



Fourth Needs Assessment Survey of the ACSH Participating Countries

Results Report

| 2021

Fourth Needs Assessment Report

The Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH) conducts biennially a Needs Assessment survey among its participating countries. The baseline study to measure baseline conditions was carried out in 2013, when the ACSH was first founded. Two subsequent surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2018.

On 15 March 2021, the ACSH launched its fourth Needs Assessment survey, which was open to potential respondents until the end of May 2021. The Survey was conducted online and comprised of 15 questions.

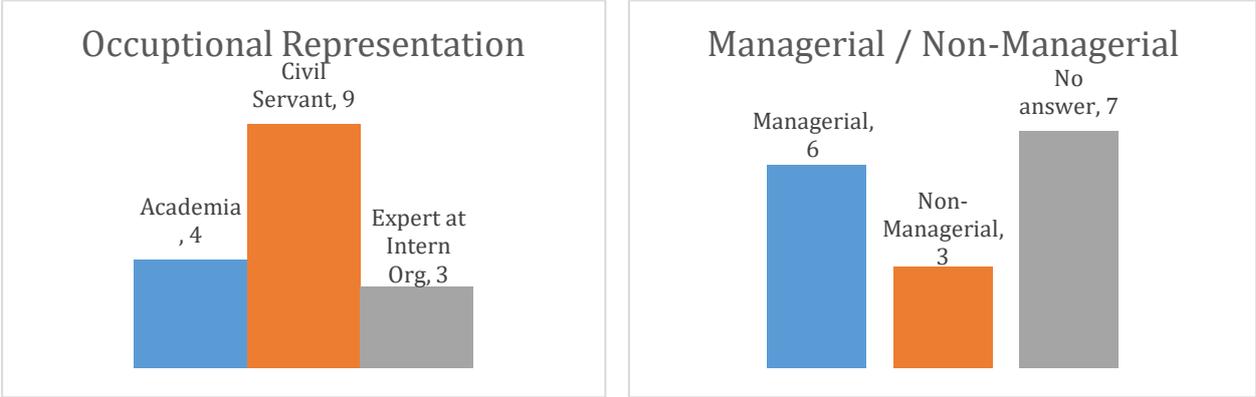
Invitations to participate in the survey were sent to potential respondents in participating countries and organisations.

The findings of the survey provide sufficient information to discern the priority areas of cooperation in civil service management and development and in public service delivery for the next two years. It gauges interest for potential activities supporting civil service development and public service delivery enhancement.

Questions 1-4 were aimed at capturing general information about the respondent – organizations (s)he represents, gender, occupation and the level of positions.

16 responses from 10 countries and 2 international organizations were registered in the electronic survey platform. The majority of respondents are female – 10 against 6.

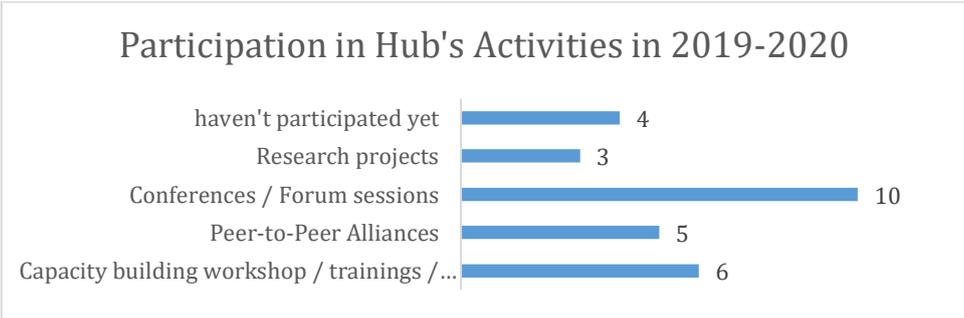
The occupation and level of positions were asked to identify correlations with the needs.



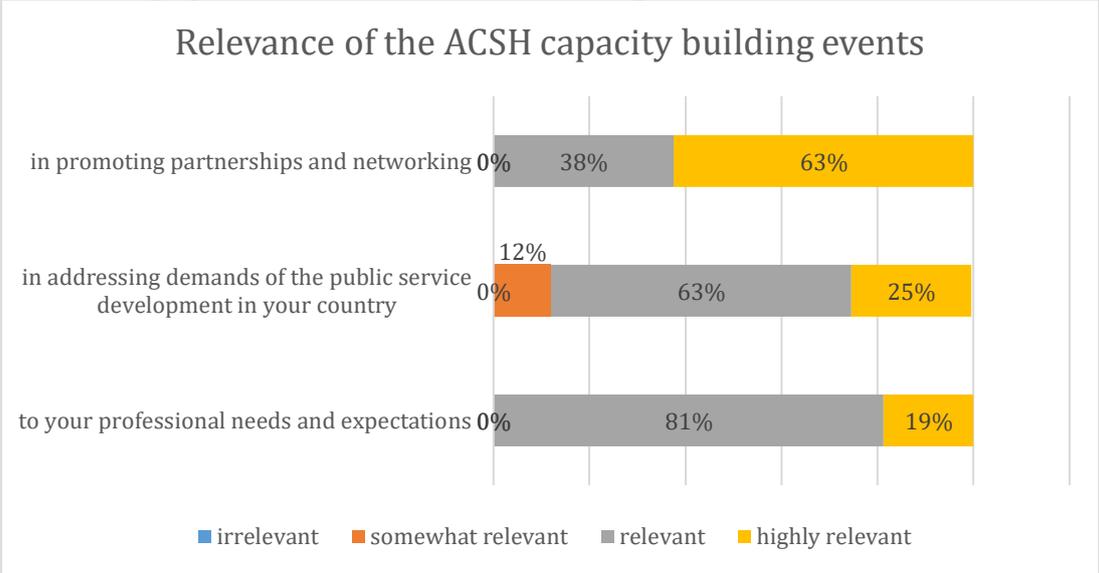
These graphs may lead to the conclusion that the survey results mostly represent views of civil servants at managerial positions and less of academia and experts from international organizations and those at non-managerial positions.

Questions 5-7 were aimed at defining degree of a respondent’s participation in the ACSH activities.

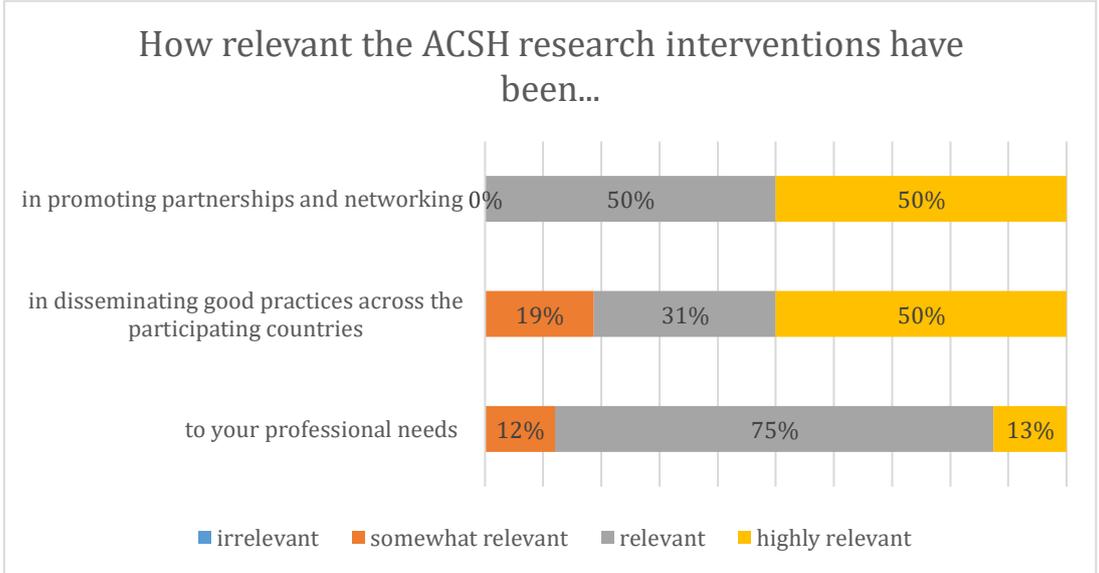
Results of the **Question 5** can also be explained by the format of events.



Question 6 measures respondents' opinion on the relevance of the Hub's capacity building events in three dimensions – in promoting partnership and networking, in addressing demands of the public service development in a respondent's country, and to a respondent's professional needs and expectations. As shown below, 100% of respondents consider ACSH capacity building interventions relevant and highly relevant in promoting partnerships and networking and to their professional needs and expectations. In addressing demands of the public service development in their country, 12,5% of respondents replied that they are slightly relevant and 8,5% - that they are relevant and highly relevant. No answers indicating as irrelevant.

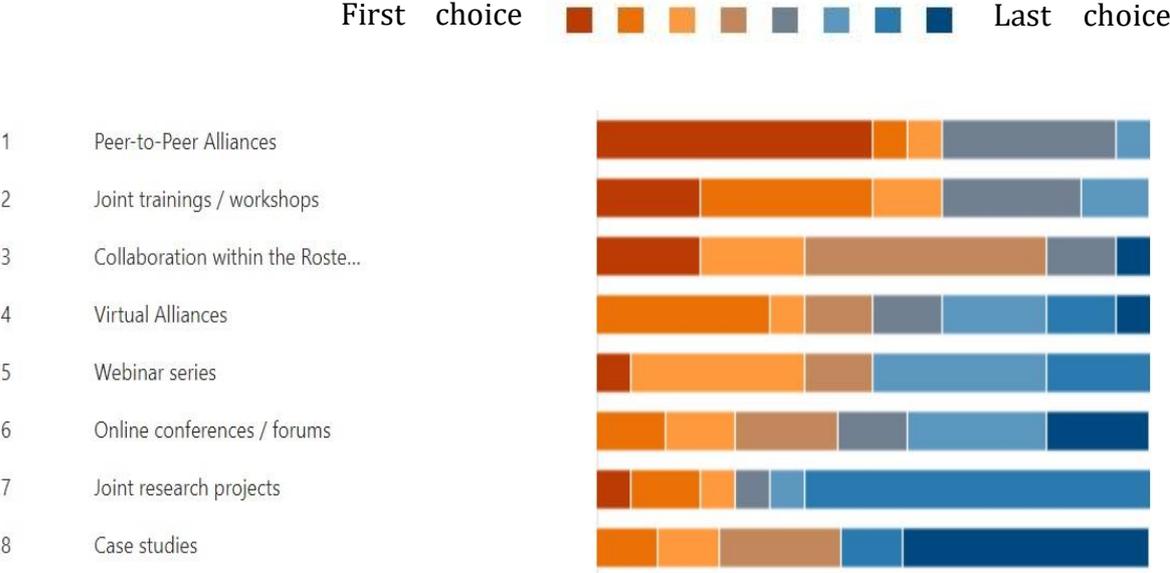


Similarly, answers to the **Question 7** indicate how relevant the ACSH research interventions have been to respondents' professional needs, in disseminating good practices across the participating countries, and in promoting partnerships and networking. Some responses indicate that research interventions were somewhat relevant in disseminating good practices across the participating countries and to respondents' needs, and between 81-100% replies show that interventions were relevant and highly relevant.



In other words, the ACSH has delivered well on the key priorities identified in the third Needs Assessment survey, as the research and capacity building interventions of the ACSH have proven to be relevant in promoting partnership and networking, in addressing demands of the public service development in a respondent’s country, and to respondents’ professional needs and expectations.

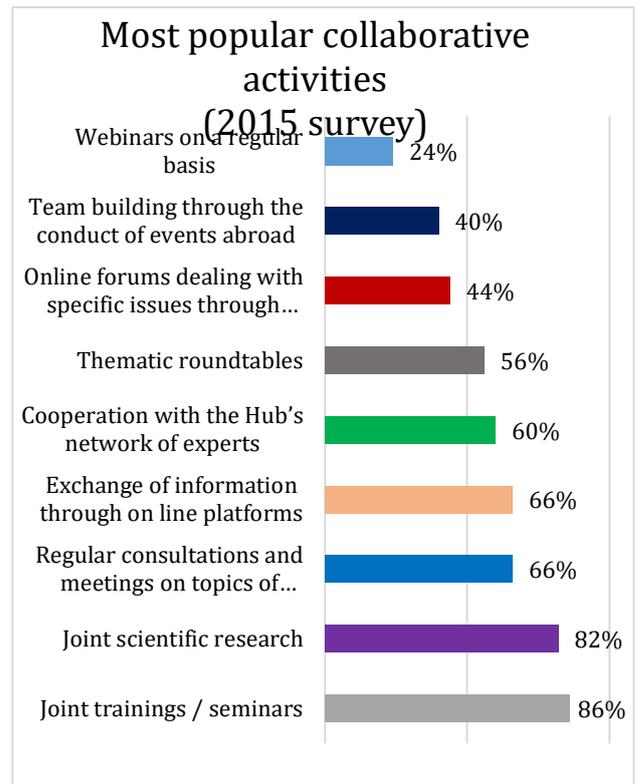
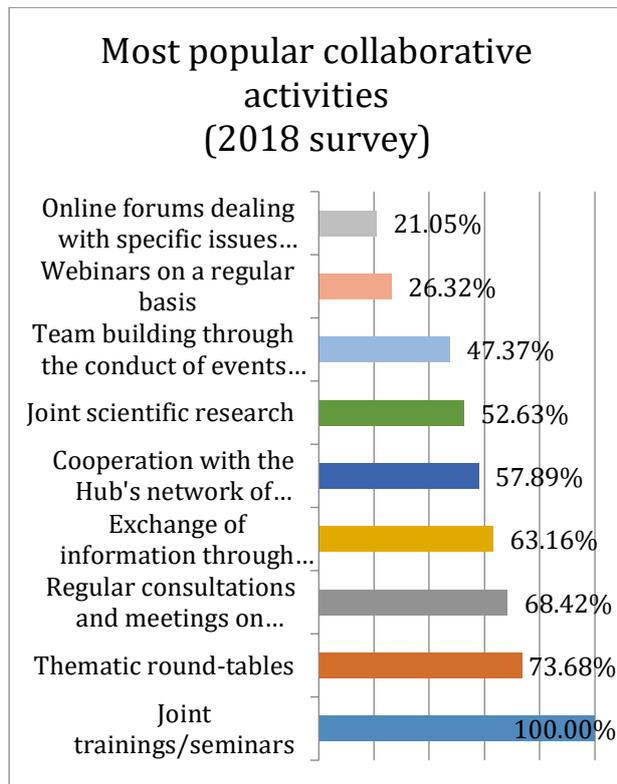
Question 8 attempts to capture preferred forms of collaborative activities for encouraging active and continuous cooperation among Hub’s participating countries.



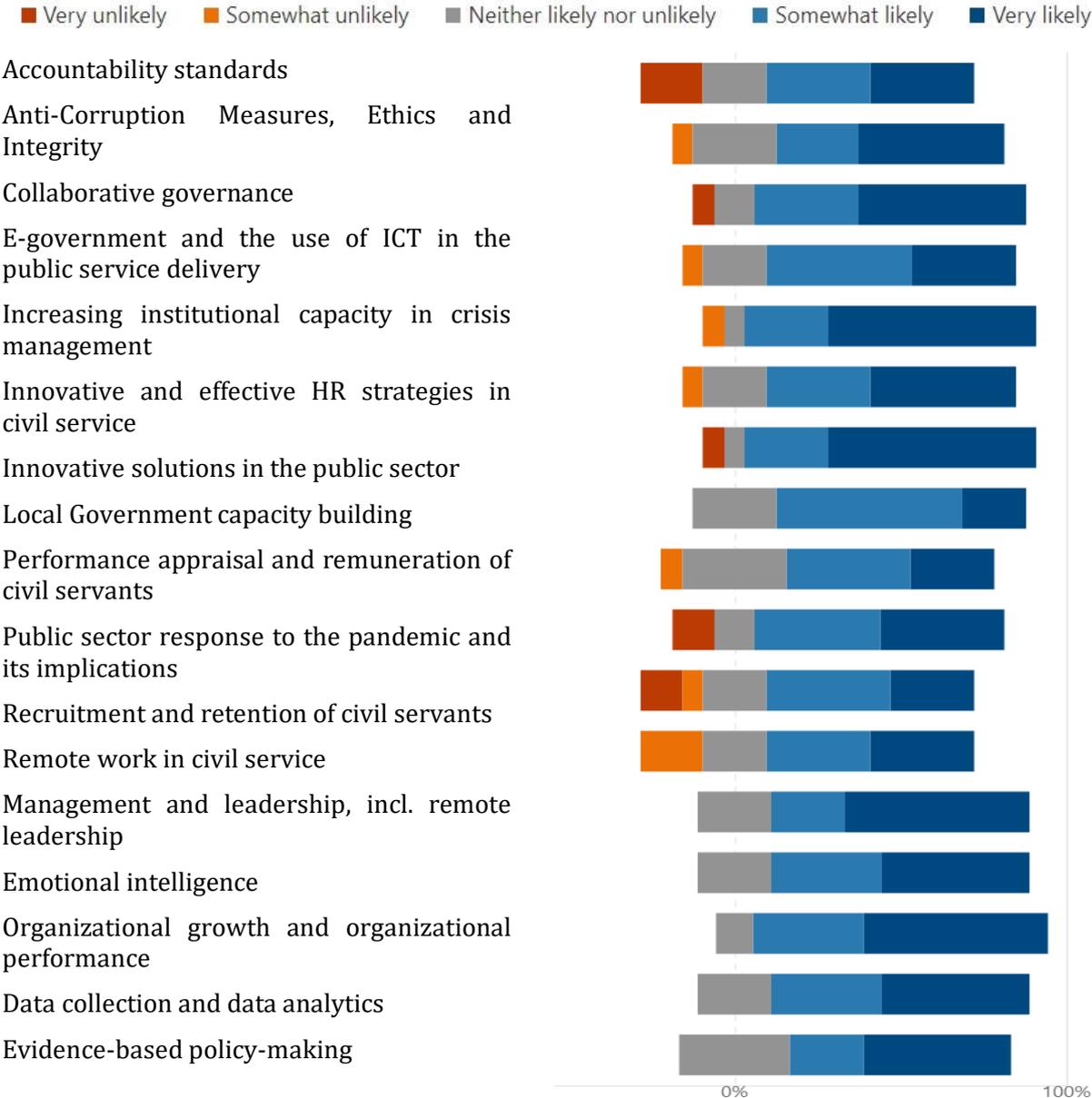
Peer-to-Peer Alliances is the most preferred form of collaboration. Joint trainings, collaboration within the roster of Experts, virtual alliances, and webinars are the next preferred forms of collaboration. This can be explained by the new working conditions created due to the pandemic. Online conferences, joint research projects and preparation of case studies go next.

It should be noted that in the previous two Needs Assessment Surveys conducted in 2015 and 2018, in the ordinary situation without the pandemic, webinars and online forums remained the least popular forms of collaborative activities.

For comparison purposes, here are responses for the same questions from the 2015 and 2018 surveys.



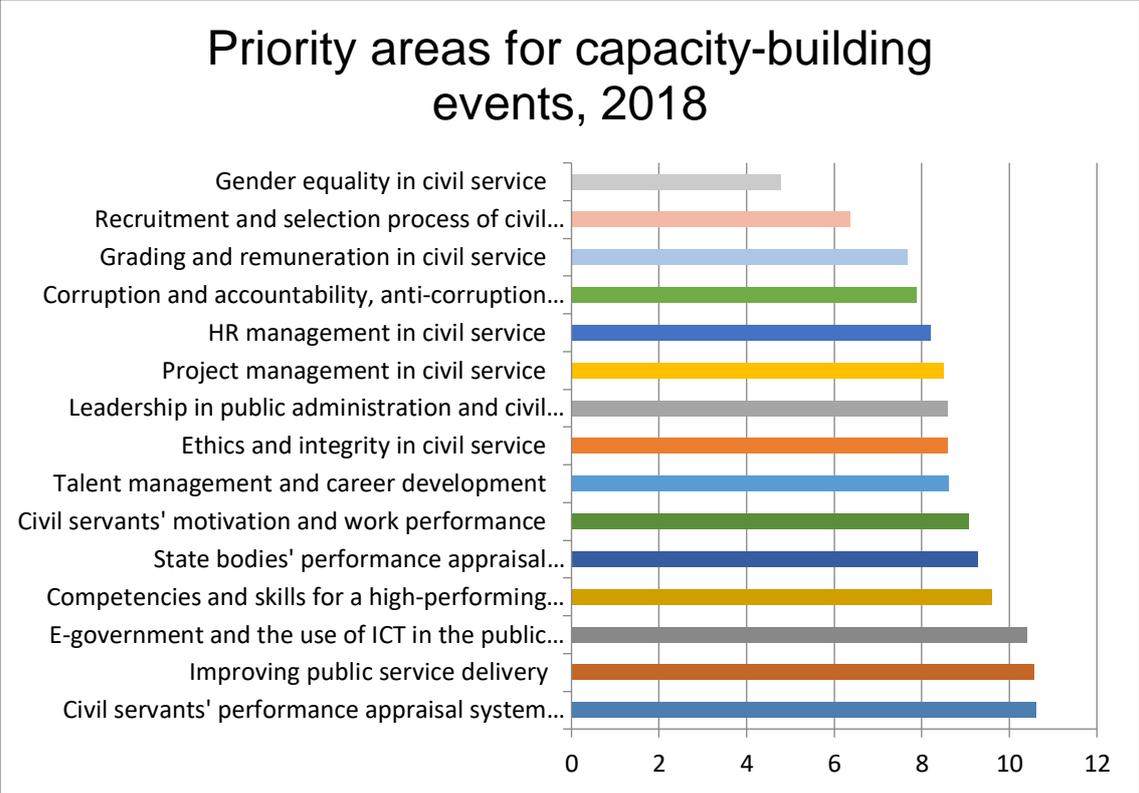
Question 9 expects to identify the topics of interest for capacity-building events.



Thus, top two equally popular topics of capacity-building events are (1) Increasing institutional capacity in crisis management and (2) Innovative solutions in the public sector. Probably a few years ago an interest in capacity building in crisis management would not be that high, while current situation has increased the importance of this topic. Next goes (3) Management and leadership, including remote leadership, and (4) Organizational growth and organizational performance. All three have acquired particular urgency in light of recent events, too. The least popular are Accountability standards and Recruitment and retention of civil servants.

To compare, top 5 priority areas for capacity-building events in 2018 included (1) civil servants’ performance appraisal system, (2) improving public service delivery, (3) E-government and the use of ICT, (4) competencies and skills for a high-performing public sector, and (5) state bodies’ performance appraisal system.

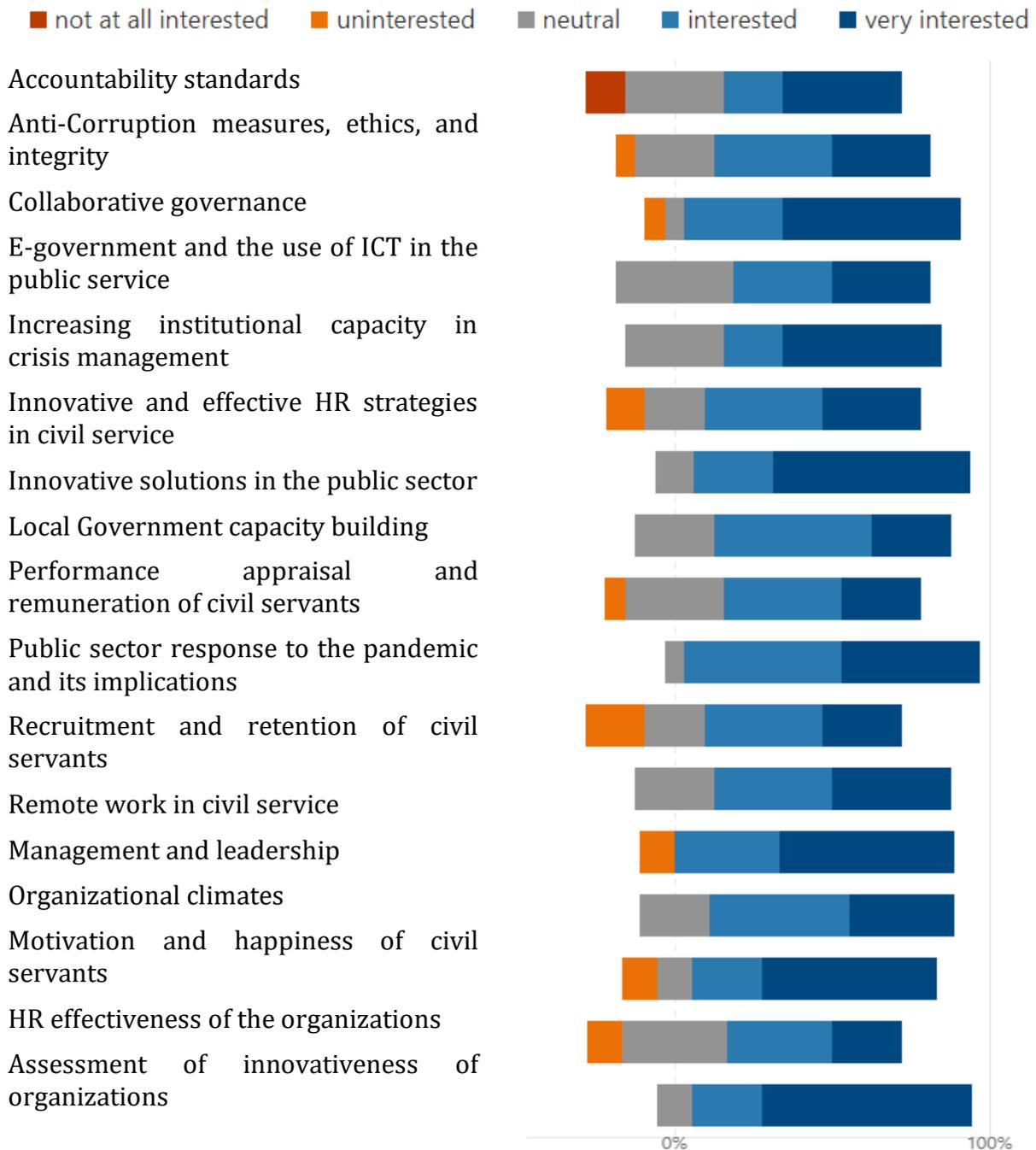
In 2015, priority topics were (1) effective human resources management, (2) anti-corruption policy, (3) professionalism and ethics in civil service, and (4) motivation and compensation of civil servants.



Respondents were given the opportunity to suggest additional topics for capacity-building events (**Question 10**). In a similar way, the proposed topics reflect on the new environment and needs affected by the Covid 19:

- Impact of the COVID 19 on public administration system and civil servants;
- E-recruitment, Smart city solutions, G-cloud for public services,
- Data security;
- Strategic planning in the civil service.

Same with the Question 9, next question (**Question 11**) tries to identify the topics of interest in research.



Top 5 topics here are: (1) Assessment of innovativeness of organizations, (2) Innovative solutions in the public sector, (3) Public sector response to the pandemic and its implications, (4) Collaborative governance, and (5) Increasing institutional capacity in crisis management.

For comparison purposes, in 2018 (1) Improving public service, (2) E-government and the use of ICT, (3) talent management and career development, (4) state bodies' performance appraisal, and (5) ethics and integrity were the most popular topics.

In 2015, the most popular topics for research were (1) effective human resources management, (2) professionalism and ethics in civil service, and (3) quality and public service delivery.

Question 12: Respondents were asked to suggest additional topics of interest for the research agenda. Some of the proposed topics are similar to those proposed for capacity-building events. Groups of additional topics suggested for inclusion in the research agenda are given below:

- Artificial intelligence in public administration
- E-recruitment, training of civil servants
- Organizations' Innovation Quotient (IQ)
- Digital transformation
- Leadership development
- Strategic planning in the civil service
- Policy coordination and evaluation in the civil service

The focus of respondents is thus more on innovations and technological advancement in public administration.

Question 13: This question intended to capture the respondents' views on ways to improve engagement on the ACSH website.

The overall impression is that the content of the website is timely, relevant, and informative, however there is a room for improvement. It is suggested to have webinars posted on the ACSH website on a regular basis, share related news from the ACSH participating countries, include additional links to institutional partners' websites, and have a chatbot and accessibility mode features. The website currently contains country profiles on civil service and public administration systems and focuses mostly on the joint events. Another recommendation mentioned under this question is to spread more information through social media. It should be noted here that ACSH regularly posts on Facebook.

Question 14: It intended to capture the views of respondents on ways to attract more potential authors for publication in the ACSH Journal¹.

One of the suggestions is to obtain a Scopus (which is a database of research literature and quality web source) status for the Journal and for the audience of the post-Soviet countries E-library. Another suggestion is to attract a wide range of international range of practitioners and researchers in the field of civil service, to include the maximum possible representation of top professionals in the editorial board of the journal. It was also recommended to introduce thematic sections on topical issues of civil service development. It is pertinent to mention here that there was one thematic issue of the Journal devoted to China's civil service, which is available on the Journal's website. It was also recommended to in have in each issue of the Journal a section on best practices falling within the topic. This section would compile contributions from participating countries. Other suggestions are to have financial incentives for articles and promote authors through local and foreign media.

Question 15: It intended to elicit the views of respondents on how to increase regional cooperation and disseminating good practices in public service across the participating countries.

Respondents suggested to organize more joint seminars, events. One suggestion was to create clubs based on different interests of participating institutions, such as Leadership club, Ethics club, HR club, etc. It was also suggested to create an opportunity to propose

¹ The ACSH has published 16 editions of the Journal to date.

a project to solve problem areas. Another respondent mentioned that more informal communication could be beneficial.

Overall conclusion of this year's assessment is that all responses reflect on the current reality affected by Covid-19.