

Assessing Capacity of Health Policy and System Research Institutions (HPSRIs) in Nepal: Framework, Lesson Learned and Future Directions

Sushil Baral¹, Achyut Raj Pandey¹, Bipul Lamichhane¹, Harvy Liwanag²

¹HERD International, Nepal

³Alliance for Improving Health Outcomes, Philippines

In collaboration with NHRC, R4D, HSS Accelerator

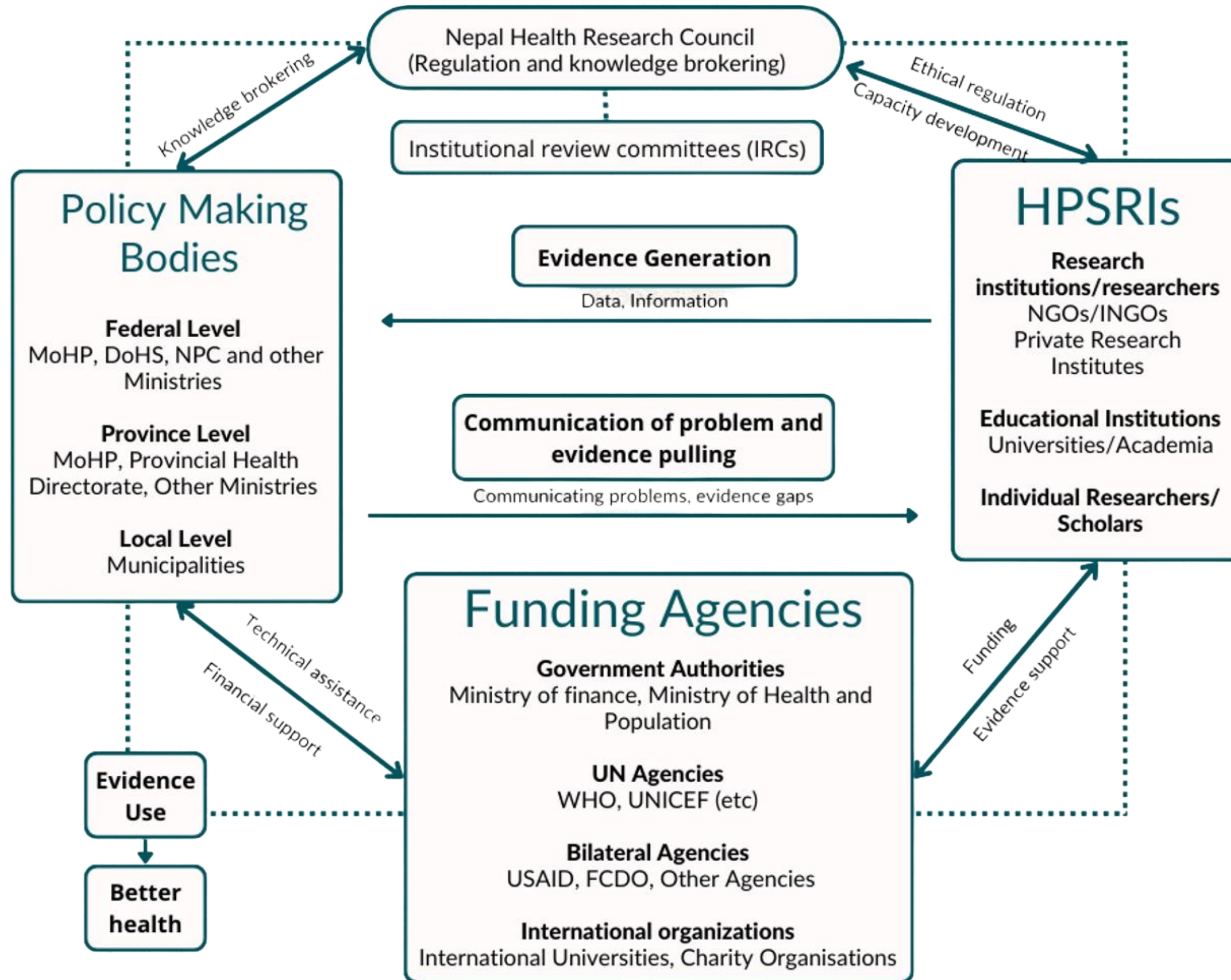




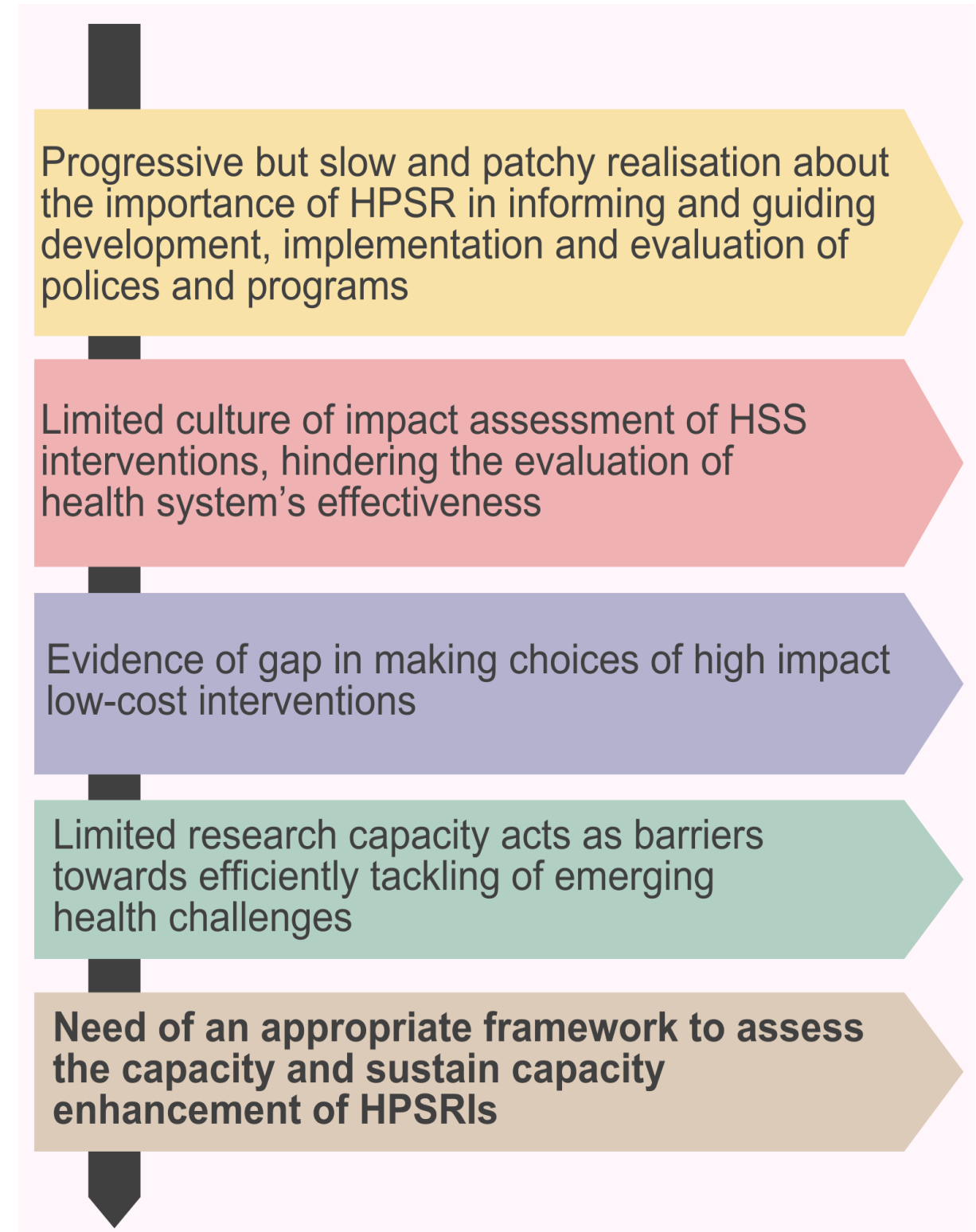
Presentation outline

- Background
- Co-creation of capacity assessment framework
- Capacity assessment framework for HPSRIs
- Lesson learnt and future directions

Health Policy and System Research Landscape in Nepal



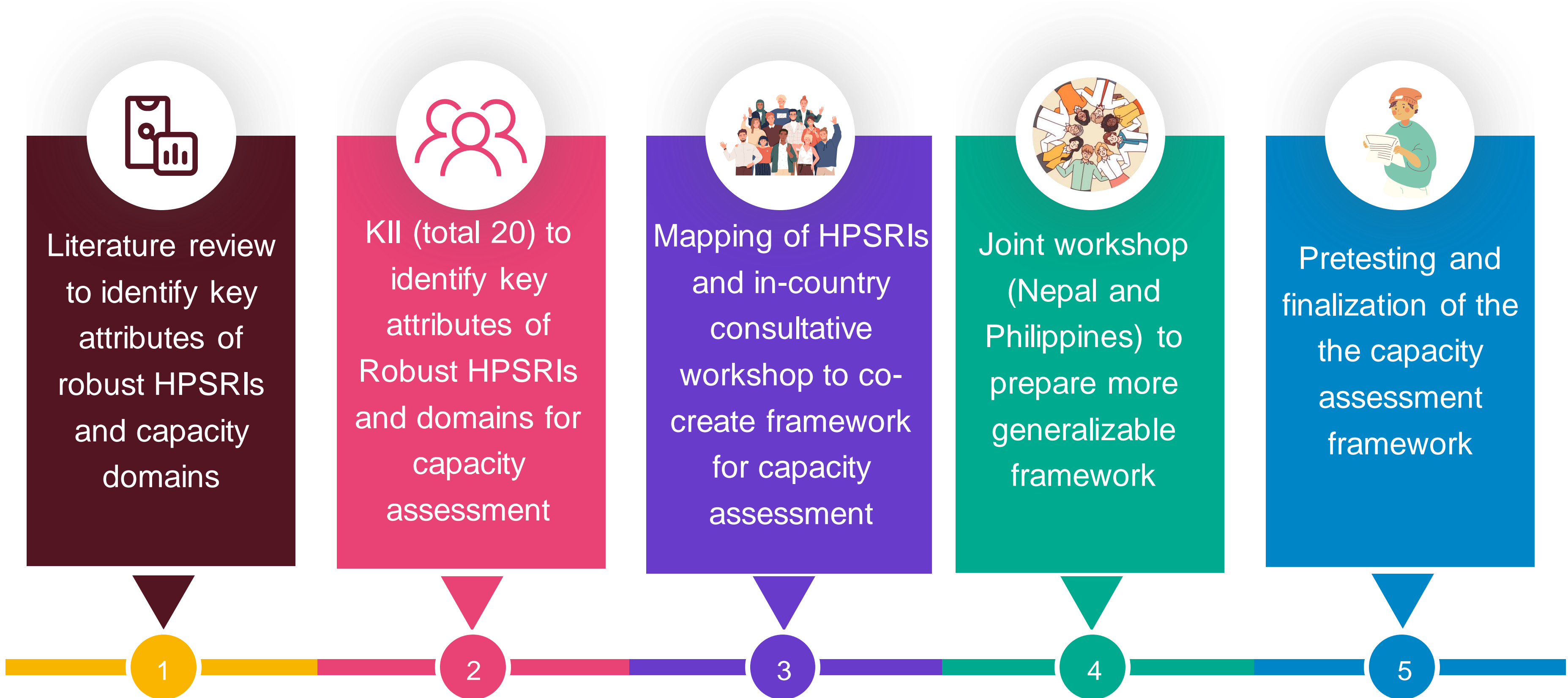
Context and Issues



Objectives

To **identify the attributes** of robust Health Policy and System Research Institutions and **Co-create a framework** to assess the capacity of research institutions for HPSR

Key steps in FAB-HPSRI project



What issues HPSRIs are dealing with?

System Level

- Evidence gaps are less clearly identified
- Institutionalization of learning is yet to be fully shaped
- Limited collaboration with academic institutions and HPSR officials/institutions
- HPSR has limited resources, and limited access to resources
- Inadequate technical capacity across all levels

Organisation Level

- Varied understanding among stakeholders
- Limited institutional home for learning
- Lack of Incentive for continuous engagement
- Weak coordination among different agencies leading to duplication
- Limited linkage, network, and connection with the wider systems

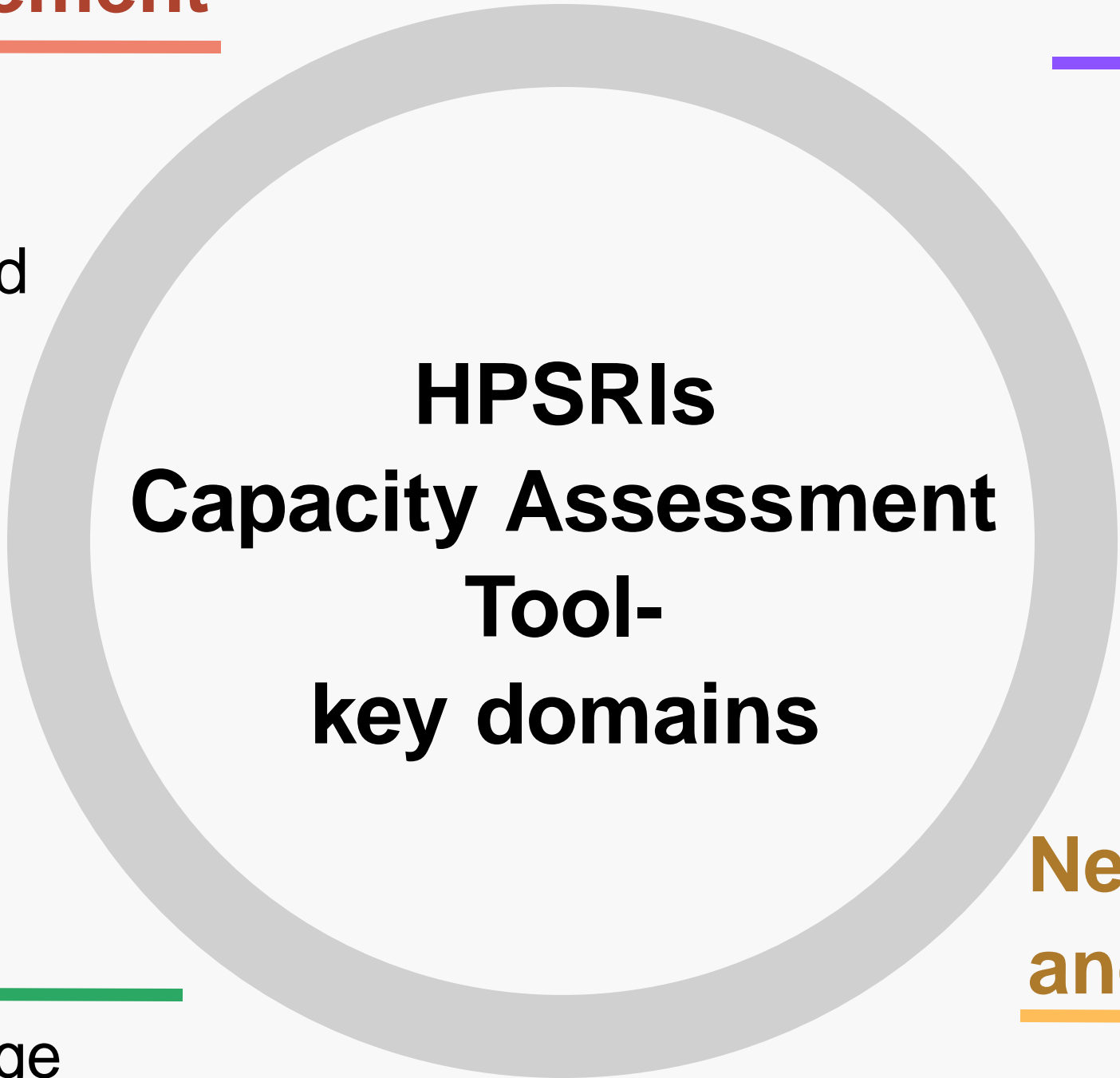
Individual Level

- Professionals are at different level of understanding
- Limited opportunities for HPSR grant that allows translating learning to policy and practice
- Weak HPSR evaluation mechanisms on whether trained professionals applied learning to policy and practice, and outcome
- Loss of interest due to lack of continuation

Outcome: HPSRIs Capacity Assessment Framework

Organizational Management

- Policy environment
- Day to day operation
- Financial management and sustainability



**HPSRIs
Capacity Assessment
Tool-
key domains**

Technical Competency

- HR availability
- Ethics & safeguarding
- Research conceptualization
- Literature review & referencing
- Research Design and methods
- Research implementation
- Data management & analysis
- Scientific writing
- Quality check mechanism

Evidence to policy

- Dissemination of knowledge
- Knowledge brokering
- Policy responsiveness

Networking, collaboration and co-creation

- Stakeholder identification
- Collaboration & networking

Two Prong Approach in Capacity Assessment

Current practice

- What HPSRIs are doing vs what needs to be done
- What is available vs what is needed



Capacity

- Basic
- Medium
- Advanced

Assessing Capacity of HPSRIs: Differentiating Institutional vs. Individual Capacity

- Unknowingly, we may be measuring individual level capacity rather than organizational capacity
- Organizational capacity assessment need to focus on team-based approach
- Initiatives at building capacity of an institution and an individual could be different

Potential use of capacity assessment tool

01

Periodic self assessment of capacity of HPSRIs

03

A preliminary step for planning capacity development initiatives

02

A tool for research initiatives or periodic assessment of the capacity by regulating agencies like NHRC

04

Tool for categorization of research institutions based on their capacity

Limitations of the tool

- Computing a composite score and comparing organizations based on the score could be challenging because of the diverse nature of work
- Not all questions are applicable to all organizations, and thus the total points on which the capacity is scored could be different for different organizations
- Nature of organization evolve over time and some questions that were not relevant or applicable in past could be important or applicable now

Future actions

Institutionalization of tool

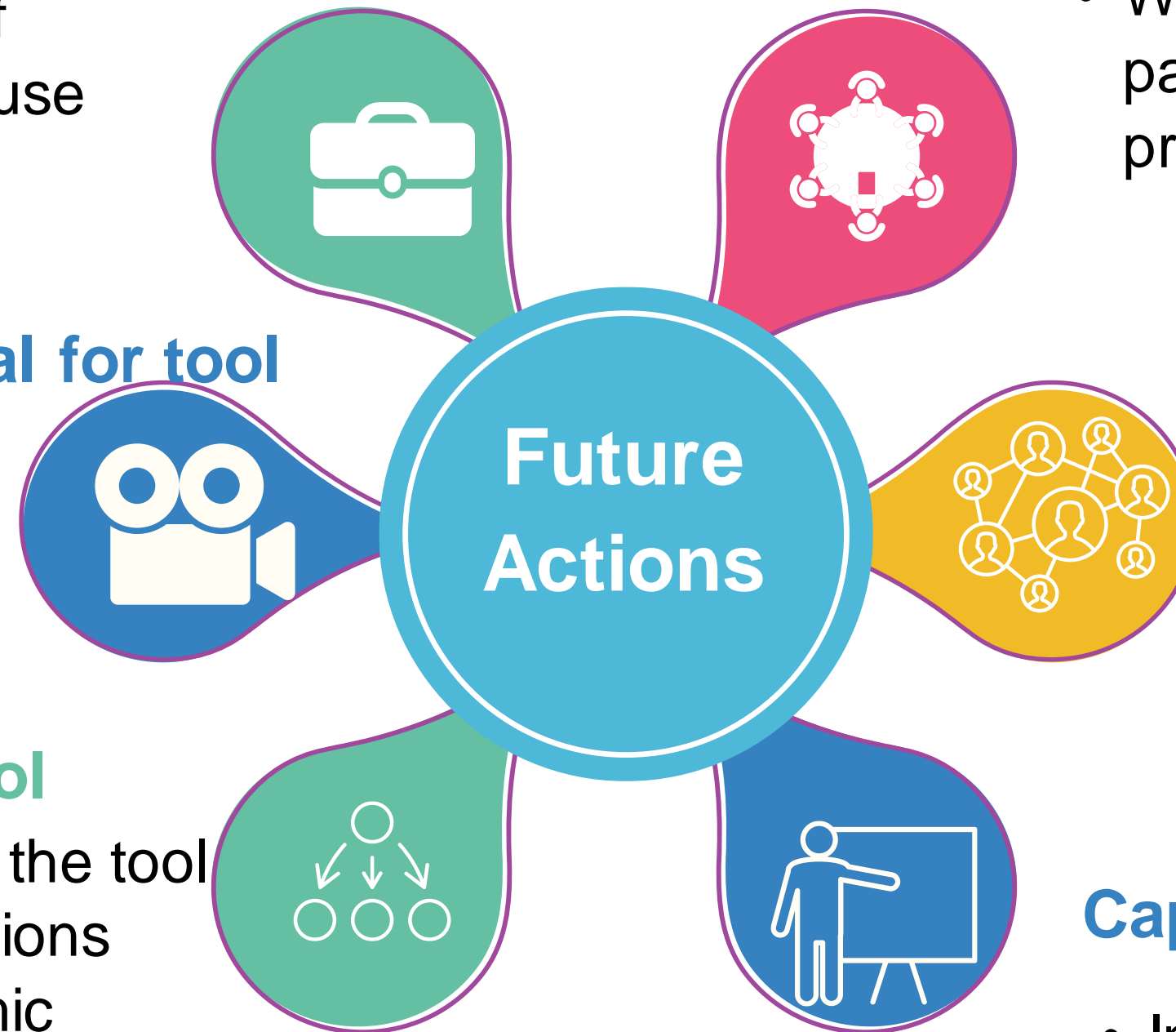
- Piloting in larger number of institutions and facilitating use on regular basis

Development of video tutorial for tool

- Develop video tutorial in Local language to facilitate adoption of tool at organizational level

Multiple versions of the tool

- Develop multiple versions of the tool based on nature of organizations
- For e.g. different for academic institutions, for organization governed and funded by governments,, non-public research agencies



Knowledge dissemination

- Wider dissemination of findings: paper publication, conference presentation, policy dialogue

Network of HPSRIs

- Establishing national network of HPSRs
- Regular policy dialogue, methodological discussions and lesson sharing

Capacity development

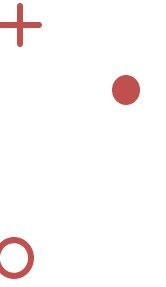
- Individual level
- Organization/institution level
- System level

Key take away message

- **Defining HPSR:** HPSR is defined by issue it addresses but tough to have clear differentiation from other types of research
- **Diversity in interest of actors:** Diverse actors are involved in HPSR and balancing interest is challenging, also means that organizations require more skills in dealing with stakeholders
 - **By are of work:** some working only in policy analysis, other on programme evaluation
 - **Nature of funding:** Some funded solely by government, other having diverse sources
 - **Primary functions:** Academic institution, research organizations, polity making bodies, programme implementing agencies

Key take away messages

- **Methodological complexity** : Multi-disciplinary field, combines methods from multiple disciplines, difficult to have exhaustive list of methodological skills required
- **Contextual differences**: Differences in organization and structure from one setting to other, need highly tailored research methodology
- Addressing all these complexities in a single tool can be complex, participants of workshops suggested different versions based on nature of organization (we may need 4/5 different versions of the tool)



Lessons: expectations and trade offs

- Need to differentiate between individual vs institutional capacity assessment
- Balancing trade-off between comprehensiveness and length of question
- Different understanding on what constitutes HPSR research capacity, organizations look for their own agenda in the capacity assessment tool too

Disclaimer

This presentation/report/document is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement No. 7200-AA-18CA-00037 managed by Results for Development (R4D) The contents are the responsibility of R4D, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Thank You



Brief Bio

I am a public health professional with expertise in generating and utilizing data to inform programs, policies, and decisions. My areas of interest include Health Policy and Systems Research, Antimicrobial Resistance, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Nutrition, Maternal and Neonatal Health, Immunization, and disaster management among others.

