

# Evidence in Decision Making: Understanding the Influence of Research in African Policy Landscapes

Insights from the 2021 and 2023 PRCI Stakeholder surveys

Mywish K. Maredia and Danielle Resnick

Presented at

PARTNERING TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR APPLIED POLICY RESEARCH  
WITH IMPACT: ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNDER PRCI, LESSONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Washington, DC (Ronald Reagan Building)

March 6-8, 2024



# How decisionmakers make decisions?



*Image generated based on a specific prompt  
by OpenAI's DALL·E (accessed March 3, 2024)*

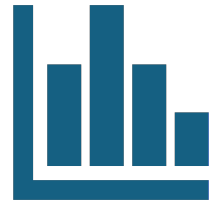
# Motivation for this assessment

- **PRCI's theory of change by strengthening institutional capacities, CPLs will be better equipped to produce research and wield greater influence**
- **For the research centers to become an influencer , it is important to understand ...**
  - ...from where/how decisionmakers **source their information and why**
  - ...where **CPLs fit in this landscape**
  - ...what is **stakeholder engagement with CPLs** , their familiarity and **utilization of CPL resources** and communication experiences?
  - ...the **broader context** of the degree to which agriculture and food security policy making at the country-level depends on evidence

# Method

- **Two rounds of stakeholder surveys** – 2021 and 2023
- Two types of stakeholders:
  - **General sample** – a broad spectrum of individuals from the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, research institutions, and donor agencies
  - **Targeted sample** – a select group of stakeholders from organizations that CPLs had earmarked to influence
- Survey method
  - General sample: **Virtual interviews** with about 20 high-level decisionmakers in each country; rest **Online survey** using the same instrument. Data collected in both years
  - Targeted sample: **All virtual interviews** with about 7-9 stakeholders recommended by CPLs. Interviews conducted **only in 2023**, by the same consultant as the general sample. Used a **distinct questionnaire** with some questions overlapping with the general sample questionnaire

Profile of respondents	Nigeria			Senegal			Uganda		
	2021 GS	2023 GS	2023 TS	2021 GS	2023 GS	2023 TS	2021 GS	2023 GS	2023 TS
Number of respondents	66	49	7	48	52	9	32	30	7
Male	72%	76%	57%	69%	69%	100%	69%	73%	86%
Main sector of employment									
Government	33%	35%	57%	29%	35%	29%	53%	50%	43%
Private sector	37%	18%	0%	29%	18%	29%	31%	23%	43%
Research sector	23%	31%	14%	29%	31%	57%	0%	0%	0%
NGO/CSO/Donor/Other	17%	16%	29%	13%	16%	14%	16%	27%	14%
Main area of expertise									
Agric dev / food security	60%	77%	100%	44%	59%	100%	53%	60%	86%
Other	23%	18%	--	48%	38%	--	38%	30%	14%
Unspecified	17%	14%	--	8%	2%	--	9%	10%	--
Primary responsibilities									
Management/Executive Duties	41%	47%	57%	41%	42%	44%	47%	53%	71%
Other	45%	44%	43%	56%	56%	56%	34%	39%	29%
Unspecified	15%	8%	--	8%	2%	--	9%	8%	--
Org. has leadership / membership in influential committees	83%	80%	100%	60%	75%	100%	84%	93%	71%
Political appointee or reports to	29%	26%	29%	21%	27%	43%	9%	10%	43%



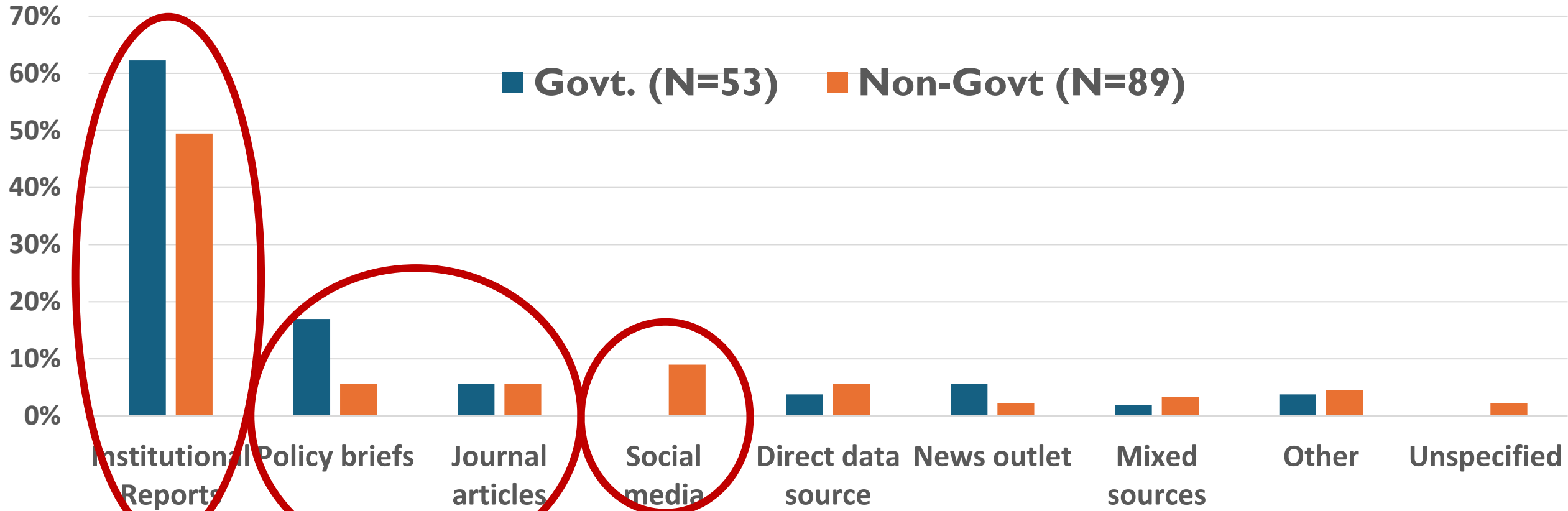
# Main Results

- 1) From where/how decisionmakers **source their information and why?**
- 2) Where CPLs fit in the landscape?

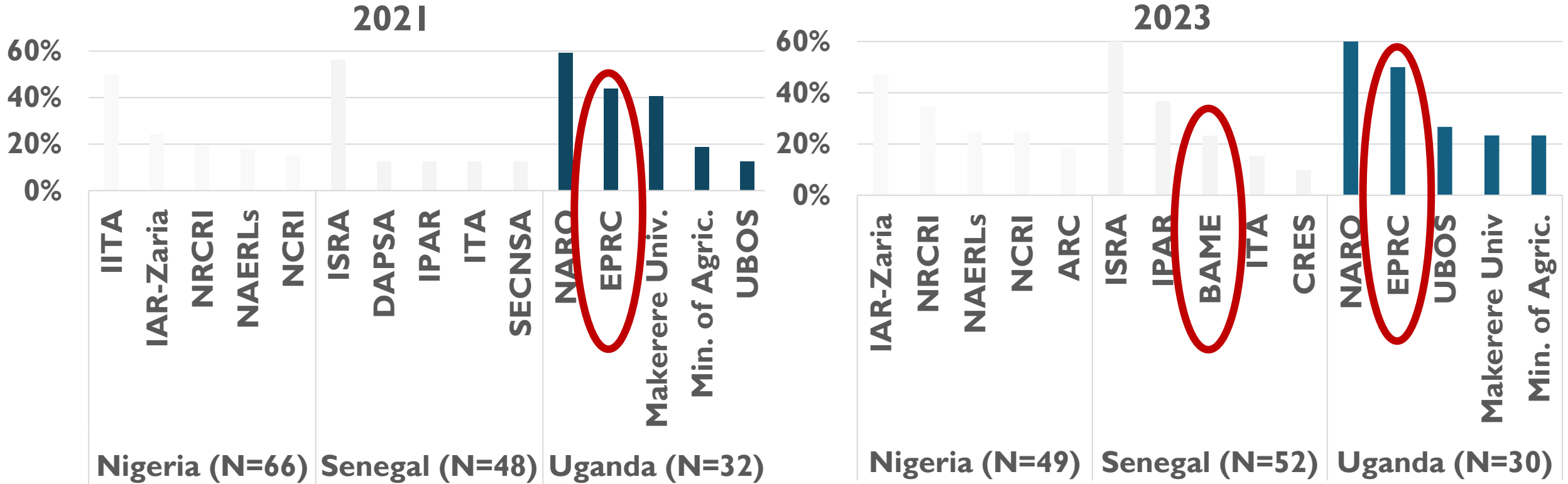


# Primary type of information relied upon by decision makers

2023



# Five most mentioned top 3 research institutions on domestic agricultural development and/or food security in 2021 and 2023, by country/region (open -ended)





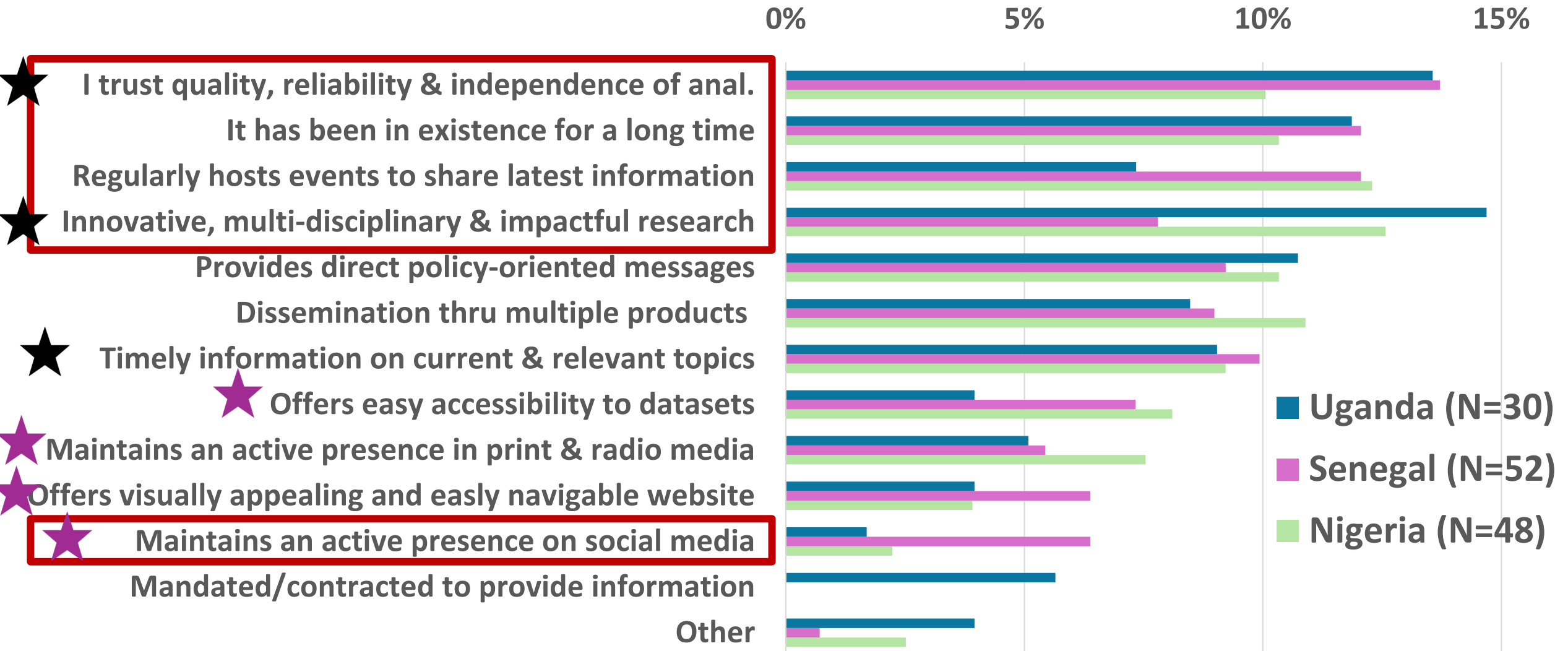
# Where do CPLs fit into the research landscape

Rank	Nigeria	Rank	Senegal	Rank	Uganda
1	IAR, Zaria	<b>1</b>	<b>ISRA-BAME</b>	1	NARO
<b>2</b>	<b>PiLAF</b>	2	ISRA (non-BAME)	<b>2</b>	<b>EPRC</b>
3	NRCRI	3	DAPSA	3	UBOS
4	APRNet	4	IPAR	4	Makerere Univ.
5	NCRI	5	SECNSA	5	PADRI
		6	CRES		

When presented with a list of national research institutions that included CPLs by name, stakeholders commonly ranked BAME, PiLAF, and EPRC as top institutions they go to for research, suggesting

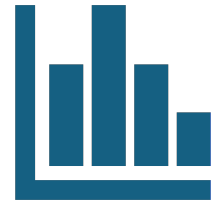
- High visibility and recognition of CPLs relative to diverse peer institutions

# Reasons for selecting an institution as top research institute, 2023





# Main Results



**3) Stakeholder engagement with CPLs: Familiarity, rating, & utilization of resources**

How many stakeholders had consulted any type of research in past 12m?

• **General sample:**  
**97%**

• **Targeted sample:**  
**100%**

How many times they had consulted any type of research in past 12m?

• **General sample: 8**  
**times**

• **Targeted sample: 10 times**

Of those that had consulted,  
**a majority indicated using research of CPLs at least sometime**

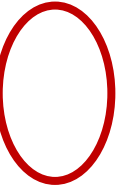
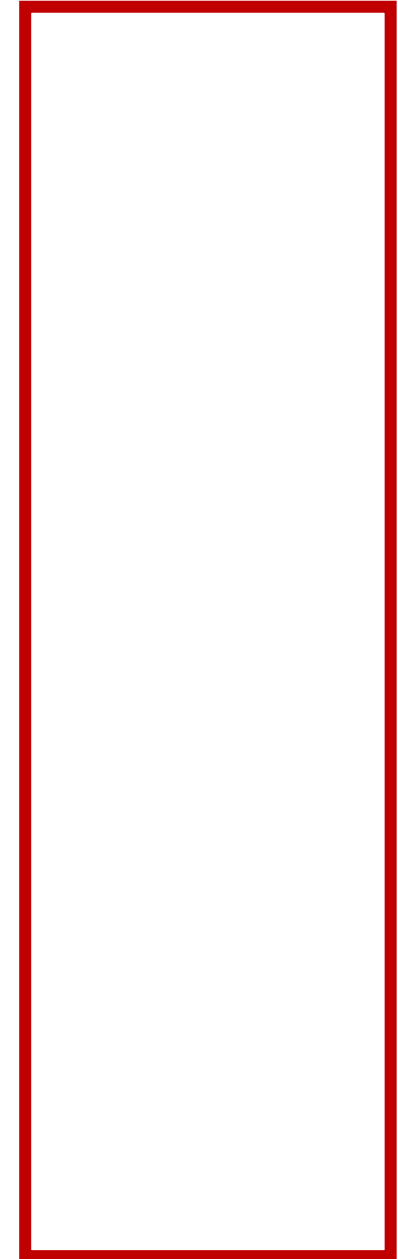
# Targeted stakeholders' familiarity with research topics on which CPLs have recently focused, and if that topic was associated with CPLs

	Nigeria: PiLAF (N=7)		Senegal: BAME (N=9)		Uganda: EPRC (N=7)	
	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 1	Topic 2
	Poultry sector policies	Farm implement manufacturing sector	Food system resilience and agricultural value chain	Favorable social and inst. environ. for sustainable agriculture...	Relationship between the sugarcane sector, food security and poverty	Nutrition security
Percentage of targeted stakeholders who had...						
1) <u>READ</u> any research on the topic report/publication in the past 2 years on the topic	57%	14%	100%	89%	100%	75%
<i>Among those that had read, how many identified CPL as the conductor of that research?</i>	0%	0%	75%	50%	83%	25%
2) <u>ATTENDED SEMINARS</u> or research forums in the past 2 years on the topic	57%	43%	100%	100%	83%	25%
<i>Among those that had attended, how many identified CPL as the organizer of the event</i>	25%	0%	33%	33%	100%	0%

Stakeholders in Senegal and Uganda generally have more familiarity and engagement with CPLs than those in Nigeria

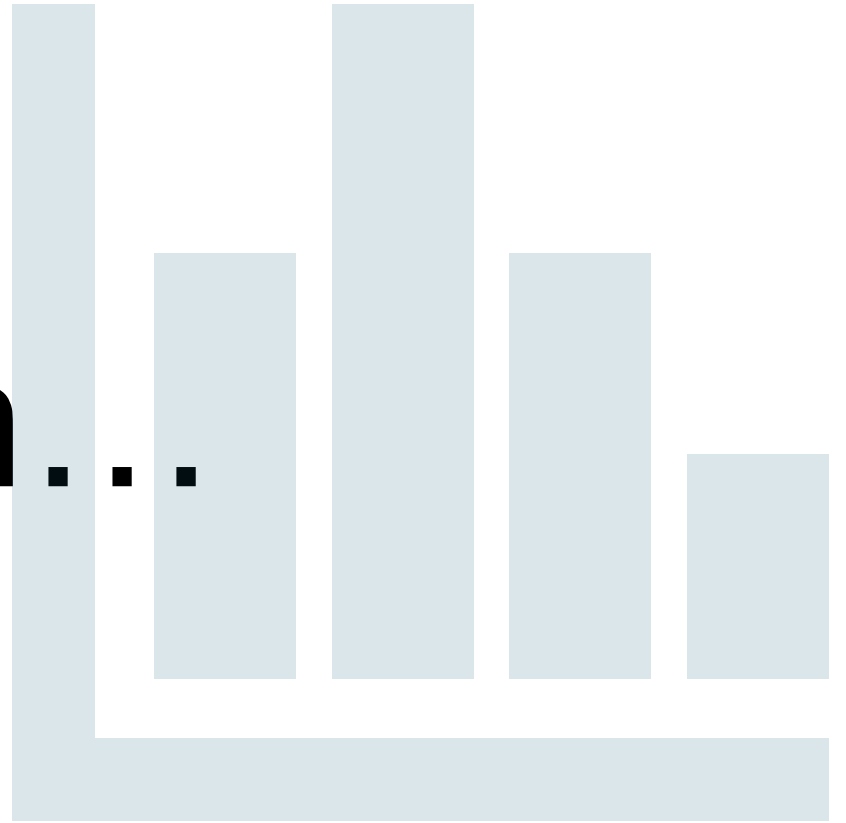
## Stakeholder's current rating of CPLs and their perception of direction of change/progress in seven dimensions

- **CPLs generally received high to medium ratings**, showing progress in most areas
- Some stakeholders identified **communications and outreach capacity, and the influence of research on policy** as areas needing improvement





**In conclusion...**



# Main Takeaways

- **Research-based evidence is important** to decision makers
  - >97% of stakeholders had consulted data/analyses/research in the past 12 months
- **Institutional reports and policy briefs are the most preferred source of information** for both govt and non-govt decision makers
  - Journal articles are rarely consulted; social media consulted more by non-govt actors
- **Long-standing CPLs like EPRC and BAME** have high visibility, but PiLAF as a newer institution faces recognition challenges; however,
  - All CPLs (incl. PiLAF) feature high when provided with a list of institutions to rank
- **The qualities that attract decisionmakers** to particular institutions as sources of credible information **are multi -faceted and vary between govt vs. non -govt actors**
  - Stakeholders prioritize trust in analysis, innovative research, longevity, and event hosting in ranking research institutions
  - Social media presence is considered less crucial



# Main Takeaways (cont'd)

- CPLs generally received **high to medium ratings with positive change/progress** on credibility, quality, timeliness of research and overall reputation
  - **Communications and outreach capacity, and the influence of research on policy** were identified as areas needing improvement
- Lastly, surveys include other data, information, feedback not presented here, that highlight the **nuanced nature of policy influence and the need for strategic and prioritized engagement with diverse stakeholders**
- We hope CPLs will take this data and stakeholder feedback into account to refine their strategic goals and activities to increase their visibility and impact



*Image generated based on a specific prompt by OpenAI's DALL·E (accessed March 3, 2024)*

# Thank you

This work was supported by the U.S. Agency for  
International Development [grant number  
7200AA19LE00001]

## Questions/Feedback?

Contact emails: [maredia@msu.edu](mailto:maredia@msu.edu) | [d.resnick@cgiar.org](mailto:d.resnick@cgiar.org)

Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity, and Influence  
(PRCI)



**MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



**RIS**  
Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries  
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली