



EXTERNAL EVALUATION

External evaluation of the
Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS)

November 6th, 2020



1. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

ReDSS decided to undertake an external evaluation to review its **strategy**, **governance structure** and **membership** to inform its next strategy development process.



2. METHODOLOGY



DATA SOURCES



35

Key
Informant
Interviews



67

Online
Survey
Responses



Extensive
Literature
Review



22

Stories of
Significant
Change

INPUT FROM



10

Member
Organisations



23

Partners,
Donors and
Other Organisations



10

Key
Staff
Members

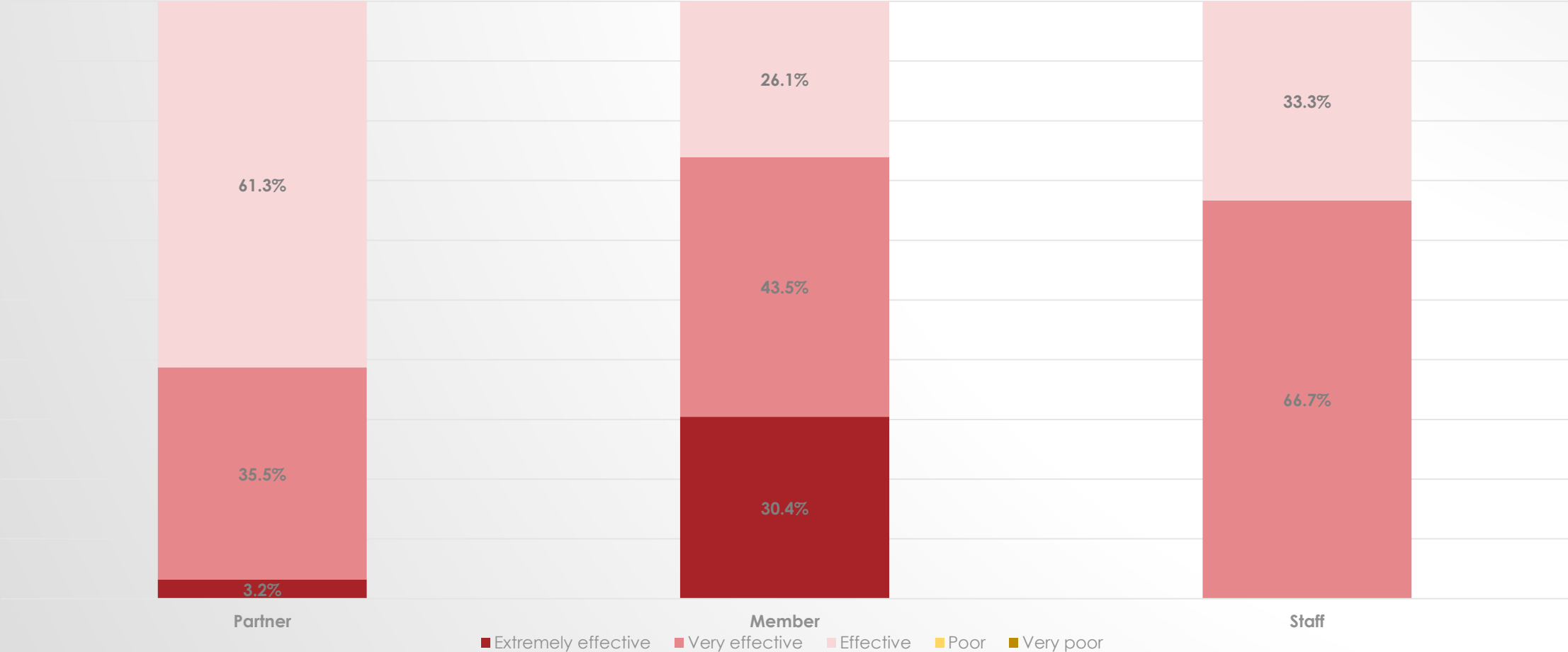


3. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



REDSS HAS BEEN VERY **EFFECTIVE** AT ACHIEVING ITS STRATEGY

How effective have ReDSS strategy and approach been towards achieving its goal and vision?



DURABLE SOLUTIONS ARE ON THE **POLICY** AGENDA

Through various capacity building activities such as training and learning workshops, **ReDSS has created a shared understanding and language for discussing durable solutions.** This has built connections between NGOs, UN agencies, academia, donors, governments, and other coordinating bodies like the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), enabling them to have meaningful discourse.

Impact on policy is substantial.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

ReDSS has managed to **navigate this complexity effectively, supporting government leadership and capacity on durable solutions.** It has become recognised as **a safe and trusted forum for productive and impactful government dialogue.**

POLICY DIALOGUE IS SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH

ReDSS has produced and disseminated a vast quantity of research. This **evidence-base has continually progressed and informed the concept of durable solutions**. Furthermore, ReDSS has translated its research into practical tools and frameworks which support the day to day work of implementing agencies.

AS A **COALITION**, REDSS CARRIES A STRONGER VOICE

ReDSS occupies a unique position, **bridging the gap between organisations working in the field, those who provide funding and those who establish policy**. It speaks on behalf of a coalition of actors, amplifying voices from the field in a coherent, collective way. ReDSS has the trust of its members and is able to represent them effectively in a range of forums.

DIFFERENT **STAKEHOLDERS** ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER

The objective of the initial strategy was **to bring people together and this objective has been achieved**. Many organisations claim to build and maintain relationships, but few come close to ReDSS' skill and effectiveness. This is one of the key differentiators which has enabled ReDSS' outsized impact.



4. GOVERNANCE





It's time to formalise and document key systems, processes and aspects of ReDSS' culture.



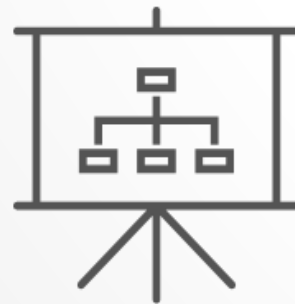
As ReDSS moves to country-level engagement, **membership must localise further.**



A simplified, centralised, adapted M&E tool will help inform organisational learning.



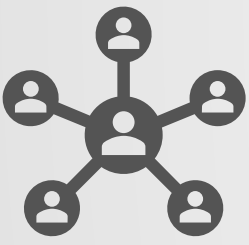
ReDSS staff are **leading global experts** in durable solutions.



The governance structure is effective and adaptable.



Personal relationships maximise member contribution.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership must continue to adapt.

- ReDSS membership was highly relevant when ReDSS had a regional scope. **With country-level engagements becoming the priority, membership lacks the local perspective. This has been successfully addressed through “ReDSS+” but needs to be translated into specific country membership.** A 75% (same members with a regional scope)/25% (country specific) ratio is perceived as the right balance.
- Current ReDSS member criteria are in fact commitments, rather than criteria. Both seem to be required.
- Members' uneven engagement is initially and often presented as a major issue. However, excessive clarification is also seen as a potential impediment rather than a solution.
- **Members comparative advantage or specialization is an area where ReDSS could leverage further engagement without the expectations to formalize it excessively.**
- **Members would like more one-to-one engagement. Without further tailoring of such engagement, there is a risk of meeting fatigue.**
- While theoretically sound, opening the membership to development NGOs seem to be less effective as expectations vary greatly.



5. STRATEGY





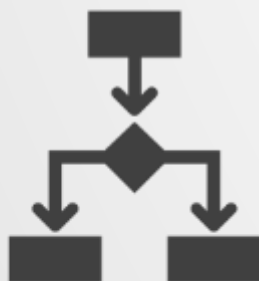
Policy dialogue is ReDSS' central strength and the area where it achieves its most significant impact.



The quality of its **learning events** and artefacts has made ReDSS an increasingly respected and credible voice.



The high level strategy is strong. It needs to be operationalised, to become the guide for day-to-day activities and prioritisation.



Themes have expanded to the point where they are not focused. Fewer themes will be more effective.



ReDSS is unusually skilled at **bringing people together**.

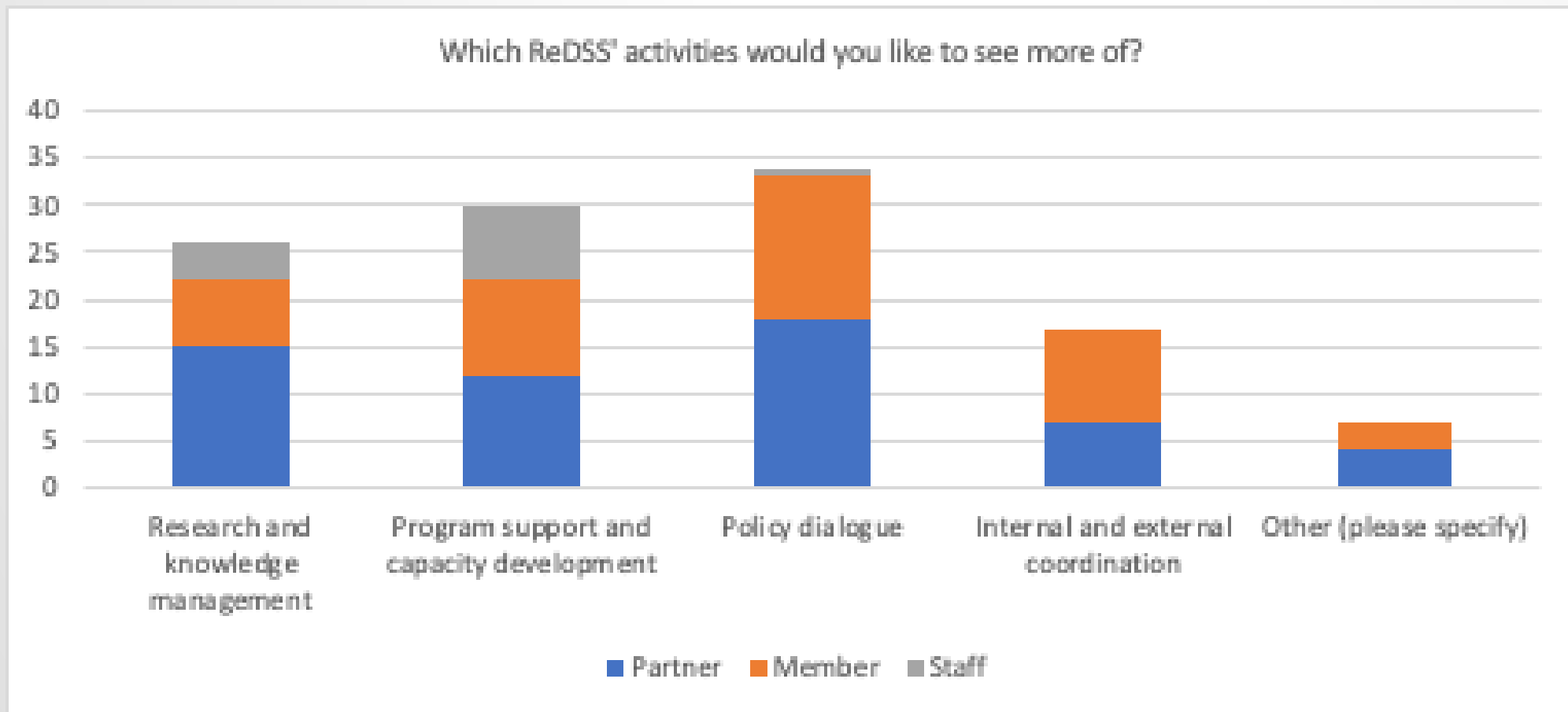


ReDSS has become a trusted and reliable source of **research** on durable solutions.



6. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

WAY FORWARD



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POLICY DIALOGUE NEEDS TO REMAIN AT THE CORE OF REDSS' STRATEGY

- Policy dialogue is ReDSS' central strength and the area where it achieves its most significant impact. Members expect ReDSS to continue to “speak on behalf of a coalition” to promote policy change. This should remain the core of ReDSS new strategy.
- Without changing the pillars and ReDSS' foundational concepts, ReDSS can reaffirm policy as its core objective. ReDSS' ways of working and the other pillars enable the policy work to progress. However, these links should be drawn more clearly.



TRANSITION FROM “WHAT” TO “HOW” WHILE REMAINING MEMBER-CENTRIC

- ReDSS has well defined its approach and culture. For the next strategy, it needs to take a step further into linking activities to its successful approach by making the strategy the assumed choice of priorities and by managing it with a reliable Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.
- ReDSS needs to make it a priority to focus on the “how”, i.e. how the members can use ReDSS’ contribution to create change on the ground.
- ReDSS should prioritise curation and utilisation of the existing body of research, rather than continuing to expand it. In revisiting the wealth of knowledge ReDSS has generated, it should aim at translating it into operationally relevant tools for members.
- ReDSS needs to reduce the thematic focus to one regional theme and two country-level themes to ensure that these themes are translated through the 4 pillars in each country and the regional strategy and work plans. Fewer themes will provide a good platform for targeted commitments from members.

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REDSS' SUCCESSFUL MOVE TO THE COUNTRY LEVEL NEEDS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ITS GOVERNANCE

- There is unanimous support to expand the membership locally by the inclusion of 3-4 international and local NGOs particularly active on durable solutions, specific to each country. A 75% (existing members with a regional scope)/25% (country specific) ratio is suggested.
- Each country will thus have different “core group” members. This ratio would strike the right balance between achieving country relevance and preserving ReDSS' overarching identity.