



Feedback surveys for transnational social change networks

A step-by-step guide

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide conveys methodology that Keystone and iScale have developed for benchmarking feedback from constituents of social change networks. It was adapted from Keystone's constituency voice method by David Bonbright, Alex Jacobs, André Proctor, Richard Ponsford and Natalia Kirytopoulou. Natalia led the transnational social change networks project, and is the lead author of this guide.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE FEEDBACK SURVEYS?

Feedback surveys are a simple, yet very powerful way for different kinds of organizations in the social change field to hear from their constituents and with them identify what works well and what needs improvement.

Organizations can ask the people who are intended to benefit from social change what they think about plans, performance and reports.

Feedback surveys are the product of Keystone's ongoing efforts to promote constituency voice in organizations that seek to produce social benefits.¹

Our search for solutions to the measurement challenges in social change has yielded a surprisingly simple solution: Ask the people that are affected by your work. Just ask them!

Partly inspired by the massive success of the customer satisfaction industry, which enables companies to better serve their customers, Keystone has been promoting constituency voice in various contexts: grantmaking institutions, international advocacy campaigns, social investment funds, agricultural development organisations, international NGOs and, in this case, transnational social change networks.²

Feedback surveys also build on iScale's efforts to develop, apply, share and promote innovations for scaling impact with partners across the field. The underlying assumption of iScale's theory of change is that different bundles of innovations can dramatically scale the impact of social change efforts. In this case, we are bringing together innovative thinking and practice associated with networks and constituency voice in a potentially path-breaking way.³

WHAT IS THEIR PURPOSE?

The purpose of feedback surveys for transnational social change networks is to gather feedback from their constituents on the network's vibrancy, connectivity and performance, as well as the value that constituents receive from participating in the network.

Feedback surveys are **an assessment exercise** that differs from conventional evaluation by creating a comparative data set including

¹ For Keystone's constituency voice analysis and methodology, see: <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/analysis/constituency>

² For more information on Keystone's current and past work, see: <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/services/feedbacksystems/examples>

³ For more on iScale's work on innovations for scaling impact see: www.scalingimpact.net

qualitative and quantitative data of constituency perceptions. As such they make a unique contribution to the larger trend toward shared metrics.⁴

Its purpose is to identify areas for improvement and norms of good practice for the participating networks, which represent a relatively young form of social action – transnational social change networks.⁵ Understanding members’ needs and engaging in continuous dialogue with them is a key part of effectively managing these networks.

Transnational social change networks are internationally focused networks with actors spread across multiple countries. They operate in the broad social and environmental fields actively pursuing public goods. They work to collectively organize multiple actors to pursue a common long-term goal that would not be achievable by any one member acting independently.

Yet, they all have different and unique characteristics. Not all aspects of the participating networks are comparable. However, we believe that comparisons -and contrasts- across the different networks generate insights and highlight aspects that absolute data for each network are unable to show by themselves.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The present guide is based on Keystone’s and iScale’s experience in carrying out a feedback survey for 9 transnational social change networks in 2009. This was a pilot project to develop and test a new approach for monitoring, evaluating and learning about networks. It was funded by the networks themselves and a seed grant from the Evaluation Unit of Canada’s International Development Research Centre. A detailed overall report from the pilot is available on Keystone’s and iScale’s websites.⁶

The guide has **two purposes**:

- First, it is aimed at transnational social change networks managers and coordinators. It helps to determine the network’s readiness to participate in a feedback survey by providing an overview of the process and describing the level of effort/resources required from the network.
- Second, it provides a step-by-step guide for an implementing agency or coordinator on how to facilitate a feedback survey process from

⁴ See FSG Social Impact Advisors, Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement and Social Impact, July 2009, available from: http://www.fsg-impact.org/ideas/item/breakthroughs_in_measurement.html. See also Paul Collier’s recorded address at the Dochas New Voices in Development conference, where he calls to NGO’s to create shared metrics and collect user feedback for assessing their effectiveness: <http://www.youtube.com/user/DochasIreland#p/a/u/0/Pafp7csG4dE>

⁵ See Batliwala, S. and L. D. Brown, Eds. (2006). *Transnational Civil Society: An Introduction*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press; Clark, J., Ed. (2003). *Globalizing Civic Engagement: Civil Society and Transnational Action*. Londo Earthscan; Florini, A. (2000). *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*. Tokyo, Japan Center for International Exchange; and Khagram, S. and K. Sikkink, Eds. (2001). *Restructuring World Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁶ <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/resources/reports> and <http://www.scalingimpact.net/>

setting up the group of participating networks to presenting them with their comparative reports.

The guide offers a practical overview of the steps for designing and implementing feedback surveys for transnational social change networks:

1. Setting up a cohort of transnational social change networks
2. Setting up an Advisory Group
3. Designing the questionnaire
4. Administering the survey
5. Producing comparative reports
6. Follow up

Annex 1 is the questionnaire used in the 2009 survey

Annex 2 is a sample comparative feedback survey report

Before we move into examining each step of the process, we would like to draw the reader's attention to some ethical considerations when carrying out feedback surveys as well as to the importance of the survey being coordinated and implemented by an independent agency.

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR FEEDBACK SURVEYS

Feedback surveys are an imposition. That imposition *can be* positive or negative. Our approach to surveys maximizes the positive benefits by building on the inherently developmental potential of surveys. Our practice of collecting and using feedback from people who have relatively little power carefully considers its effects on them and their ongoing power relationships.

Keystone has developed an ethical framework that sets out 10 practices to guide feedback systems:

Inclusive design	We include respondents in all major decisions about designing research, often through an advisory group.
Informed consent	Respondents are asked for their informed consent. They will not suffer any discrimination if they refuse.
Confidentiality	We guarantee the confidentiality of all individual responses.
Power and gender analysis	We design research to consider the views of the least powerful people separately from other groups. We normally expect to disaggregate feedback from women and men.
Appropriate methods and sampling	We use methods appropriate for respondents. Samples will be statistically valid.
Complaints	We establish simple methods for handling complaints. All respondents are informed of their right to complain.
Reporting back	We encourage commissioning agencies to report findings back to respondents in ways that are easy for them to access.

Deliberation	We encourage commissioning agencies to discuss the findings with respondents with a view to taking action.
Publication	We encourage commissioning agencies to publish findings (unless there is an overwhelming reason not to).
Personal attitudes	All stakeholders, including the implementing agency's staff, will demonstrate respect for others, and a commitment to build understanding and dialogue. Individuals will not abuse their positions for private benefit.

All these practices have to be carefully applied to the specific context, requiring time and consideration. The practices and underlying principles may at times conflict with each other, which will require more careful reasoning.

Feedback surveys should **not** be conducted where either:

- Constituents do not want to give feedback, having considered the proposition,
- The costs to constituents in participating in the survey are likely to be more than resulting benefits, or
- Powerful actors are not sincerely committed to strengthening dialogue with constituents.

THE ROLE OF AN INDEPENDENT IMPLEMENTATION ENTITY

In feedback surveys that use a common questionnaire for a group of different organisations (in our case, transnational social change networks), it is crucial that the process is initially facilitated and implemented by an independent entity or coordinator.

There are **3 main reasons** for this:

- The independent party guarantees the anonymity of the responses, ensuring that no individual responses can be attributed to a particular constituent or specific organisations are identified
- The independent party also guarantees the confidentiality of the results of the individual networks. Comparisons between networks are done anonymously and individual networks are not identified when compared to others. The network decides to make the results publicly available.
- It helps maintain an independent and, to the extent possible, unbiased point of view during the design, implementation and analysis phases of the process.

The **role** of the independent implementing entity or coordinator is to:

- Manage the relationships with the networks participating in the survey
- Coordinate the process, overseeing the content of the survey as well as all logistical issues
- Collect constituents' contact details and keep them confidential
- Collect survey responses and keep them confidential

- Analyse the survey results, produce and present the confidential individual networks reports
- Guarantee the anonymity of the data set
- Broker learning relationships between the different participating networks

STEP 1. SETTING UP A COHORT OF TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS

To form a cohort for a comparative feedback survey a **minimum of 6** networks is required. This is so that comparisons between participating networks are made in a way that does not compromise the anonymity of any individual network.

However, the higher the number of participating networks, the greater the value of comparisons and contrasts among them. Higher numbers of participating networks also mean that we can create sub-groups of networks within the cohort for comparison (for example by size, thematic area, type of strategies implemented, regions of the world where they work, etc.)

In our view there is no theoretical limit to the number of networks that can be included in a feedback survey. The limiting factors are those relating to practical implementation, and particularly the capacity of the independent agency that is coordinating the survey.

The **criteria** for selecting participating networks are:

- To be international, involving actors from different countries
- To work in the broad social and environmental justice field, pursuing public good goals
- That the network managers express an explicit commitment to make improvements on basis of the feedback received and to report back and deliberate with the network's constituents.

The **terms of reference** for the survey should be shared and agreed to by the networks' managers. Below is an example of the commitments of both parties in carrying out the feedback survey:

To provide the network with the raw data of its constituents responses to the survey in an Excel format	Contribute "X amount" towards project costs
To guarantee the confidentiality of the network's survey results.	Report the findings back to its constituents and discuss them together, with the aim of strengthening services and relationships.
To administer the survey to the network's constituents, seeking the highest response rate possible	Assign a representative who will be the main contact point for the agency in the process and participate in the Advisory Group
To make the survey available in X languages	Work with the agency to ensure that the views of those being surveyed are represented in the survey design
To protect the anonymity of the survey responses	Provide Keystone with contact details of constituents to be surveyed
To keep the contact details of the network's constituents confidential and to not share them with any third party	Send an introductory email to its constituents explaining the network's participation in the project and notifying them that the agency will contact them with a survey

STEP 2. SETTING UP AN ADVISORY GROUP

As highlighted in the ethical framework above, it is very important that the feedback survey is designed in an inclusive manner.

Such a process increases the sense of ownership for both network managers and constituents and ensures that the questions we ask touch on the priority issues for network constituents.

The Advisory Group should include one representative from each network's secretariat (or equivalent) and one representative from each network's constituency.

This can either be a single group or, depending on the size and/or if there are legitimate concerns that members of an integrated group might not feel empowered to speak freely, you can consider setting up two separate groups.

Ask the secretariat to nominate one person from their team and one person from their membership. If you have reasonable doubts related to the constituents' representative chosen, you may ask the secretariat to allow you to contact members directly. Clearly this does not ensure absolute representation of all voices in the network, however we find that this is a practical way to ensure that both sides are heard and that the questions asked in the survey are relevant for the majority of constituents.

Write a simple document outlining the **terms of reference** for the group(s) and share them with those invited to participate in the survey. The Terms of Reference should include a group statement of purpose of and set of tasks.

Purpose:

- To guide the development of the methodology and ensure that the questionnaire covers all areas of concern

Tasks:

- Review drafts of and provide comment on the survey methodology and questionnaire
- Take part on a series of teleconferences (no more than 3) to discuss the questionnaire and any other issues relative to the design and implementation of the survey
- Be ambassadors for the project and encourage other members of the network that they interact with to take the survey.

STEP 3. DESIGNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Various approaches to designing the common questionnaire can be used:

- You can design a questionnaire from scratch, providing drafts for the Advisory Group(s) to discuss and review. This is a long process and our experience suggests that you should allow 3 months for the process to be completed.
- You can use an existing questionnaire and submit it to the Advisory Group so that they can propose changes. You should be clear from the beginning about the process and agree with the Advisory Group(s) what type of and how many changes will be admitted. This should be a shorter process and 1 month should allow plenty of time for the members of the group to provide their comments.
- Finally, you may choose to go with an existing questionnaire in its entirety. This should be particularly useful in the case that you are running a repeat survey and you want to compare performance over time. In this case, this should be agreed from the beginning with the Advisory Group(s). If substantial objections are expressed by the members of the Group(s), you should consider revising the questionnaire to take their comments into account.

In **Annex 1** of this guide we share the questionnaire that was used for the feedback survey for 9 transnational social change networks in 2009. You can use this as a reference.

The questionnaire looks at **six key areas** of network performance as shown in the table below:

Feedback area	Description
Structure and function of the network	Network model, support or active agent function
Quality of relationships with the network's bodies	Meeting constituents' needs, quality of communications, responsiveness to feedback
Network vibrancy	New relationships established, their value, adequacy of network's size and diversity, extent of participation in the network
Level of synergy within the network	Sharing of common interests and concerns, participation in network's strategy and decision making
Value added for constituents	Network effectiveness, meeting of expectations
Network's impact	Impact on constituents' work, influence in the field

The table below identifies some **key network metrics** that you can use as a reference in designing your questionnaire:

Metric	General Questions
Alignment	<p>Is there a match between member's goals/priorities and that of the network?</p> <p>Do network members share similar concerns across the network?</p>
Communication	<p>How well do the various network parts communicate with each other?</p> <p>How often do network members communicate?</p>
Participation	<p>How active are members?</p> <p>What is the value of participating in the network?</p>
Diversity	<p>How diverse is the network?</p> <p>Is the current level of diversity appropriate for the networks goals?</p>

These are some **tips** for designing a collaborative questionnaire:

- The coordinator should share an initial draft with the members of the group(s) and invite their comments. A period of 2-3 weeks for this is advisable. Up to 3 drafts may be required for completing the common questionnaire, depending on which approach you are using.
- As receiving comments from different sources by email may be very difficult to deal with, the draft review can be done using a collaborative website or wiki. It takes some effort initially to set up the website and to encourage the members of the group(s) to sign up and use it, but it is worth the effort as it facilitates hugely the coordination. Members can either edit the questionnaire directly (this is an option for a more 'tech savvy' crowd) or post their comments on the page where the draft questionnaire is published.
- However, most members of the Advisory Group(s) will not provide their comments in writing and will prefer to do this orally during a meeting. Since here you will be dealing with international networks, it is most unlikely that you will be able to hold a face-to-face meeting. The most efficient way would be to set up a series of teleconferences (from 1 to 3 depending on which approach you are using). It is useful to have two representatives from the coordinating agency on the call. This allows one person to lead the call and the other to take clear notes. Make sure to schedule the teleconferences with enough time in advance (2 months, if possible) and keep in mind that you will probably have to make compromises across different time zones. Two tools that are very useful for scheduling teleconferences with multiple people in different time zones are:
 - [Doodle](#), and
 - [The World Clock](#)
- Keep your questionnaire as short as possible (maximum of 20 questions, in addition to the respondent profile questions). People

tend to find long questionnaires off putting, and the length of the questionnaire affects the response rate.

- Provide the opportunity to participating networks to include a set (no more than 5) of customised questions. This takes a lot of pressure of the process of designing the common questionnaire and provides an extra incentive for networks to participate.

STEP 4. ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

In the 2009 survey pilot, one of the challenging issues that we dealt with in the Advisory Group was defining the constituents that were going to be surveyed. Our **working definition** was:

Organisations and individuals

- that consider themselves to be part of the network; and
- for which email contact details are available.

Respondents can therefore include: members, partners, grantees, donors and members of advisory boards.

Unlike other types of feedback surveys, when it comes to surveying transnational social change networks it is easiest to identify respondents as constituents for which **email** contact details are available. In these networks email is the main means of communication.

While designing the questionnaire, you should coordinate with the networks managers to get the **contact details** of their constituents. This in some cases can be a long process, requiring multiple communication exchanges as not all networks will have their contact databases well organised.

You should ask them to provide you with a **complete** list of their constituents, including the name of the organisation (if applicable), the name of the respondent and their email address, as well as their preferred language (in the case that you are administering the survey in more than one language).

It is also good to ask for more than one contact person per member organisation, if possible. This way you can include more voices in the survey and not only those of the directors or focal points.

Once you have the constituents' contact details, you should keep them in an electronic folder that is marked '**confidential**' and is password protected. The folder should be deleted 2 months after the completion of the survey and the presentation of the comparative reports.

TESTING THE SURVEY

Before the survey is sent to respondents, you should make sure to test it with a small number of respondents.

For this you can ask Advisory Group(s) members to provide you with the names of one or two constituents that would be willing to test the survey.

Send them the survey, ask them to fill it out and then answer the following questions:

- How long did it take you to answer the survey?

- Was the wording of the questions easy to understand? Was there any ambiguity? If yes, which questions need to be formulated differently and how?
- Would you object to or feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions?
- Did you spot any technical issues? (e.g. buttons not working)
- Did you spot any errors?

You should allow one week for respondents to test the survey and answer your questions.

Before launching the survey, make the necessary adjustments as indicated by the test results.

ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey can be sent to constituents as an **online questionnaire**. There is a plethora of online survey tools to choose from. 2 tools that we have used and would recommend are:

- [Zoomerang](#), and
- [Survey Monkey](#)

However, for some respondents in developing countries it might be difficult to fill out an online survey due to an unstable internet connexion. To ensure that these constituents are also able to take part in the survey, it is a good idea to also make the questionnaire available as an interactive pdf form. These forms are sent as email attachments. Respondents can fill them out offline, then hit the 'submit' button and send the data back to you through their email application.

When you set up the survey, you should allow sufficient time for **customising** the questionnaire for each of the networks. There will be some fields that will need customisation such as the name of the network, the name that they use to describe the Secretariat or equivalent, etc. Careful proofreading is required.

The questionnaire should be accompanied by an **introduction** to orient respondents. In the introduction you should inform them of the following:

- Purpose of the survey and how results will be used
- That the survey results will be reported back to them
- That you will guarantee the anonymity of their responses
- The number of questions in the survey and how much time it should take to complete
- An email address where they can send any doubts and complaints regarding the survey.

The survey should remain **open for 3-4 weeks**. Each week you should send a reminder to those that have not yet completed the survey (online survey tools offer this option) asking them to fill it out.

STEP 5. PRODUCING COMPARATIVE REPORTS

Once the survey is closed, the data from all the participating networks are aggregated into a common dataset and analysed.

Individual networks are presented with a report that shows how they were rated by their constituents and how their ratings compare to those of the other networks in the group.

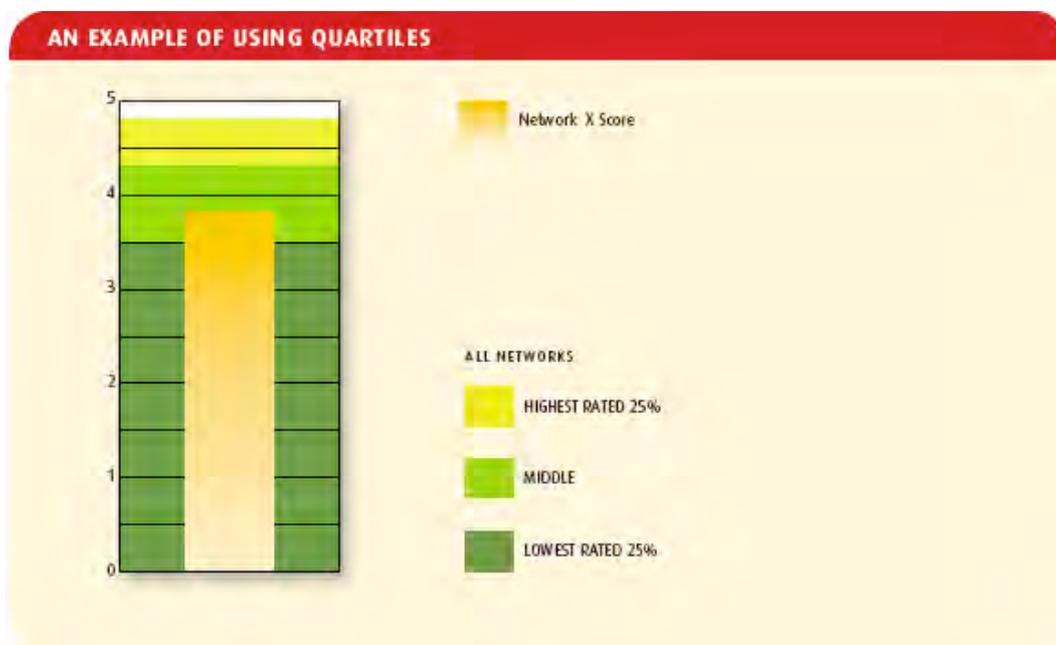
Annex 2 of this guide is a sample of the reports that were presented to the nine networks that took part in the 2009 survey. You can use this as a reference.

CHARTS AND QUARTILES

A variety of charts can be used to present the findings of the survey. Some can be simple column graphs. Sometimes the performance of the whole group of networks can be summarised by using quartiles.

A quartile is a sub-group of 25% (or a quarter) of the whole group of networks.

Quartiles are well suited for comparing this type of perceptual data, which can often be subjective and not precisely accurate. Understanding which quartile a network sits in gives a reasonably accurate basis for comparing performance against other networks.



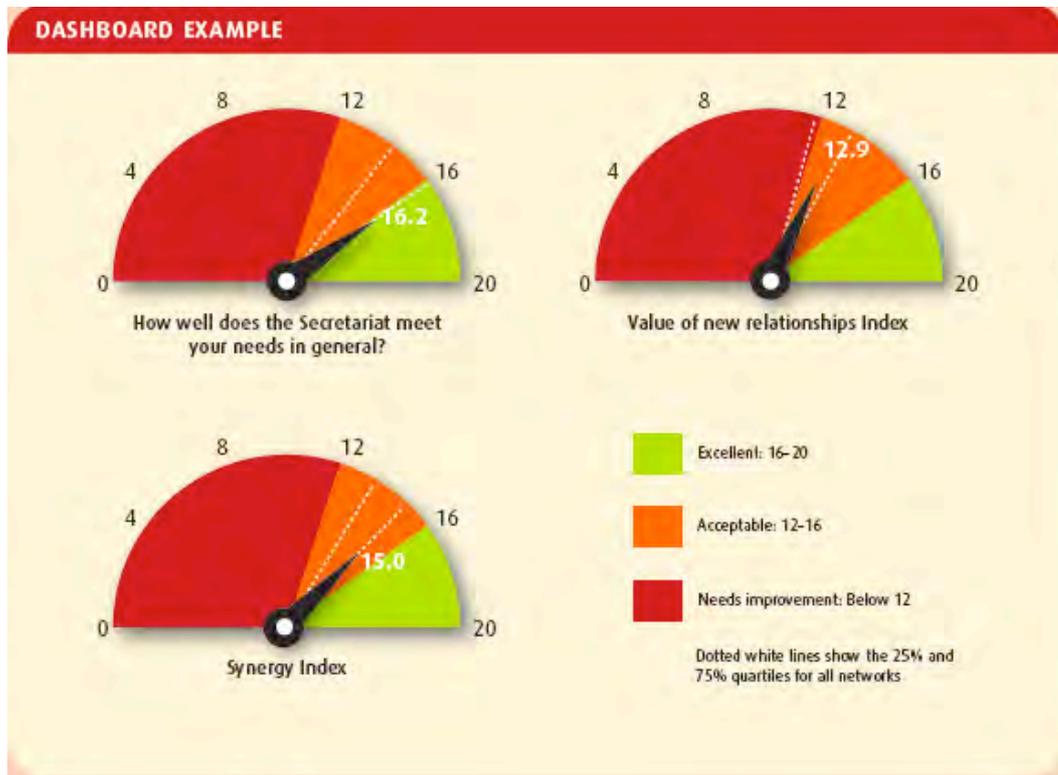
This chart shows the average score given to “Network X” by its constituents in a specific area of performance (the yellow column) against a shaded background that shows the equivalent rating for all networks grouped into quartiles.

In this chart, the top quartile of networks is made up of those that are rated in average between 4.3 and 4.7 out of 5 by their constituents. These are the highest rated networks in the group.

The next 50% of networks are given an average rating between 3.5 and 4.3 out of 5. These are the middle performers across the whole group of networks.

The networks in the bottom quartile are given a maximum score of 3.5 out of 5. These are the lowest performing networks.

So, we can see that Network X, with an average rating of 3.8 out of 5, is placed within the middle performers of the group of networks.



This sort of dashboard serves well for presenting key findings. It converts responses into ratings of 0 to 20.

The coloured background indicates areas of strong and weak performance. Green equals to excellent, orange to acceptable and red shows that improvements need to be made. The dotted white lines show the ratings for the cohort of networks. The left line indicates the top of the 25% lowest performing networks. The space between the two white lines is where the 50% middle rated networks sit. And the right line shows the beginning of the group of the 25% highest rated networks. The black needle shows where the network in question sits in relation to the spectrum. So we can see that Network X in the first area is among the highest performing networks, while for the other two it sits among the middle rated ones.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

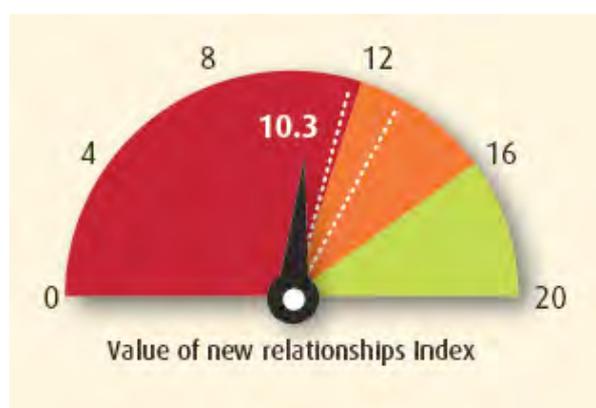
In your analysis, you can create certain **indexes** that present a summary view on key network aspects.

For example, in the 2009 feedback survey we summarised the results from the below question matrix:

7 As a result of your participation in [Network], have you established relationships with any of the following and, if so, how valuable were/are these relationships in general?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know - N/A
	No relationship established	Not valuable at all	Rarely valuable	At least half of them were valuable	Most of them were valuable	All of them were very valuable	
Civil Society Organisations (NGO, women's association, farmers' organisation, CBO, other grassroots organisations, etc.)	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
With governance board(s), council(s) or committee(s)	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Local or sub-national authorities	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
National Governments	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Regional and International intergovernmental organisations	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Academic institutions/ Research institutes/ think-tanks/Other research teams	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Private sector companies/businesses	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Independent consultants	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

Into a single rating forming the "Value of new relationships Index":



Some single questions, expressing constituents' general satisfaction in an area can also be used to express key findings. Here is an example:



Since the main purpose of this type of feedback surveys is to provide network managers with data that they can use to improve their work, it is important that the report includes a series of follow up points and recommendations. It is good that in addition to some general recommendations, other recommendations are included under the different headings of the survey.

Some kinds of **recommendations** that may come out from a feedback survey like this are⁷:

- Report the survey's findings back to respondents, along with initial responses to the feedback received. This can be done via their website, newsletter and/or at the next general meeting.
- Explore constituents' expectations regarding their role in supporting their actions. Where is the overlap between the secretariat's view of the network's role and members' expectations? How can this be strengthened – for instance through targeted communication.
- Disseminate further among their constituents the role of other bodies than the Secretariat (e.g., board).
- Consider holding more events, especially at the regional level, or other types of opportunities for constituents to meet each other. Events may be held at a distance, on-line, or in-person.
- Review decision-making mechanisms to make sure that those constituents that wish to be involved are involved.
- Map the needs of their different constituencies and identify strategies to address them.
- Examine strategies for raising their own profile in the field, etc.

⁷ For a more comprehensive list see the cohort report from the 2009 feedback survey for transnational social change networks: [Feedback Survey for Transnational Social Change Networks](#).

STEP 6. FOLLOW UP

REPORT BACK TO CONSTITUENTS

The purpose of the feedback surveys can only be fulfilled if the networks report back the survey results to their constituency as:

- It demonstrates the network managers' commitment to effectively listen to the feedback provided by constituents and make improvements in their work.
- It creates the space for dialogue and learning between the different constituents of the network.
- It empowers constituents to hold managers accountable for effectively implementing improvements.

It is the role of the implementing agency that coordinates the survey to keep reminding the network managers of their commitment to report the results back to their constituents and to advise them on how to carry out these report backs.

Here is an example of how Aflatoun, one of the participating networks in the 2009 survey reported back to their membership:

http://aflatoun.org/downloads/aflatoun_2009_secretariat_performance.pdf

Other ways of reporting back include discussing the results in face-to-face or virtual meetings with constituents.

MONITOR PROGRESS

The implementing agency can encourage corrections and improvements following the survey findings. This can be done by repeating the survey in 1 or 2 years' time. A public commitment to repeating the survey creates strong incentives for improvement and can increase credibility that the networks are committed to improving.

But networks can also consider other ways for collecting feedback, triggered by specific events or interactions with constituents that would be useful for monitoring performance. For instance, they can ask constituents a few short questions at the end of a meeting or through their newsletter. This sort of data collection - preferably through a carefully designed mechanism ensuring independence and anonymity - can provide networks with actionable, real time data.

Keystone has developed an application for collecting this sort of data anonymously: [The Feedback App](#). This is a **free online tool** that allows organisations to create their own surveys choosing from a list of predetermined questions and with the possibility to add a few customised questions. They can then send the link to the survey by email to their constituents whose responses are collected anonymously. Organisations can then access their confidential report where they can see how they are rated by their constituents and how their ratings compare to those of other organisations using the Feedback App. They can choose to be compared to a particular type of organisation, "networks" being one of the available options.

EVALUATING THE FEEDBACK

After the completion of the feedback survey, it is consistent with the spirit of the exercise to ask the participating networks to evaluate their experience with taking part in the survey. The purpose is to get their feedback on their satisfaction with the process, the uses that they give to the survey findings and any related improvements taking place.

You can do this through a simple online questionnaire sent to the members of the Advisory Group(s) shortly after the networks have been presented with their individual confidential reports.

Below is the questionnaire that Keystone and iScale used to get feedback from the networks that took part in the 2009 survey:

1 Which network are you part of?	[Provide list]
2 What is your position in the network?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board member or equivalent • Executive Director or equivalent • Senior manager or equivalent • Monitoring and Evaluation manager or equivalent • Other, please specify:
3 Were you the focal point in your network for this survey?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
4 How likely is it that you will take actions as a result of findings from the survey?	1- Not at all likely 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10- Very likely
5 Compared to other evaluative activities that you have undertaken how useful/actionable was Keystone/iScale's contribution to your network?	1- Least useful 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10-Most useful
6 What has been the most important benefit or insight that you got from the survey?	[Open]
7 Overall, how useful did you find the Keystone/iScale feedback survey for transnational social change networks?	1- Not at all useful 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10- Very useful
8 How likely is your network to take part in this survey again in the future?	1- Not at all likely 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10- Very likely
9 How strongly would you recommend that other transnational social change networks take part in future versions of this survey?	1- Would not recommend 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10-Very strongly recommend

10 What could Keystone/iScale have done better?	[Open]
11 Any other comments?	[Open]

The results of this feedback can be viewed here:

<http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/services/feedbacksystems/examples#Other>

Since many of the changes implemented by the networks in response to the feedback received will require some time to be realised, it would be good to follow up with the networks' coordinators individually **six months** after the completion of the process. This would preferably be done in a semi-structured interview with them.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE UPDATES REGARDING FEEDBACK SURVEYS FOR TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE NETWORKS PLEASE REGISTER WITH:

- networkssurvey@keystoneaccountability.org, or
- [The Impacts Community of Practice wiki](#)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON FEEDBACK SURVEYS SEE:

- <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/services/feedbacksystems>

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Annex 1 - Questionnaire used in the 2009 Feedback Survey for Transnational Social Change Networks

Welcome to the feedback survey for [Network]! This survey is part of a project that provides networks with comparative data on how they are perceived by their constituents (e.g. members, partners, grantees, donors and advisory board).

You have been sent this survey because either you, as an individual, or the organisation you work for is associated with [Network].

[Network] would like to hear from you on how they can improve their effectiveness and maximise the value that you get from participating in the network.

If you are associated to [Network] as an **individual**, please respond to the questions keeping in mind the relationship that **you** have with [Network].

If it is your **organisation** that is associated to [Network], please respond to the questions keeping in mind the relationship that **the organisation** has with [Network].

The survey is conducted by Keystone (www.keystoneaccountability.org) and iScale (www.scalingimpact.net) acting as independent agents.

All responses will be kept anonymous and completely confidential.

**If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact:
natalia@keystoneaccountability.org**

You can save your answers at any time using Acrobat Reader

About you: for organisations

If not representing an organisation, skip to Question D

A Which organisation do you represent? Remember that all responses will be kept anonymous. The name of the organisation will not be reported in the survey results.

B Which of the following best describes your organisation?

<input type="radio"/>	A Civil Society Organisation (Non governmental organisation, women's association, farmers' organisation, community based)
<input type="radio"/>	A funder/grant-making organisation
<input type="radio"/>	A local or subnational governmental authority
<input type="radio"/>	A national government
<input type="radio"/>	A regional or international intergovernmental organisation
<input type="radio"/>	An academic institution/research institute/think-tank/other research team
<input type="radio"/>	A private sector company/business
<input type="radio"/>	A research team of individuals from various institutions
<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)

C What is your position in your organisation?

<input type="radio"/>	Executive Director
<input type="radio"/>	Manager/Team leader
<input type="radio"/>	Officer/Researcher
<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)

Skip to Question F

About you: for individuals

D Which of the following best describes the type of organisation you work/volunteer for?

- A Civil Society Organisation (Non governmental organisation, women's association, farmers' organisation, community based)
- A funder/grant-making organisation
- A local or subnational governmental authority
- A national government
- A regional or international intergovernmental organisation
- An academic institution/research institute/think-tank/other research team
- A private sector company/business
- A research team of individuals from various institutions
- Other (please specify)

E What is your position?

- Executive Director
- Manager/Team leader
- Officer/Researcher
- Other (please specify)
- I am self-employed

About you: for individuals

F What type of relationship do you/does your organisation have with [Network]? Please choose **up to 2 options** that most closely describe the relationship. **An answer to this question is mandatory.**

- I have/my organisation has signed up to be part of [Network]
- I am/ my organisation is implementing a project/programme/initiative in partnership with [Network]
- I/my organisation receive(s) funding from [Network]
- I/my organisation provide(s) funding to [Network]
- Other (please specify)

G How long have you/has your organization been part of [Network]?

- Under 1 year
- Over 1 and under 3 years
- Over 3 and under 5 years
- Over 5 years

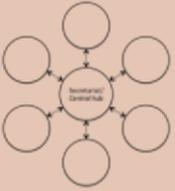
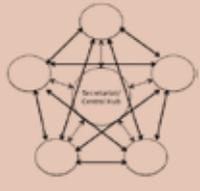
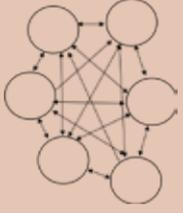
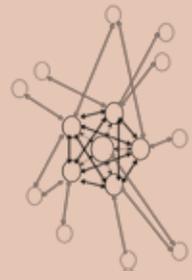
H In which country are you/is your organisation or its headquarters (if in more than one country) based?

The structure of [Network]

NOTE: By 'constituent' in this survey we mean all those directly affected by the work of [Network] or that play a direct role in [Network].

NOTE: Many questions in this survey will ask you to provide a rating on a scale of 1-low to 5-high. Click on the rating that is closest to your appreciation. If you are not sure, have no opinion on the subject, or the issue doesn't apply to your situation, please choose the 'Don't know - N/A' (Not applicable) option.

1 In your opinion, which of the following models best describes [Network]?

1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●
<p>A centralised network - Hub & spoke model</p> 	<p>A network with a clear centre but with interactions that may or may not go through it</p> 	<p>A decentralised network - Multi-hub model:</p> 	<p>A network with a dense inner core and looser ties with peripheral members - Core-periphery model:</p> 	<p>None of the above. (Please explain)</p>

2 In your opinion, [Network]'s primary role:

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Not at all				Absolutely	Dont know N/A
Currently is to support its constituents to perform certain activities	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Should be to support its constituents to perform certain activities	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Currently is to be an active agent, undertaking activities on behalf of the constituents (for example as an active Secretariat or other central hub)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Should be to be an active agent, undertaking activities on behalf of the constituents (for example as an active Secretariat or other central hub)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

Your relationship with the Secretariat and other bodies

3 How well does [Network]'s Secretariat meet your organisation's/your needs?

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Not at all				Very well	Dont know N/A
In general	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Timely information on network events	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Timely information on the network's results	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Quick response to queries	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Administrative follow up	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Provision of high quality, relevant services	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Provision of high quality, relevant coordination	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Enabling transparent and efficient flow of information	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Facilitating contacts between constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Facilitating contacts with key allies or policy makers	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Other (Please specify)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

Your relationship with the Secretariat and other bodies

- 4 How would you rate the quality (i.e. timeliness, openness, relevance, accuracy) of the communications that you have with the different bodies of [Network]?

	1	2	3	4	5	Dont know N/A
	Very low				Very high	
With the Secretariat	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
With governance board(s), council(s) or committee(s)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
With task/theme related workgoups or committees	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

- 5 Do [Network]'s bodies make improvements in what they do in response to feedback from you/your peers?

	1	2	3	4	5	Dont know N/A
	Not at all				Always	
Secretariat	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Governance board(s), council(s) or committee(s)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Task/theme related workgoups or committees	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

- 6 Are there any comments, suggestions that you would like to make regarding the quality of relationships with [Network]'s bodies? You can also use this space to explain any of the choices that you made in this section.

Your participation in [Network]

7 As a result of your participation in [Network], have you established relationships with any of the following and, if so, how valuable were/are these relationships in general?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know - N/A
	No relationship established	Not valuable at all	Rarely valuable	At least half of them were valuable	Most of them were valuable	All of them were very valuable	
Civil Society Organisations (NGO, women's association, farmers' organisation, CBO, other grassroots organisations, etc.)	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
With governance board(s), council(s) or committee(s)	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Local or sub-national authorities	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
National Governments	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Regional and international intergovernmental organisations	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Academic institutions/ Research institutes/ think-tanks/Other research teams	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Private sector companies/businesses	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Independent consultants	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Other (please specify)	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

Your participation in [Network]

8 How were these relationships usually initiated?

	We were introduced by [Network] Secretariat	We met at an event organised by [Network]	We met through the online platform/ list-serv of [Network]	We were introduced by another constituent of [Network]	We knew each other before I /my organisation joined [Net]	We identified prospective partners within [Net] and approached them directly	No relationship established- Don't know - N/A
With Civil Society Organisations (NGO, women's association, farmers' organisation, CBO, other grassroots organisations, etc.)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With funder/grant-making organisations	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With local or subnational governmental authorities	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With national governments	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With regional and international intergovernmental organisations	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With academic institutions/ Research institutes/think-tanks/ Other research teams	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With private sector companies/businesses	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
With independent consultants	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●
Other (please specify)	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	6 ●	●

Your participation in [Network]

- 9 Are the current diversity and the size of the membership of [Network] adequate for meeting the purpose and strategies of the network?

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Not at all				Absolutely	Dont know N/A
Diversity	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Size	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

- 10 How would you describe yourself as a participant in [Network]?

1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Peripheral – Observer				Very active – Initiate and lead discussions, collaborations, and/or other activities	Don't know N/A

- 11 Are there any comments, suggestions that you would like to make regarding your participation in [Network]? You can also use this space to explain any of the choices that you made in this section.

Level of synergy in the Network

12 To what extent do you/does your organisation:

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Not at all				Very much	Don't know N/A
Share common interests with the network?	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Participate in the strategy of the network?	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Have similar issues and concerns with other participants in the network ?	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

13 How do you feel that key decisions affecting constituents are made in [Network]?

1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
All the key decisions affecting constituents are made by the [Network]'s Secretariat				All the key decisions affecting constituents are constituent driven	Don't know N/A

14 Are there any comments, suggestions that you would like to make regarding the level of synergy in [Network]? You can also use this space to explain any of the choices that you made in this section.

Value in participating in [Network]

15 How effective is [Network] in the following?

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Not effective at all				Extremely effective	Don't know N/A
Facilitating networking/ brokering partnerships between constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Coordinating advocacy actions	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Creating new knowledge	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Facilitating knowledge sharing between constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Providing technical assistance/ capacity building to constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Providing financial support to constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Supporting its constituents in furthering their goals	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Promoting the work of the constituents	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Enhancing the constituents' capacity to mobilise resources	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

16 To what extent has your or your organisation's participation in [Network] met your or your organisation's expectations?

1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Not at all				Absolutely	Don't know N/A

17 Are there any comments, suggestions that you would like to make regarding the value you/your organisation find(s) in participating in [Network]? You can also use this space to explain any of the choices that you made in this section.

Impact of the Network

18 How much has participation in [Network] impacted on your/your organisation's work?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
	Negative impact	No positive or negative impact at all				Massive positive impact	Don't know N/A
In general	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On your capacity	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On your strategies	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On the way you work/ your practices	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On the visibility of your work	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On the reach of your work	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On the sources of knowledge that you have available for your work	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On your ideas and the way you communicate them	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
On your values and the way you apply them in your work	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Other (please explain):	0 ●	1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●

Impact of the Network

19 Would you describe [Network] as a major influencer in its area of work?

1 ●	2 ●	3 ●	4 ●	5 ●	●
Not at all				Absolutely	Don't know N/A

20 Are there any comments, suggestions that you would like to make regarding [Network]'s impact in your field of work? You can also use this space to explain any of the choices that you made in this section.

Submit the form

If you are satisfied with your answers, please submit this form by pressing the button on the right. Please note that you need to be connected to the internet to send the form.

SUBMIT

If you for any reason want to reset ALL the questions and start again, press this button. **WARNING:** all answers, including text, will not be deleted from the survey fields.

RESET



Feedback Survey for Transnational Social Change Networks

COMPARATIVE SURVEY REPORT:

A B C D

This is an anonymous report compiled from the actual findings of the iScale-Keystone survey of nine transnational social change networks in 2009-10

Introduction

This report presents what 77 constituents of the hypothetical “ABCD” Network say about the performance of the network and the value that they get from participating in it. The results are anonymised from actual findings and give a true representation of the results of each of the 9 transnational social change networks that participated in a comparative survey of all their constituents. The same survey instrument was simultaneously administered all over the world.

This survey is not an evaluation. Rather it holds up a mirror to show each network how their constituents see their performance. This anonymous example report provides “ABCD” with information that it can use to deliberate with its constituents in order to identify specific opportunities for improvement. Each participating network received a confidential report just like this one. Keystone will follow up with each network in 6 months time to catalogue what improvements and other changes the networks report stemming from their constituency deliberations on the findings. The process provides two ways to help interpret the data:

A comparative analysis, showing how ABCD performs relative to the other networks in the group. This makes it easier to identify areas of relatively strong and weak performance, and pinpoint potential areas for improvement.

ABCD may use the data to identify some priority areas where it wants to see improvement over the next 12 to 18 months and measure progress by repeating the survey in the future.

Constituents’ responses are grouped into six separate sections as shown in the table below:

A network’s constituents are defined as all the organisations and individuals that consider themselves to be part of the network.

Section	Feedback areas
Structure and function of the network	Network model, support or active agent function
Quality of relationships with the network’s bodies	Meeting constituents’ needs, quality of communications, responsiveness to feedback
Network vibrancy	New relationships established, their value, adequacy of network’s size and diversity, extent of participation in the network
Level of synergy within the network	Sharing of common interests and concerns, participation in network’s strategy and decision making
Value added for constituents	Network effectiveness, meeting of expectations
Network’s impact	Impact on constituents’ work, influence in the field

Constituents’ perceptions should be interpreted in light of each network’s unique strategy and priorities.

- The survey covers many areas in which constituents’ perceptions may be very important to a network.
- Low ratings in an area that is not central to a network’s strategy may not be a concern for a network.

At the end of this report we have included a series of conclusions and points for follow up.

Annex 1 includes the responses given to a set of customised questions where no comparison is made with the other networks in the group.

Annex 2 includes all the responses given to the open ended questions of the survey. These have been edited to protect the anonymity of respondents.

Annex 3 is the questionnaire that was used for the survey.

Introduction

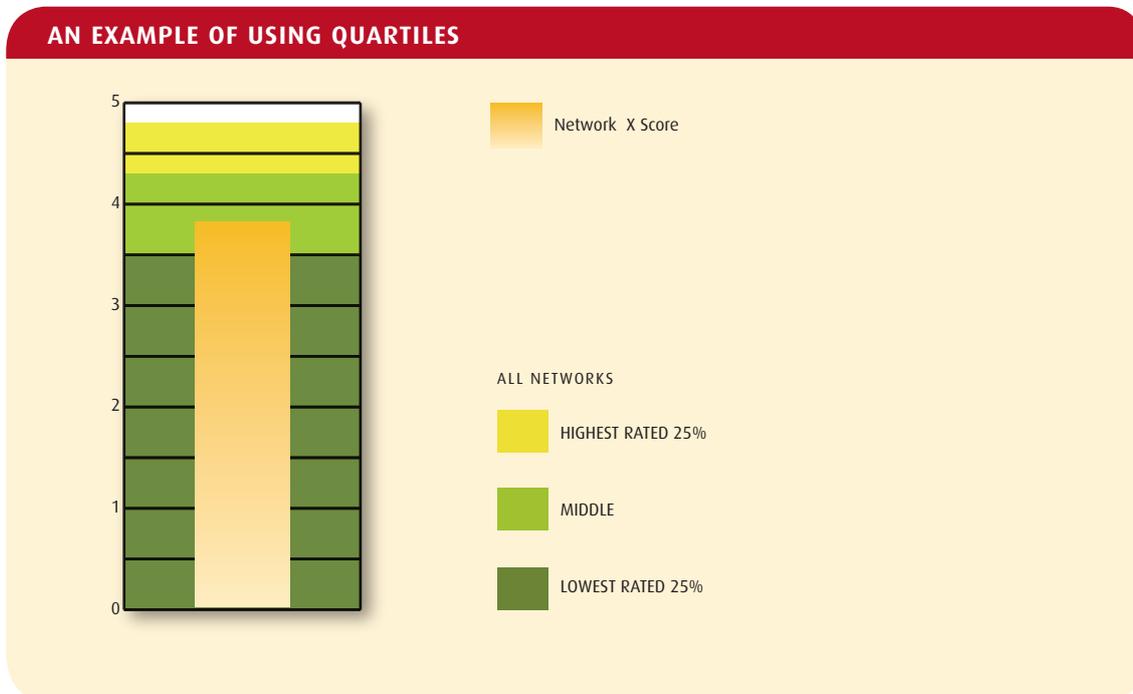
CHARTS AND QUARTILES

We use a variety of charts to present the findings of the survey. Some are simple column graphs. Sometimes we summarise the performance of the whole group of networks by using quartiles.

A quartile is a sub-group of 25% (or a quarter) of the whole group of networks.

In these charts, a shaded background shows the performance of all networks using quartiles. The top quartile shows the performance of the highest-rated 25% of networks. It is shaded yellow. The lowest-rated 25% of networks fall in the bottom quartile, which is shaded dark green. The middle-performing group included two quartiles, or 50% of the whole group. It is shaded light green. When you compare ABCD's score to the shaded area, you are able to see whether you are among the top 25% of performers, the middle 50% of performers, or the lowest 25% of performers of the whole group.

Quartiles are well suited for comparing this type of perceptual data, which can often be subjective and not precisely accurate. Understanding which quartile you sit in gives a reasonably accurate basis for comparing performance against other networks.



This chart shows the average score given to “Network X” by its constituents in a specific area of performance (the yellow column) against a shaded background that shows the equivalent rating for all networks grouped into quartiles.

In this chart, the top quartile of networks is made up of those that are rated in average between 4.3 and 4.7 out of 5 by their constituents. These are the highest rated networks in the group.

The next 50% of networks are given an average rating between 3.5 and 4.3 out of 5. These are the middle performers across the whole group of networks.

The networks in the bottom quartile are given a maximum score of 3.5 out of 5. These are the lowest performing networks.

So, we can see that Network X, with an average rating of 3.8 out of 5, is placed within the middle performers of the group of 9 networks.

Introduction

METHODOLOGY

In this survey, data were collected through an anonymous questionnaire independently administered by Keystone in October 2009.¹

Each participating network was asked to supply the names and contact details of all their current constituents, defined as:

Organisations and individuals

- that consider themselves to be part of the network; and
- for which email contact details are available.

Respondents included: members, partners, grantees, donors and members of advisory boards.

The survey was conducted using an online tool. For respondents with a limited access to internet, the questionnaire was made available in an interactive pdf format that could be filled in offline and sent as an email attachment.

The survey questionnaire was designed in collaboration with an Advisory Group formed by one representative of each network's secretariat (or equivalent) and one representative of each network's constituency. It was also reviewed by a group of network evaluation experts.

Network	N° of invites	N° of invites delivered	N° of partial responses	N° of complete responses	Response rate
ABCD	XXX	XXX	14	63	XX%
All Networks	3748	3726	XXX	XXX	24%

The ABCD questionnaire was administered in 3 languages - English, French and Spanish - and it was received by XXX of its constituents. Of these, 77 returned either a completed or partially completed questionnaire, representing a response rate of XX%. About 62% of the responses were received in English, 25% in Spanish and 13% in French.

The total number of responses for all 9 participating networks was 885 and the total response rate was 24%.

Answers to open ended questions were coded and quantified when relevant.

Costs for the survey were met partly by the participating networks and partly by the International Development Research Centre and the Excelsior Fund.

¹ The design and execution of this feedback survey follows Keystone's ethical framework for conducting feedback exercises, available here: <http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/sites/default/files/Keystone%20ethical%20framework%20Aug09%20web.pdf>

PARTICIPATING NETWORKS

Nine transnational social change networks participated in this comparative survey. They are all international, involving actors from different countries; pursue goals within the broad social and environmental justice field; and they share the premise that by adopting a networked structure they will generate greater benefits for their field of work and their constituents. Yet, they all have different and unique characteristics. Not all aspects of the participating networks are comparable amongst them. However, we believe that comparisons across the different networks generate insights and highlight aspects that absolute data for each network are unable to show by themselves.

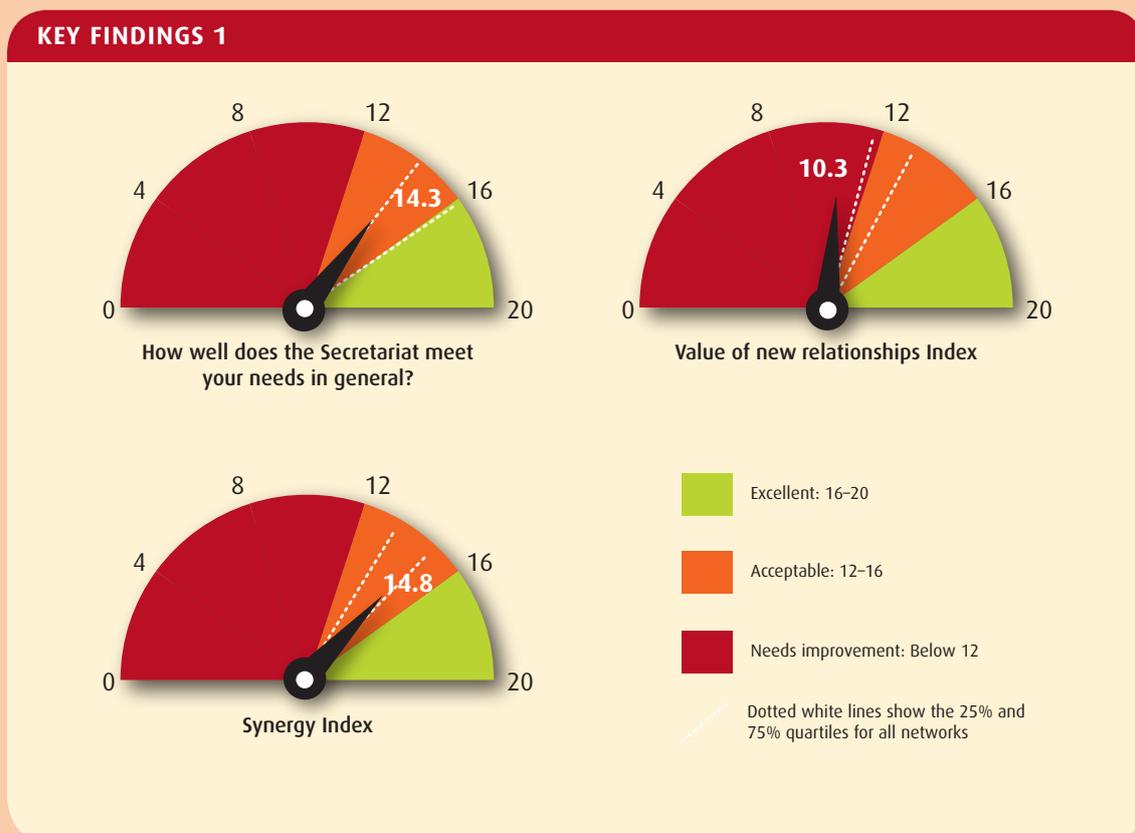
The following table summarises the characteristics of the networks that took part in this survey.² The 'size' column refers to the number of organisations and individuals³ that consider themselves to be part of the network.

Name	Thematic focus	Area of work	Size	Sectors	Countries
Aflatoun	Children's rights, financial education	Programme replication, Technical assistance/ Capacity building, knowledge sharing, advocacy	92	CSOs, Government	22
CIVICUS	Civil society strengthening, human rights	Knowledge sharing, advocacy, research	450	CSOs, Private grantmaking organisations, Individuals	110
Countdown 2010	Environment	Advocacy, knowledge sharing	861	CSOs, Government, Corporate, Academia	61
Gender at Work	Gender	Capacity building, knowledge sharing	27	CSOs, International Organisations, Individuals	3
Health Care Without Harm	Health, Environment	Advocacy, knowledge sharing, research, capacity building	1050	CSOs, International Organisations, Hospitals and health care systems, Medical professionals, Government, Academia	52
International Land Coalition	People-centred development/ poverty alleviation, Human rights	Policy dialogue and advocacy, knowledge management and capacity building	84	CSOs, Inter-governmental organisations, research institutes	36
Red Mercosur	Development	Research, knowledge sharing	12	Academia	4
Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Research Network	Development/ poverty alleviation, gender, health, education	Research, capacity building, grantmaking, advocacy	105	Academia, Government	40
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)	Energy & Environment	Advocacy, knowledge sharing, grantmaking	309	CSOs, Corporate, Government, Academia	49

² Information for this table was contributed by the participating networks in June 2009

³ Only when associated to the network in their individual (not institutional) capacity.

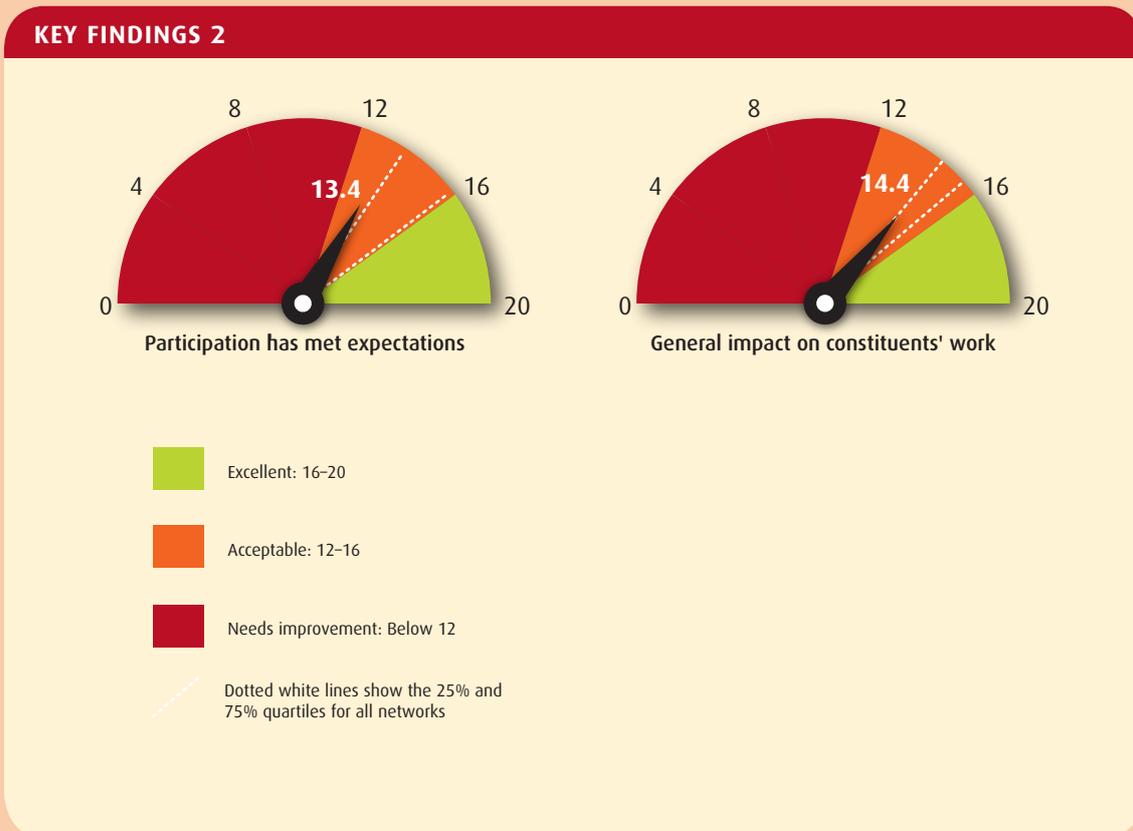
Key findings



This *dashboard* shows constituents' satisfaction ratings for five key areas of network performance. Each one converts responses to a number of questions into a single rating of 0 to 20.

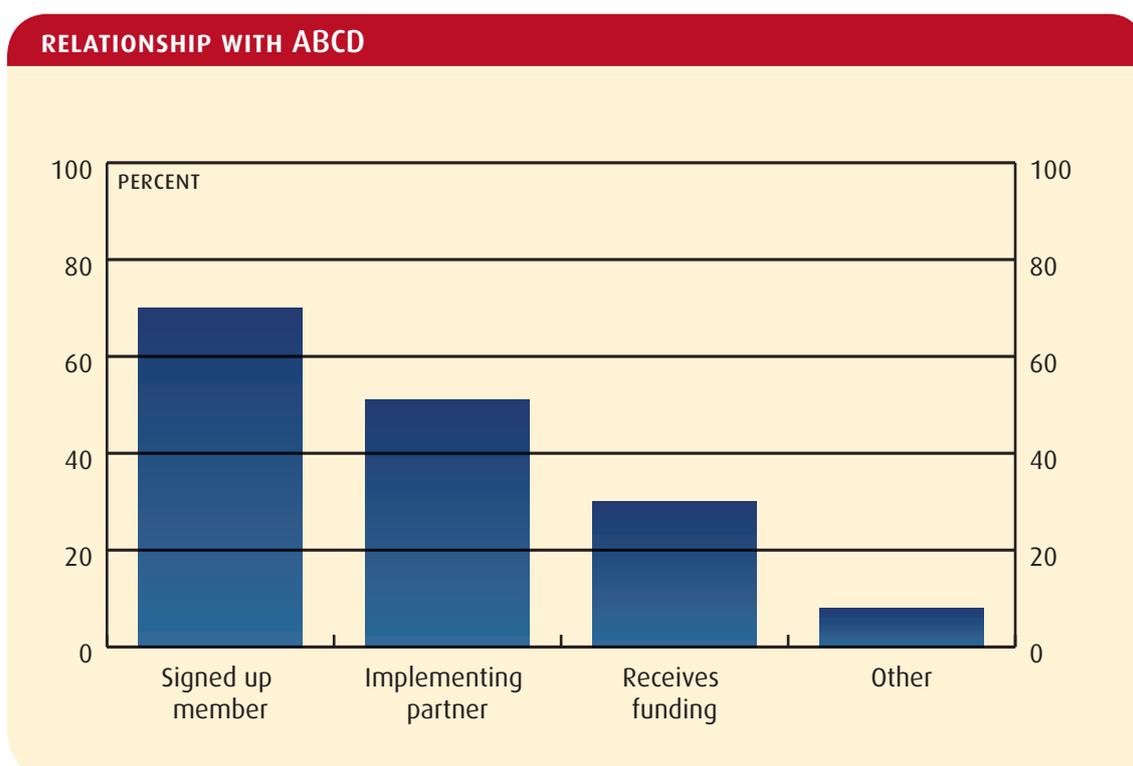
- On average, respondents give ABCD a rating of 14 out of 20 for how well the Secretariat meets their needs in general. This places ABCD at the highest end of the bottom 25% of networks in the group. *"The Secretariat is quite close to the partners and that is a great thing, but the relationship with the regional nodes needs streamlining and especially how members get to participate effectively"*.
- The overall value of relationships established as a result of participating in ABCD is rated 10 out of 20. This places ABCD among the lowest performing networks. *"There is a need to further define strategies in relation to networking and linking to various institutions. It should be noted that networking does not necessarily [mean] expanding the membership"*.
- The level of synergy (sharing of common interests, similar concerns and participating in the network's strategy) within the ABCD network is rated 14 out of 20. This places ABCD in the middle performing group of networks. *"Decisions come through the board where constituents are part of the decision making process"*.

Key findings



- Respondents give a rating of 13 out of 20 on the extent to which their participation in the ABCD network has met their expectations. This places ABCD in the penultimate position in the group of the nine networks.
 - “Participation in ABCD has deepened our interest and involvement in [theme] related issues”.
 - “[..] I think ABCD should clearly state how NGOs can benefit from the network”.
- In terms of general impact on constituents’ work, respondents give ABCD a score of 14 out of 20, placing it seventh of the nine networks in the group. “Main impact is giving visibility to the [issue], and providing greater ‘legitimacy’ to local efforts, even if actual forms of direct support are limited”.
- In summary, ABCD’s constituents rate the value they get from ABCD as low compared to other networks, in four at of five major areas of satisfaction. ABCD is in most occasions rated by its members as falling in the bottom 25% of networks. This suggests that there is significant scope for ABCD to improve the value that members gain from their involvement in the network.

Respondents' profile



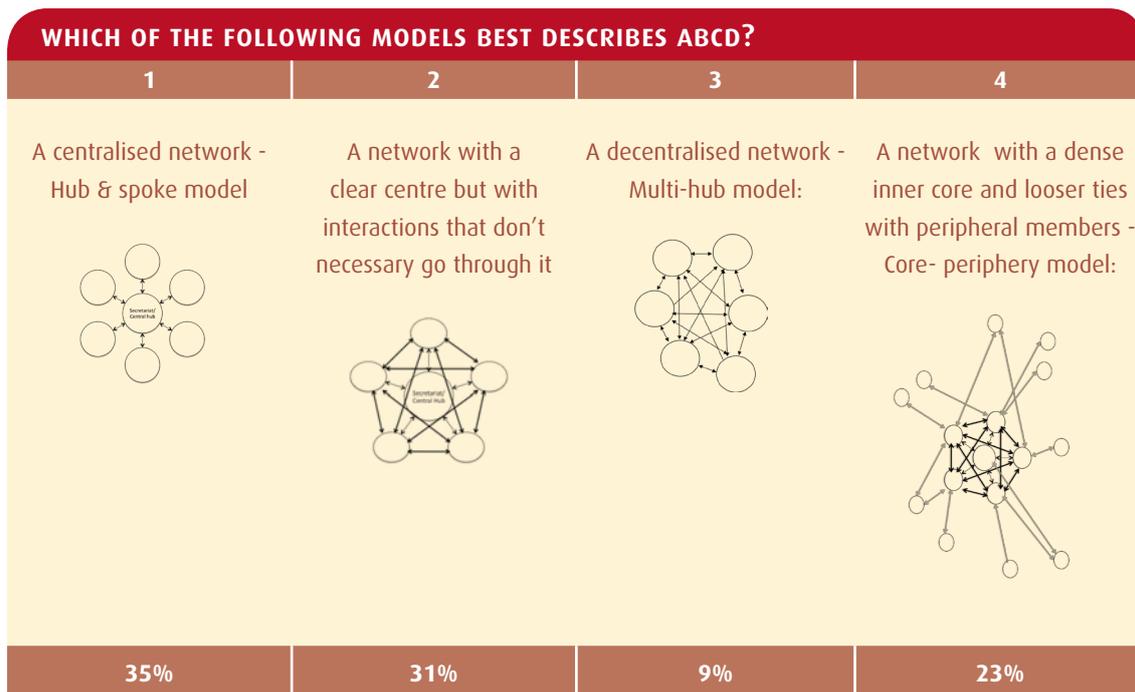
- We asked respondents 5 questions on their profile (type of organisation, position in the organisation, type and length of relationship with ABCD and country of work).
- About three-quarters (76%) of respondents are in the civil society organisation category. Thirteen percent of respondents are at academic institutions/ research teams or think tanks. There are also 4% in the regional or international organisation category and 4% that are funders, grantmakers or foundations.
- More than half of respondents (54%) hold the position of Executive Director or similar in their organisation; about 23% are Managers or Team leaders and 23% are Officers or Researchers.
- As shown above, the majority of respondents (70%) are ABCD members; half (51%) are currently implementing or have in the past implemented a project/initiative with ABCD; and, about a third (30%) receives funding from ABCD. Another 8% is made up of organisations that provide funding to ABCD, have received training from ABCD or has had some other type of collaboration with the network.
- Almost half (46%) have been part of ABCD for three years or less, about 21% from 3 to 5 years and 33% for more than 5 years.
- The largest concentrations of respondents were in Africa (28%), Latin America and the Caribbean (22%), Europe (19%), South-Eastern Asia (15%) and South-Central Asia (12%)⁴.

⁴ Countries were grouped following the UN macro regions categorisation: <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/maplib/worldregions.htm>

Section 1

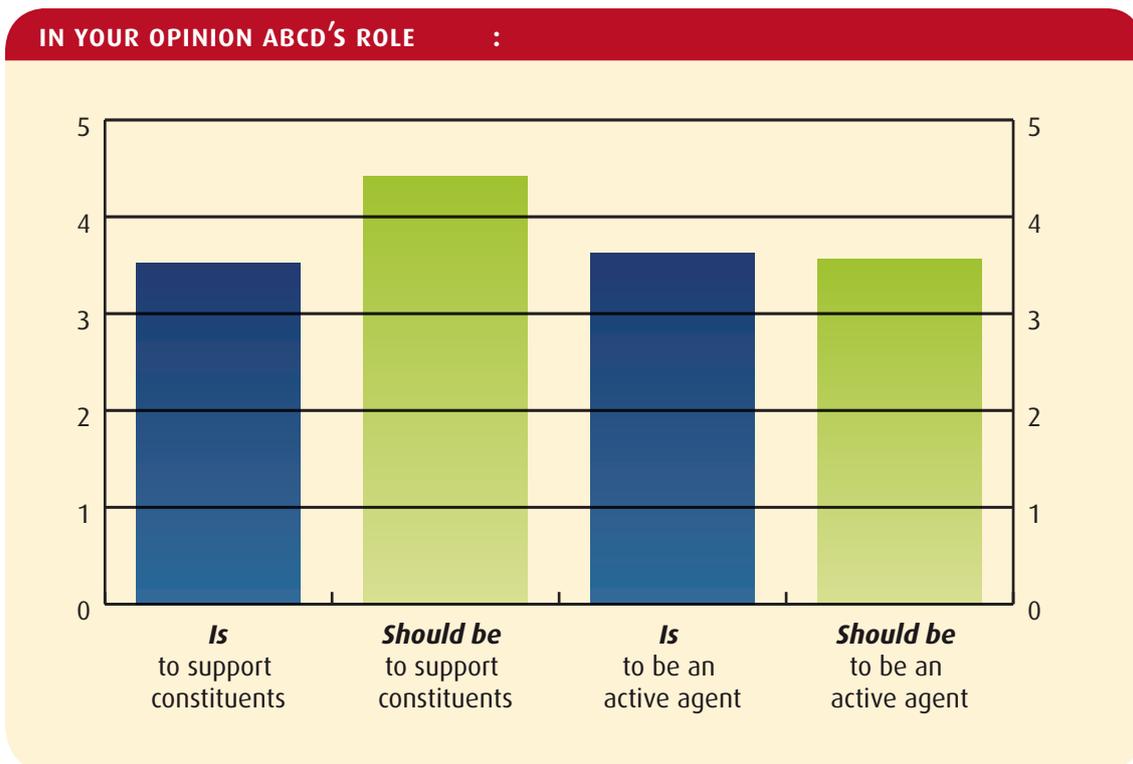
Structure and function of the ABCD network

Structure and function of the ABCD network



- Respondents reported a wide variety of perceptions about the type of network that ABCD is. This was a common finding for most of the networks in the group, independently of their size. It could reflect that respondents do not think about the structure of the networks in these terms, or it could be a genuine diversity of views.
- 66% of respondents see ABCD as a network that has a single well defined centre (i.e. as 'hub & spoke' model or 'clear centre').

Structure and function of the ABCD network

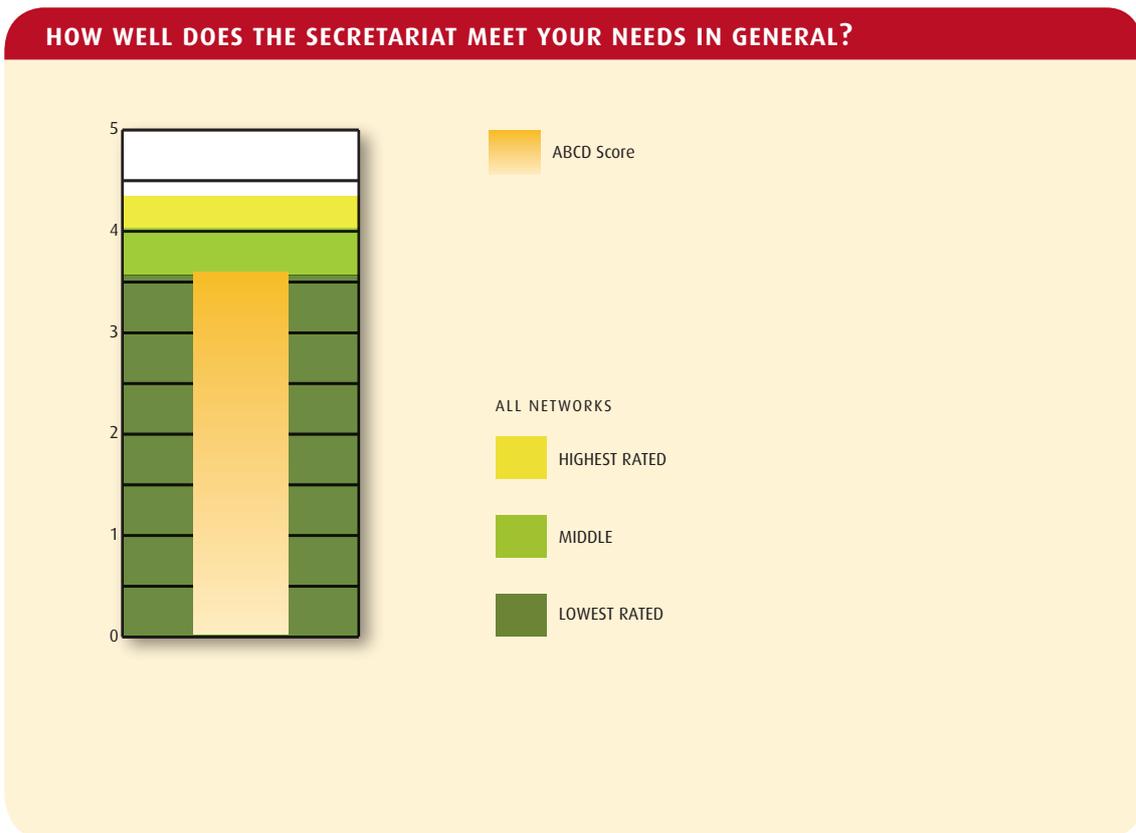


- On average, respondents rated their perception of how much ABCD's role is to support its constituents in performing certain activities at 3.5 out of 5. However, 83% of respondents feel that ABCD's role should be to support its constituents in performing activities (average rating of 4.4 out of 5).
- The rating given on whether its current role is to be an active agent undertaking activities on behalf of its members was 3.6 out of 5. Fifty five percent of respondents feel that ABCD's role should be to be an active agent on their behalf (average rating of 3.6 out of 5).
- The correlation between the perception of its current role and what this role should be suggests that ABCD isn't meeting its constituents' expectations in its support role. On the other hand, ABCD seems to be as an active agent as its constituents expect it to be.

Section 2

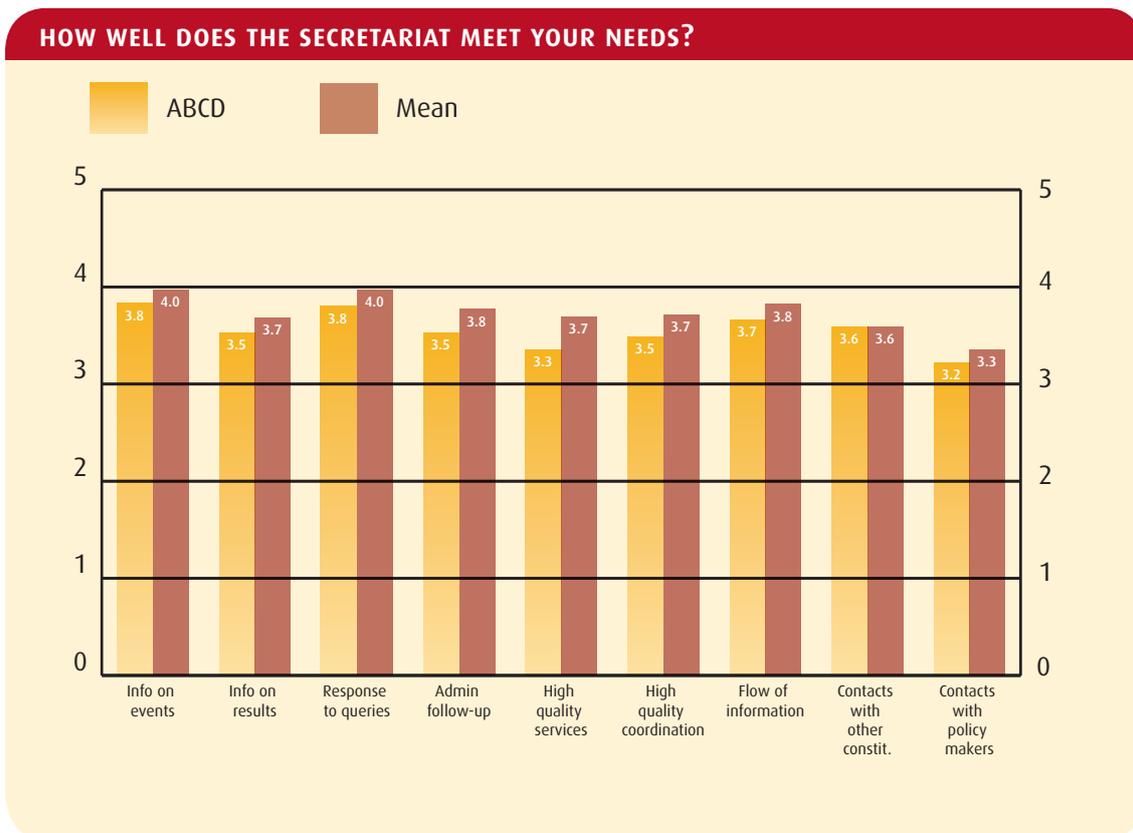
Quality of relationships with ABCD's Secretariat

Quality of relationships with ABCD's Secretariat



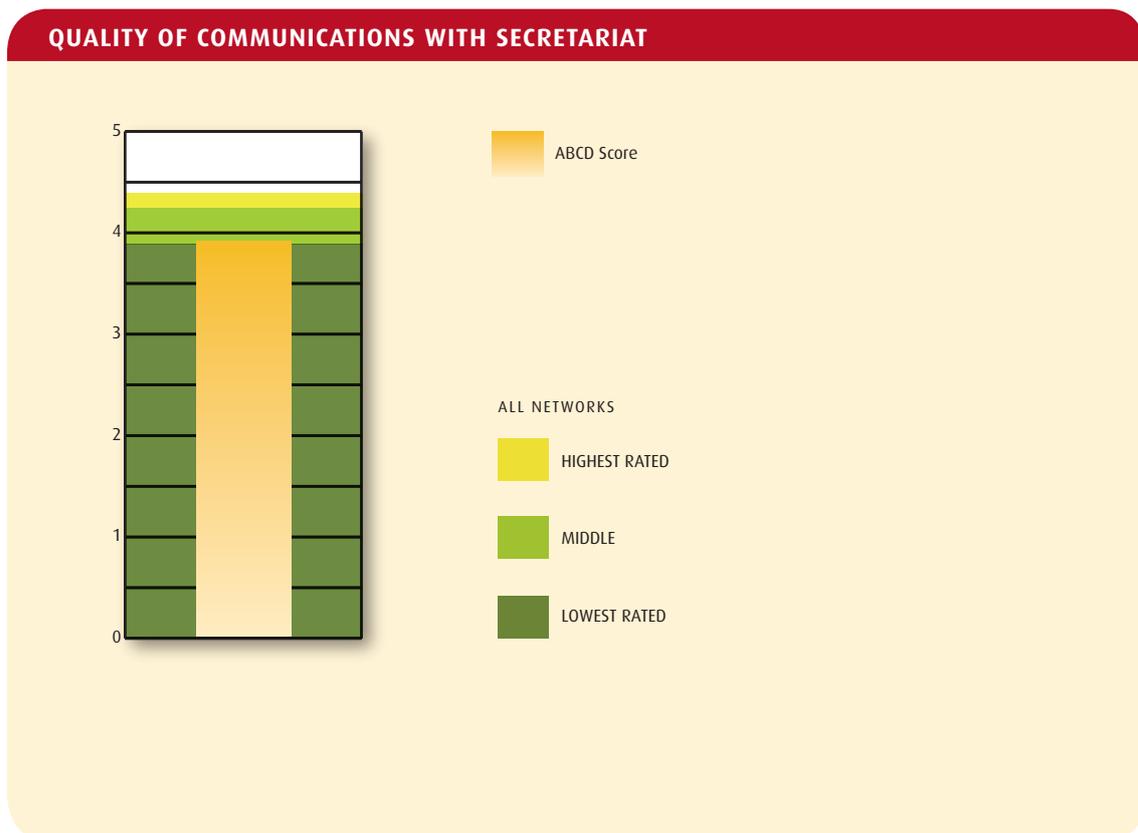
- On average, respondents give ABCD a rating of 3.6 out of 5 for how well the Secretariat meets their needs in general. This places ABCD at the top of the bottom 25% of networks in the group.
- The next chart analyses respondents' satisfaction with the Secretariat in more detail.

Quality of relationships with ABCD's Secretariat



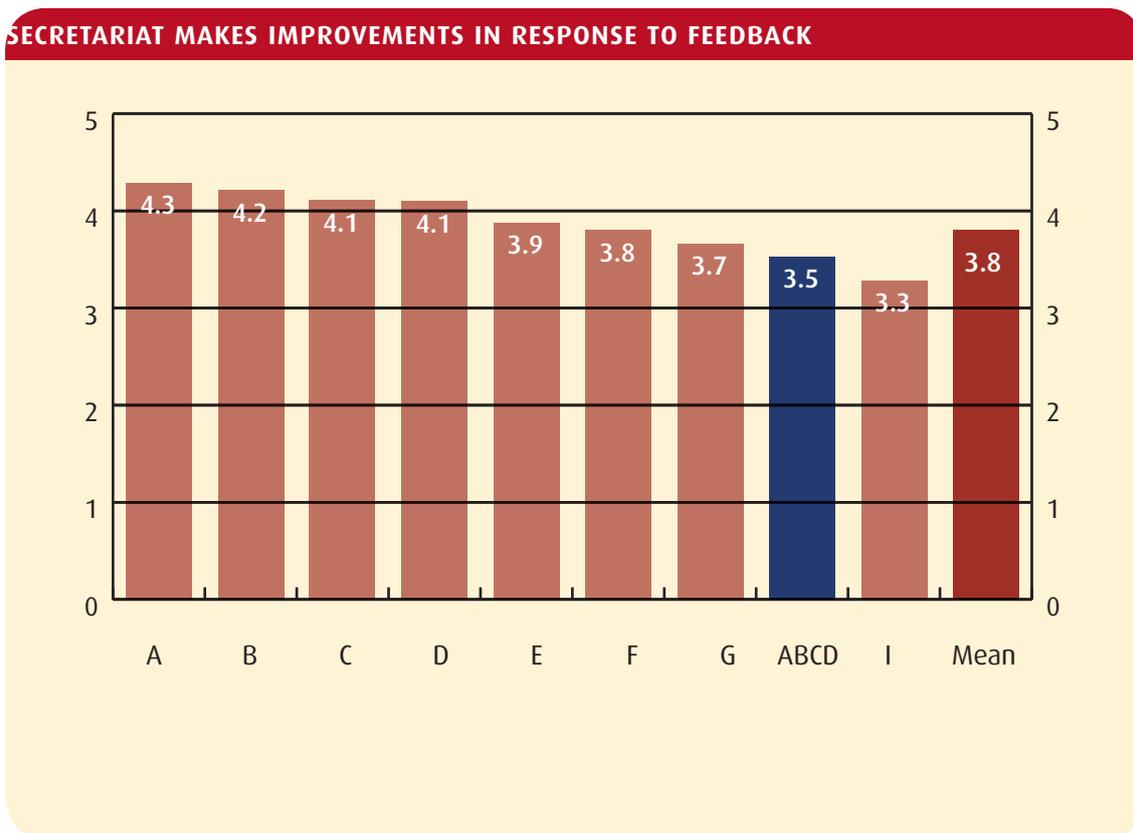
- In all areas ABCD is rated below the mean for the group of networks, with the exception of facilitating contacts with other constituents, where it sits next to the mean. The highest rated areas are the provision of timely information on network events and responding quickly to queries (both at 3.8 out of 5).
- The following percentages of respondents feel that ABCD's Secretariat meets these needs either "well" or "very well":
 - Timely information on network events by 69%
 - Timely information on the network's results by 54%
 - Quick response to queries by 61%
 - Administrative follow up by 49%
 - Provision of high quality, relevant services by 42%
 - Provision of high quality, relevant coordination by 49%
 - Enabling transparent and efficient flow of information by 63%
 - Facilitating contacts between constituents by 56%
 - Facilitating contacts with key allies or policy makers by 34%

Quality of relationships with ABCD's Secretariat



- Asked about the quality (i.e. timeliness, openness, relevance, accuracy) of communications that they have with the Secretariat, respondents give ABCD an average rating of 3.9 out of 5, placing it at the top of the lowest rated group.
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents give it a high or very high rating. The average for the group of networks is 62%.

Quality of relationships with ABCD's Secretariat



- Respondents give the Secretariat a rating of 3.5 out of 5. This places ABCD next to last in the group of nine networks.
- We also asked questions about the quality of communications and improvement on the basis of feedback about other bodies within the network (governance boards, councils, committees and task/theme related workgroups or committees). On average 54% of respondents across all networks, and 47% for ABCD said that they didn't know. This suggests that constituents are not aware of these other bodies, and perhaps do not see them as being as important or relevant as the Secretariat.

About a third (32%) of comments made by respondents regarding the quality of their relationship with the Secretariat make suggestions for improvement and 16% are positive.⁵ Illustrative examples include:

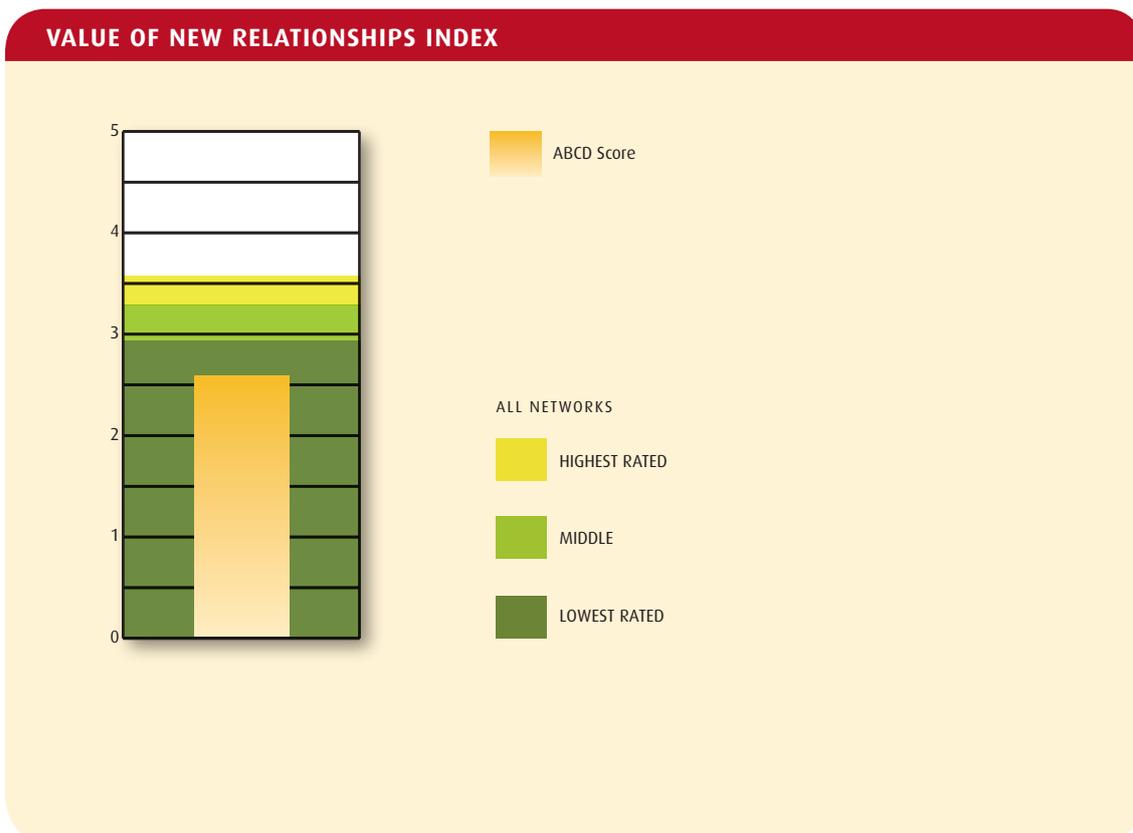
- "The Secretariat is quite close to the partners and that is a great thing, but the relationship with the regional nodes needs streamlining and especially how members get to participate effectively. Members do not have direct interaction with the council, which is quite understandable. All I know, as a member, is the Secretariat that I closely collaborate with."
- "ABCD might explore the use of communities of practice or other forums to disseminate a wide range of information and to enable constituents to discuss topics via means other than email".

⁵ The quantitative analysis of comments provided by respondents is based on the coding of their responses. Hence, percentages presented here should not be seen as precise measurements but rather as providing a reliable general indication.

Section 3

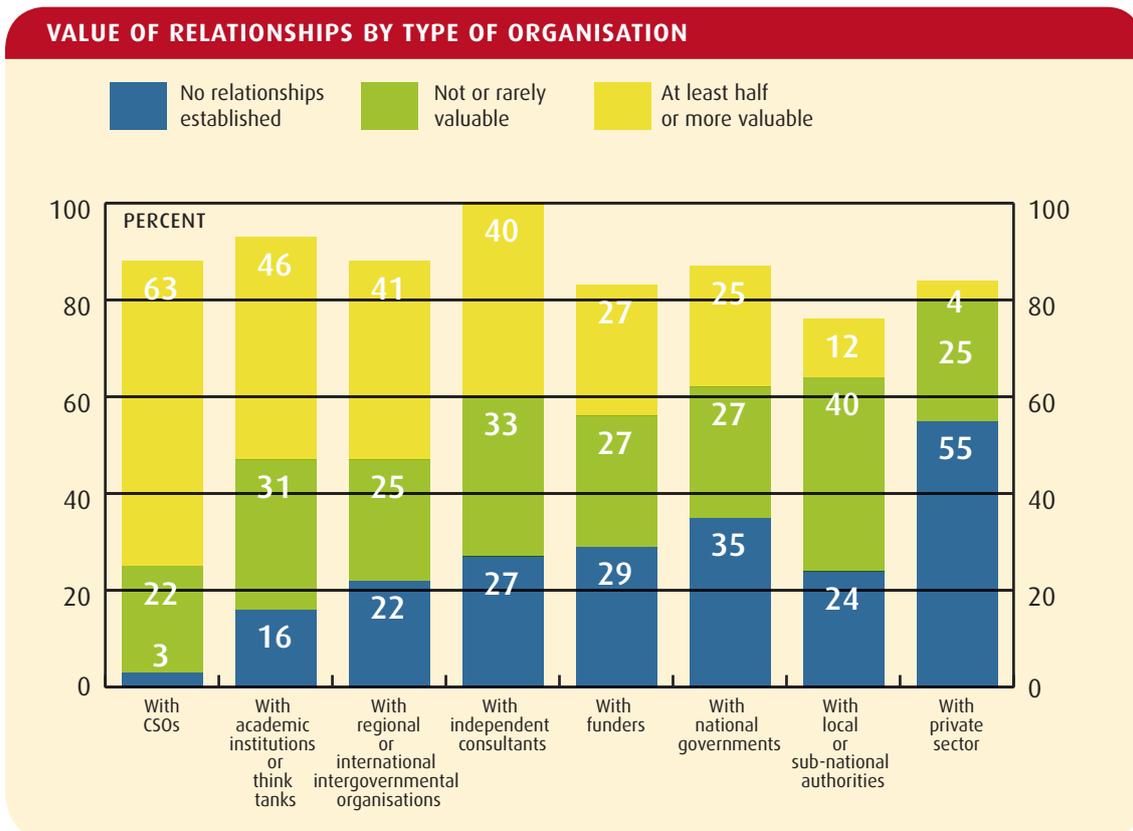
Network vibrancy

Network vibrancy



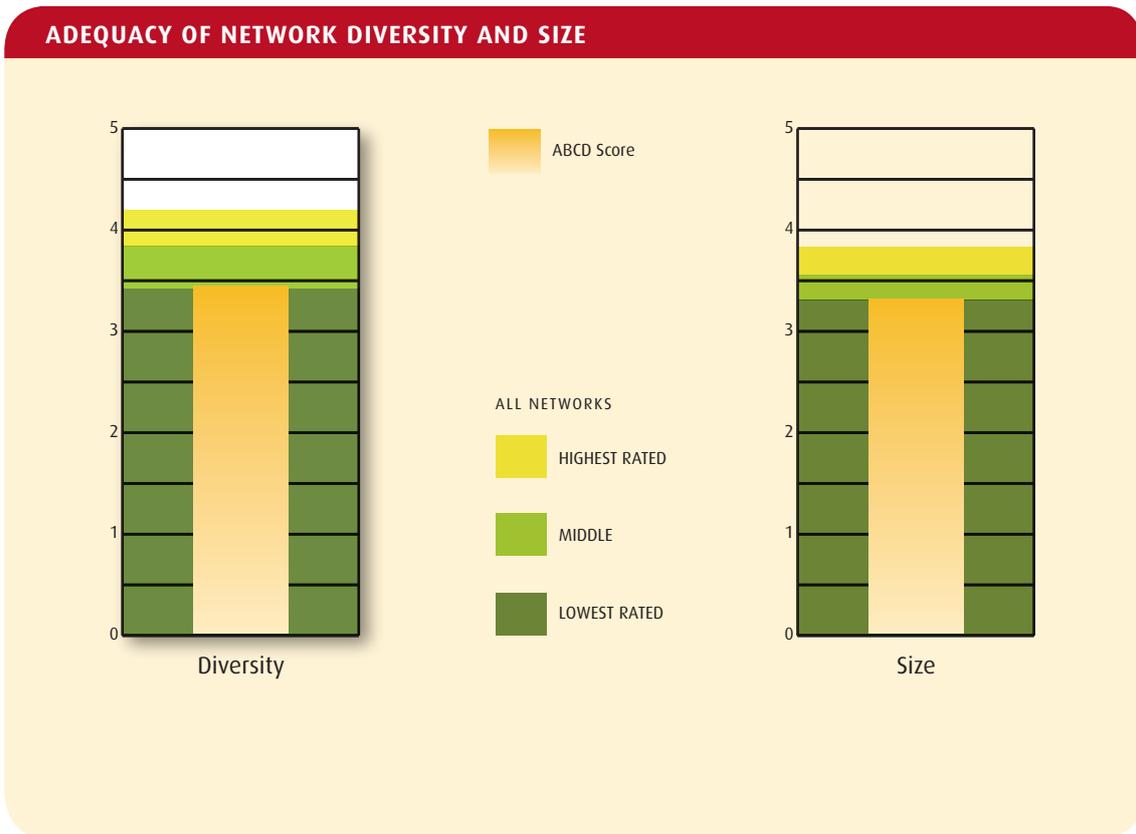
- The “Value of new relationships Index” summarises the value that respondents give to the new relationships that they have established with different kinds of actors as a result of participating in ABCD’s network .
- Respondents’ overall value of relationships established of 2.6 out of 5 places ABCD within the bottom performing group of networks for this measure.

Network vibrancy



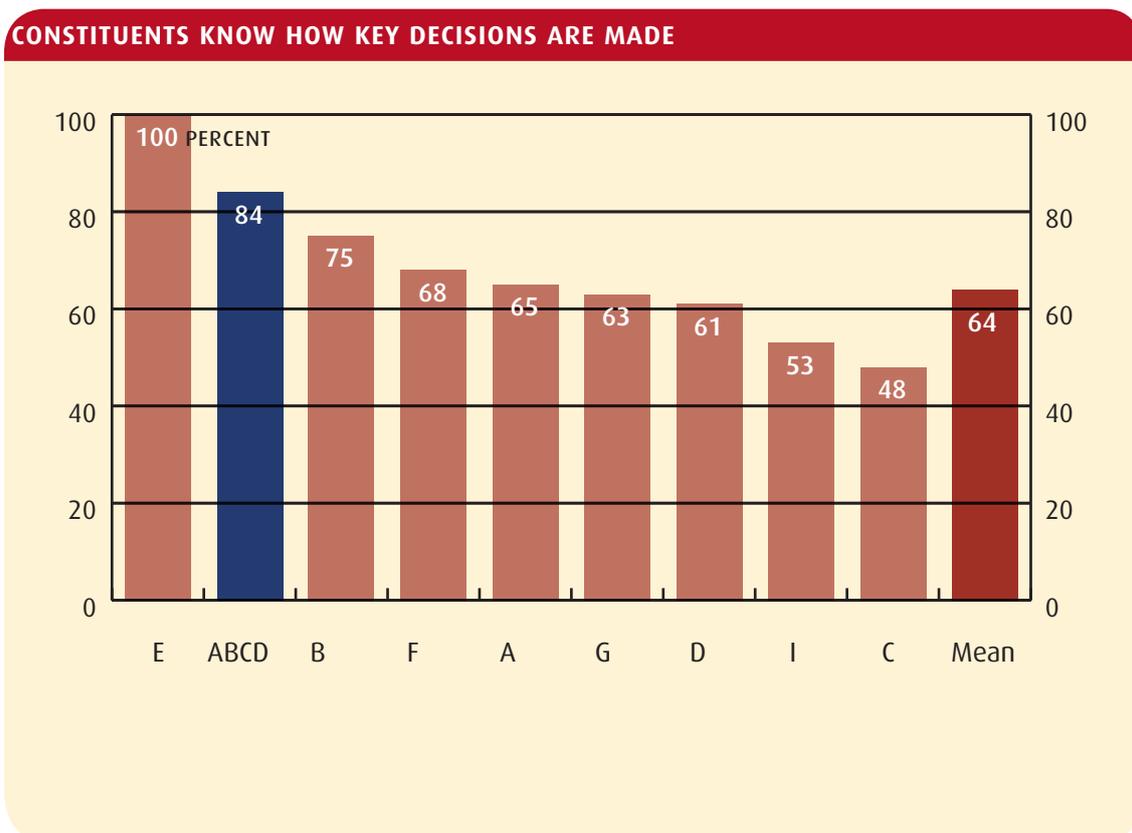
- As a result of their participation in the ABCD network, constituents most frequently establish relationships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs, 85%) and find them largely valuable (63%).
- Respondents give an average rating of 3.3 out of 5 regarding the value of new relationships that they establish with CSOs and 2.9 regarding relationships with regional and international intergovernmental organisations. In both cases, this places ABCD next to last in the group of networks.
- Most commonly relationships were initiated by respondents meeting each other at an event organised by ABCD (average of 22%) and by being introduced to each other by the Secretariat (7%), while 21% stated that they knew each other before joining ABCD.
- On average 28% of respondents said not to have created relationships with the type of organisations listed in the questionnaire. Further analysis does not show any significant correlations between the type of organisation respondents are associated with and the value they assign to the relationships created with the different types of organisations. The only interesting finding is that none of the three intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in the survey reports to have established any valuable relationships with other IGOs.

Network vibrancy



- The adequacy of the diversity and the size of the ABCD network are rated 3.4 and 3.3 out of 5 respectively. This places ABCD for both aspects within the lowest rated group of networks.

Level of synergy within the ABCD network

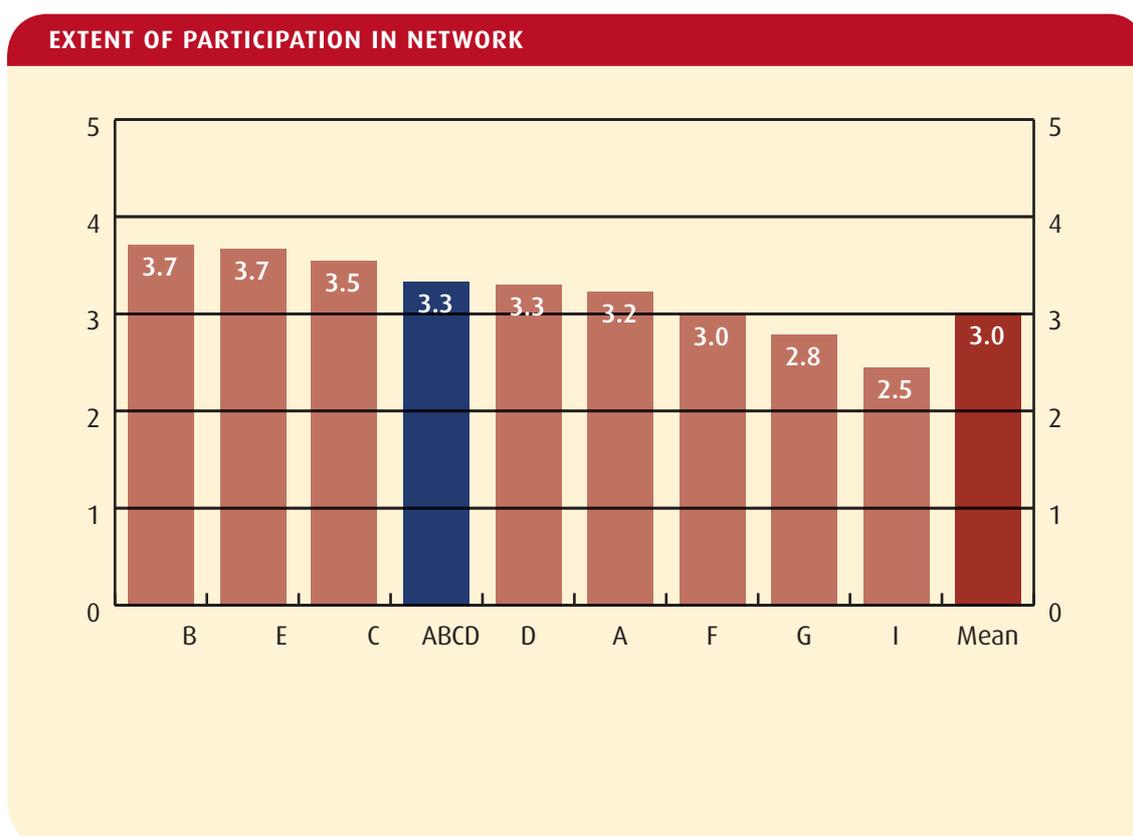


- Asked about how key decisions affecting constituents are made in ABCD, 16% say that they don't know. This takes ABCD out of the common trend among the group of networks, for which an average of 36% of respondents do not know how decisions affecting them are made. Comparatively, ABCD sits in second place regarding the percentage of constituents who express an opinion about how decisions are made. Further analysis shows that implementing partners and those receiving funds from ABCD tend to have a better idea about how decisions are made.
- Seventeen percent of respondents feel that either most or all key decisions are made by the Secretariat; another 28% that decisions are equally distributed between the Secretariat and being constituent driven and 40% that either most or all key decisions are constituent driven.

A fifth of the comments received in this section are positive, 27% make suggestions for improvement and 13% are negative. An illustrative example of comments is:

- "Decisions come through the board where constituents are part of the decision making process".
- "All members do not have the same level of information" (translation from French).

Network vibrancy



- On average, respondents rate their participation in the ABCD network as 3.3 out of 5. This places ABCD as fourth in the group of networks and above average for the group. Comparisons between the networks in the group suggest that there may be an inverse correlation between the size of the network and the extent of participation in it; bigger networks tend to have less participation.

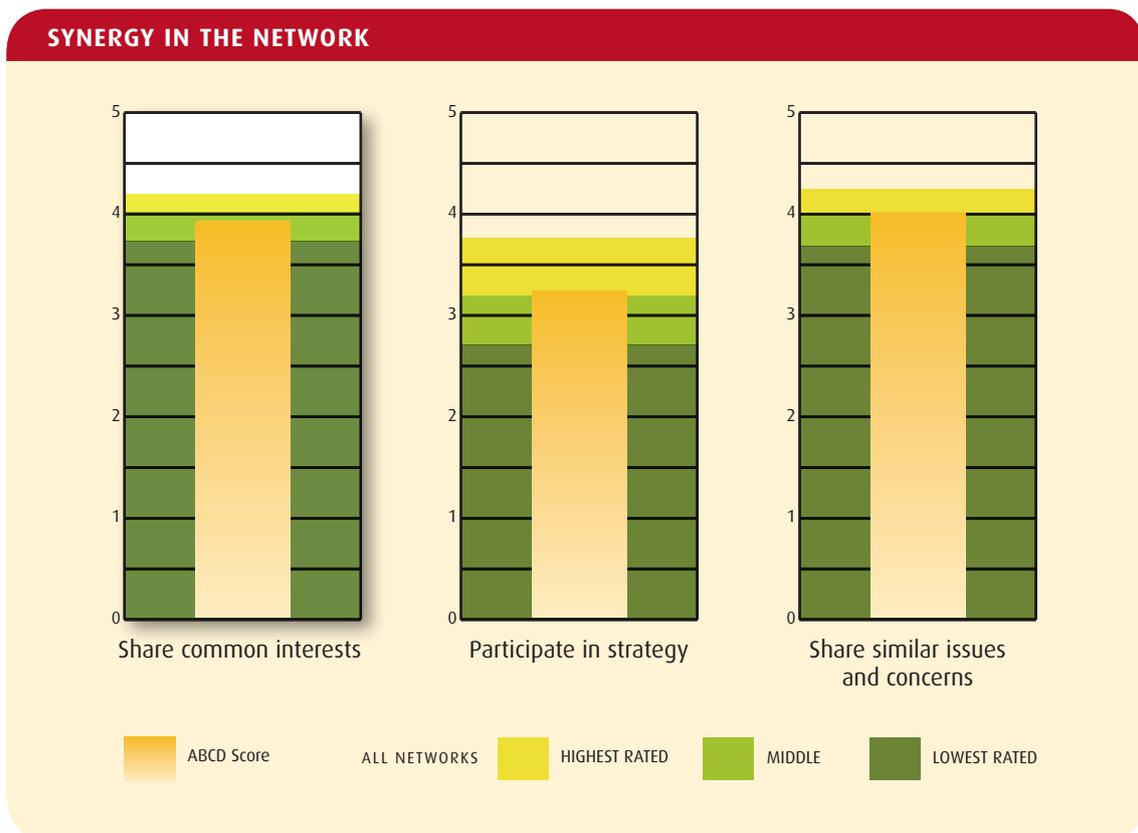
In this section, over a third (38%) of comments received are suggestions for improvement, 19% are positive and 13% are negative. There are a variety of comments ranging from the need to encourage more participation in the network, to ensuring a greater representation of Southern countries. Some illustrative examples of comments are:

- “There is a need to further define strategies in relation to networking and linking to various institutions. It should be noted that networking does not necessarily [mean] expanding the membership”.
- “Regional processes/nodes should be strengthened having clear linkages with the ABCD global strategic objectives so that more organisations at the regional level having common areas of interest can participate in ABCD initiatives and work together to make significant changes”.
- “Though very brief, [my participation] was very interesting, very challenging and has lots of potential to be actively nurtured and sustained. Very relevant to the policy work [our organisation] is working on at the international, regional and national levels”.

Section 4

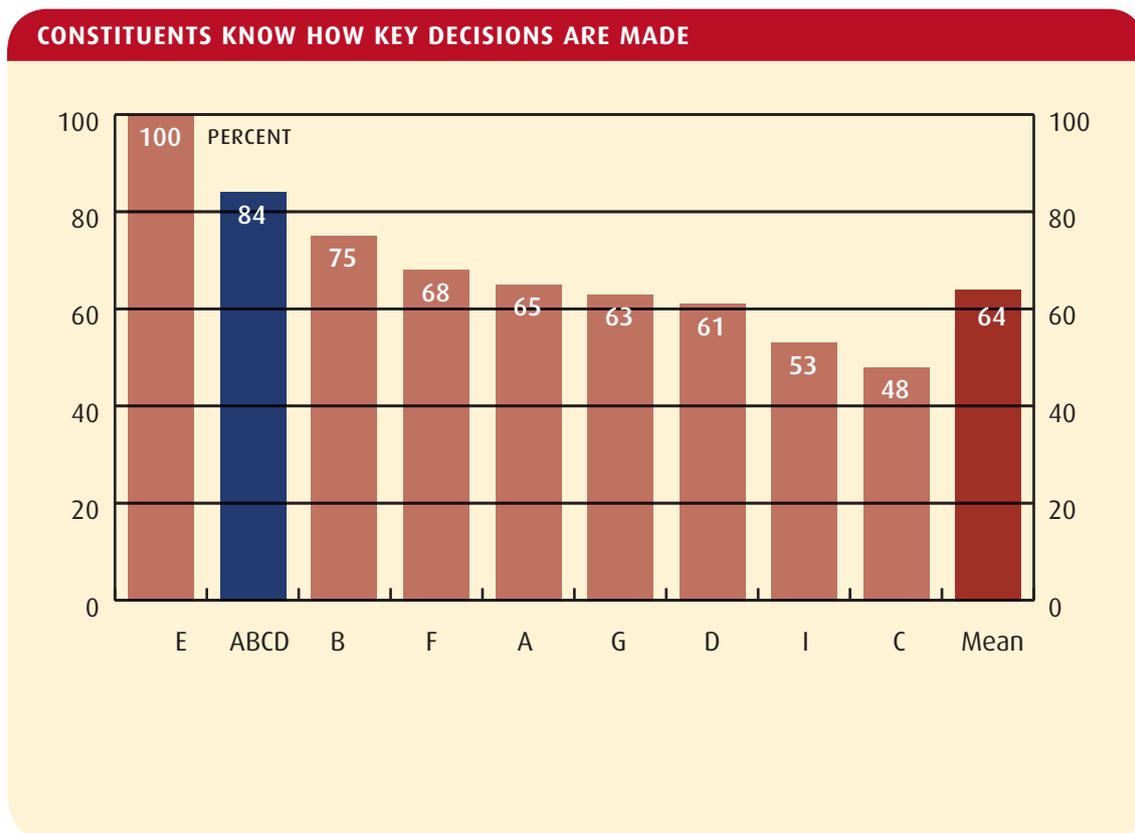
Level of synergy within the ABCD network

Level of synergy within the ABCD network



- In this section we asked ABCD's constituents about the level of synergy in the network, and specifically about the extent to which constituents share common interests with the network, participate in its strategy and have similar issues and concerns with other participants. ABCD is rated 3.9, 3.2 and 4 in these three areas.
- Comparatively, ABCD, in all three areas, sits at the top of the middle group of networks.

Level of synergy within the ABCD network



- Asked about how key decisions affecting constituents are made in ABCD, 16% say that they don't know. This takes ABCD out of the common trend among the group of networks, for which an average of 36% of respondents do not know how decisions affecting them are made. Comparatively, ABCD sits in second place regarding the percentage of constituents who express an opinion about how decisions are made. Further analysis shows that implementing partners and those receiving funds from ABCD tend to have a better idea about how decisions are made.
- Seventeen percent of respondents feel that either most or all key decisions are made by the Secretariat; another 28% that decisions are equally distributed between the Secretariat and being constituent driven and 40% that either most or all key decisions are constituent driven.

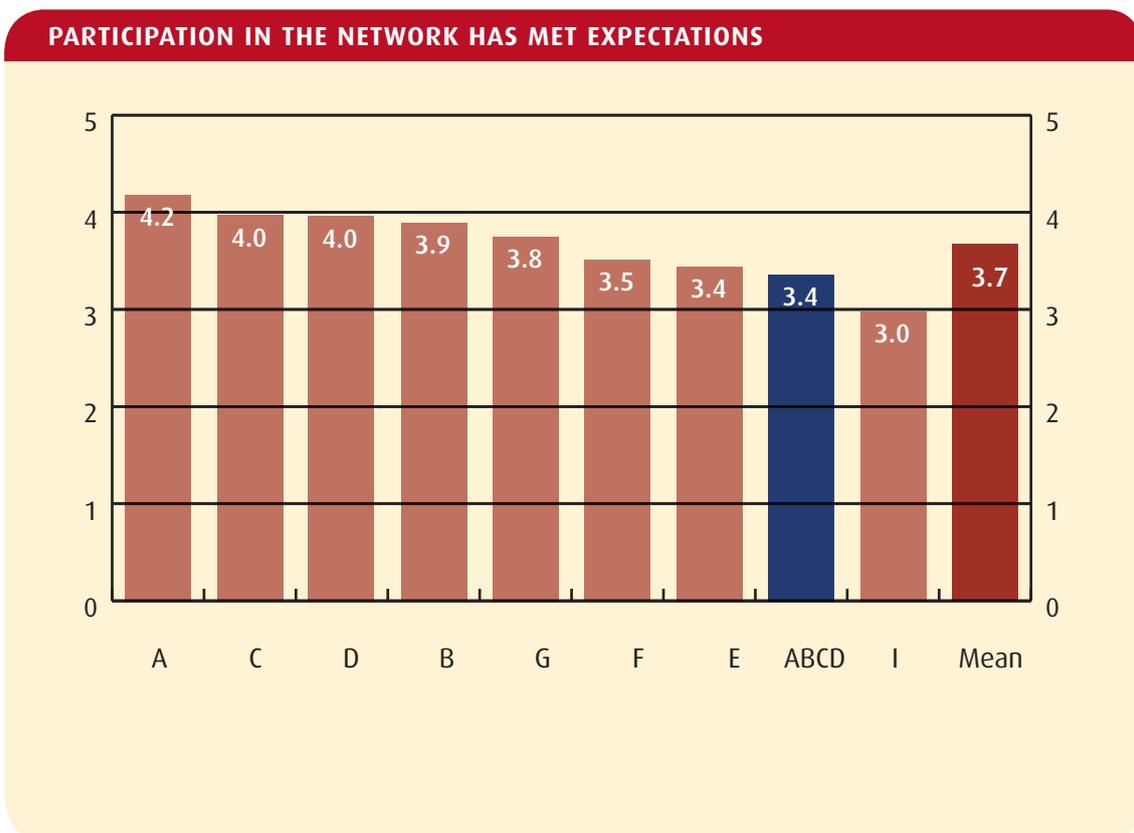
A fifth of the comments received in this section are positive, 27% make suggestions for improvement and 13% are negative. An illustrative example of comments is:

- "Decisions come through the board where constituents are part of the decision making process".
- "All members do not have the same level of information" (translation from French).

Section 5

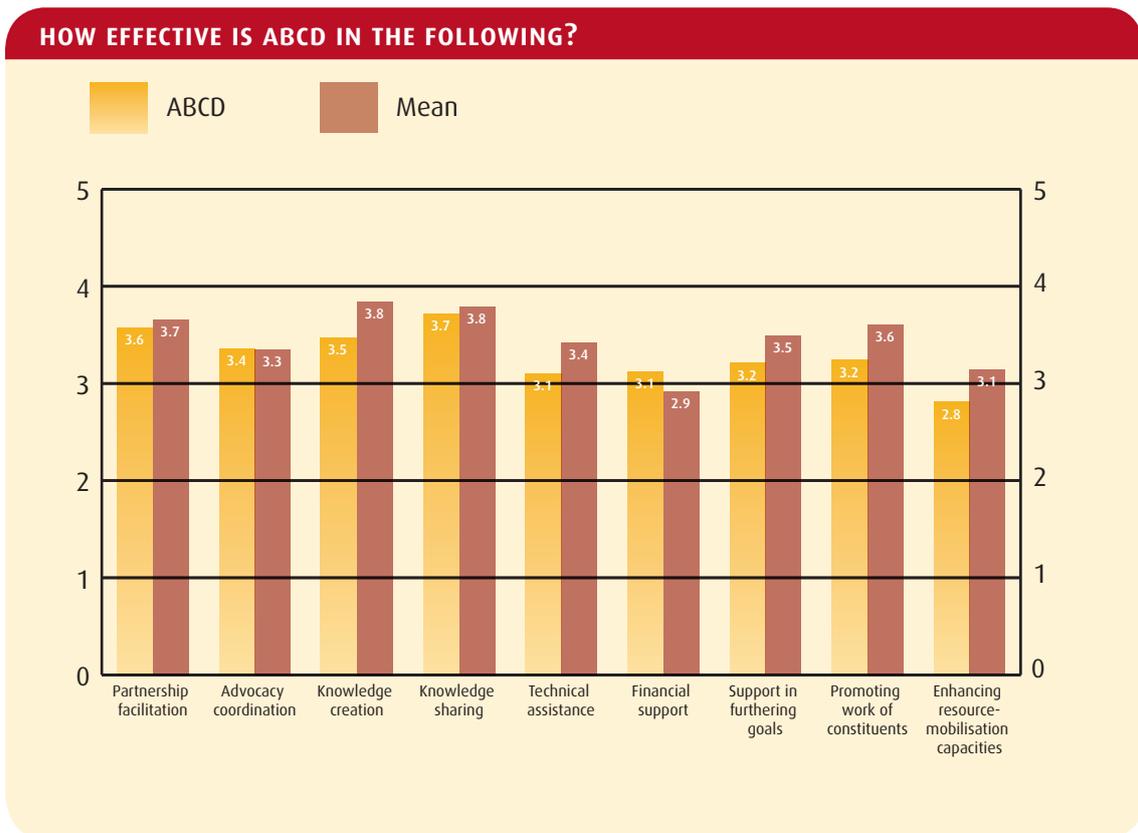
Value added for constituents

Value added for constituents



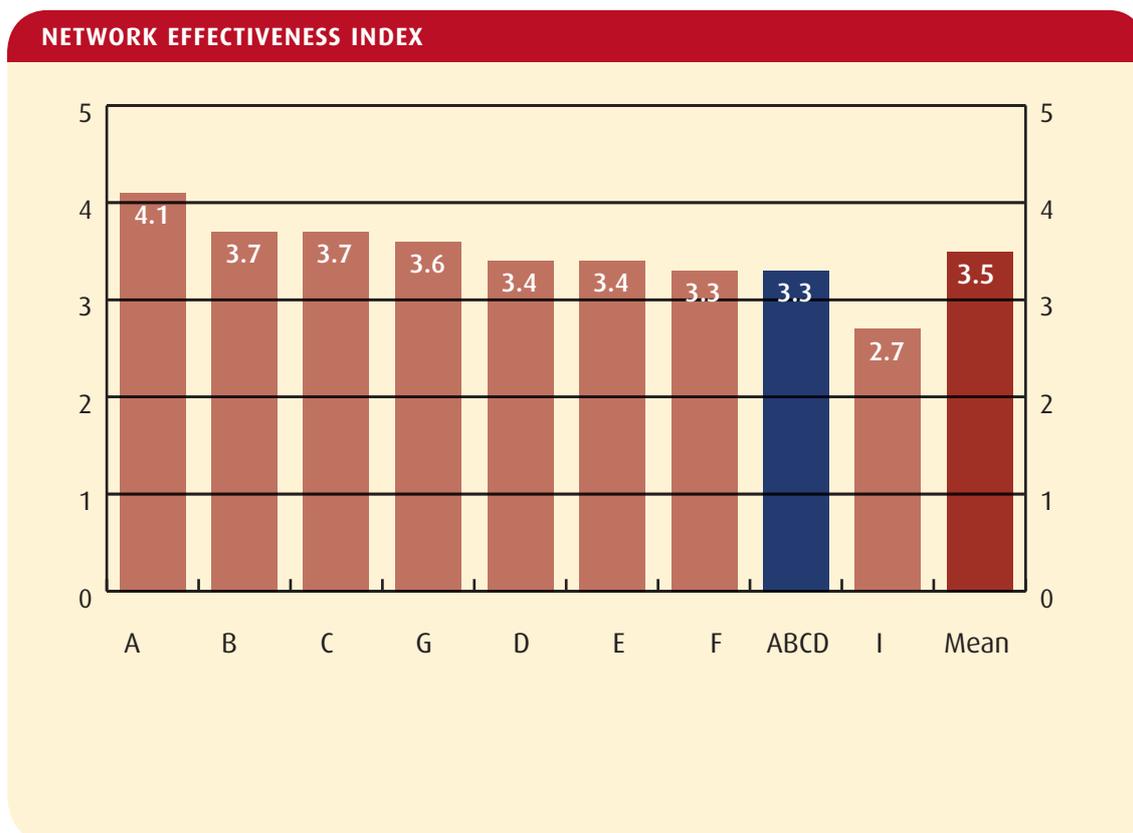
- Respondents give a rating of 3.4 out of 5 on the extent to which their participation in the ABCD network has met their expectations. This places ABCD next to last in the group of the 9 networks.
- Fifty percent of respondents say that ABCD met their expectations either very much or absolutely, 29% give a medium rating, while 20% say that it didn't meet their expectations.
- Further analysis shows that the groups mostly benefiting of their participation in the ABCD network are CSOs (57% of those responding to this question give it a high or very high rating) and those receiving funds from ABCD (68%). None of the 3 IGOs in the survey reports that their participation in ABCD has met their expectations.

Value added for constituents



- The graph shows the average ratings given by respondents on ABCD’s performance in a series of areas in the relation to the mean for all the networks in the group.
- Respondents report that ABCD is either “very” or “extremely” effective in:
 - Facilitating networking and brokering partnerships between constituents by 50%
 - Coordinating advocacy actions by 43%
 - Creating new knowledge by 48%
 - Facilitating knowledge sharing between constituents by 61%
 - Providing technical assistance and capacity building to constituents by 25%
 - Providing financial support to constituents by 33%
 - Supporting its constituents in furthering their goals by 35%
 - Promoting the work of constituents by 40%
 - Enhancing constituents’ capacity to mobilise resources by 19%

Value added for constituents



- In comparison to the other networks, ABCD's ratings in these areas (3.3 out of 5) are below average (3.5 out of 5) and place ABCD next to the lowest performer.
- The only areas in which ABCD scores above average are in coordinating advocacy actions and providing financial support (3.4 against a mean of 3.3 and 3.1 against 2.9 respectively).

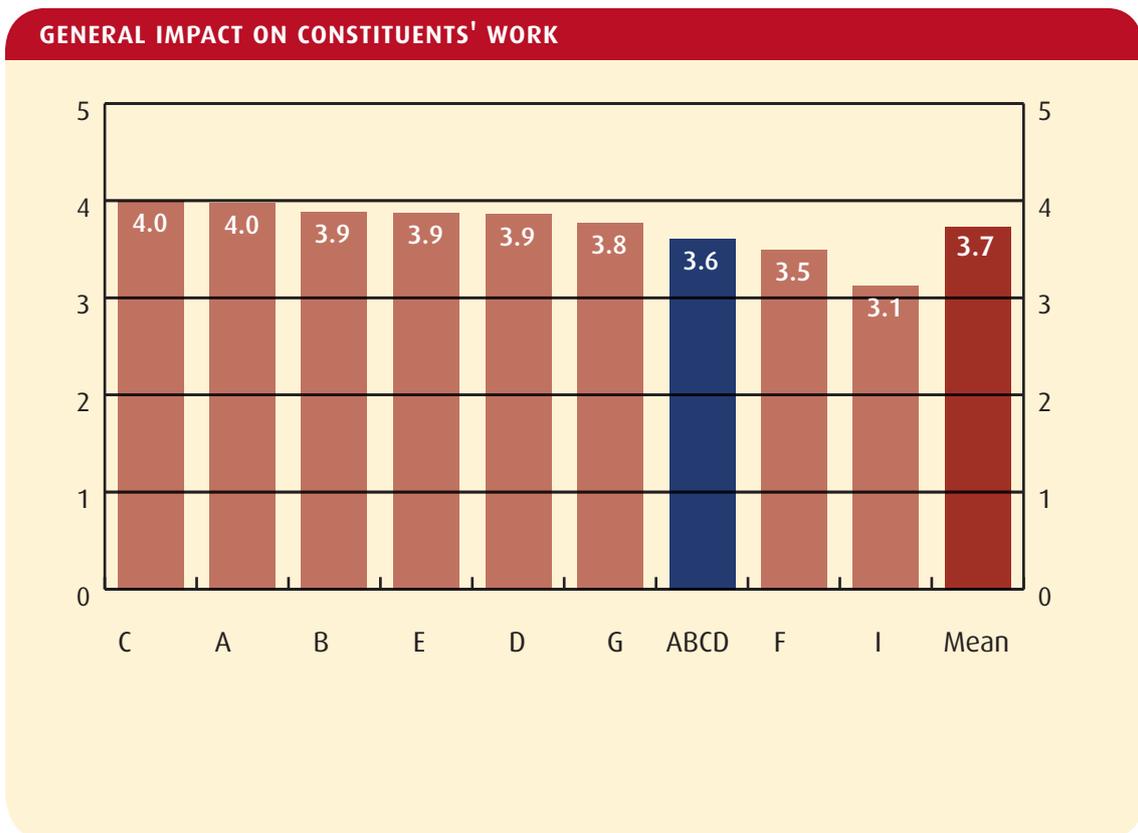
In this section more than a third (38%) of the comments received are positive, 23% make suggestions for improvements and 23% express respondents' dissatisfaction. Illustrative examples of comments include:

- "Participation in ABCD has deepened our interest and involvement in [theme] and related issues".
- "At the moment it is only the funding that we got, but other than that, we do not see much value. I think ABCD should clearly state how NGOs can benefit from the network".
- "The relationship has been very disappointing and has added a great deal of stress to our organisation and to our coordinator".

Section 6

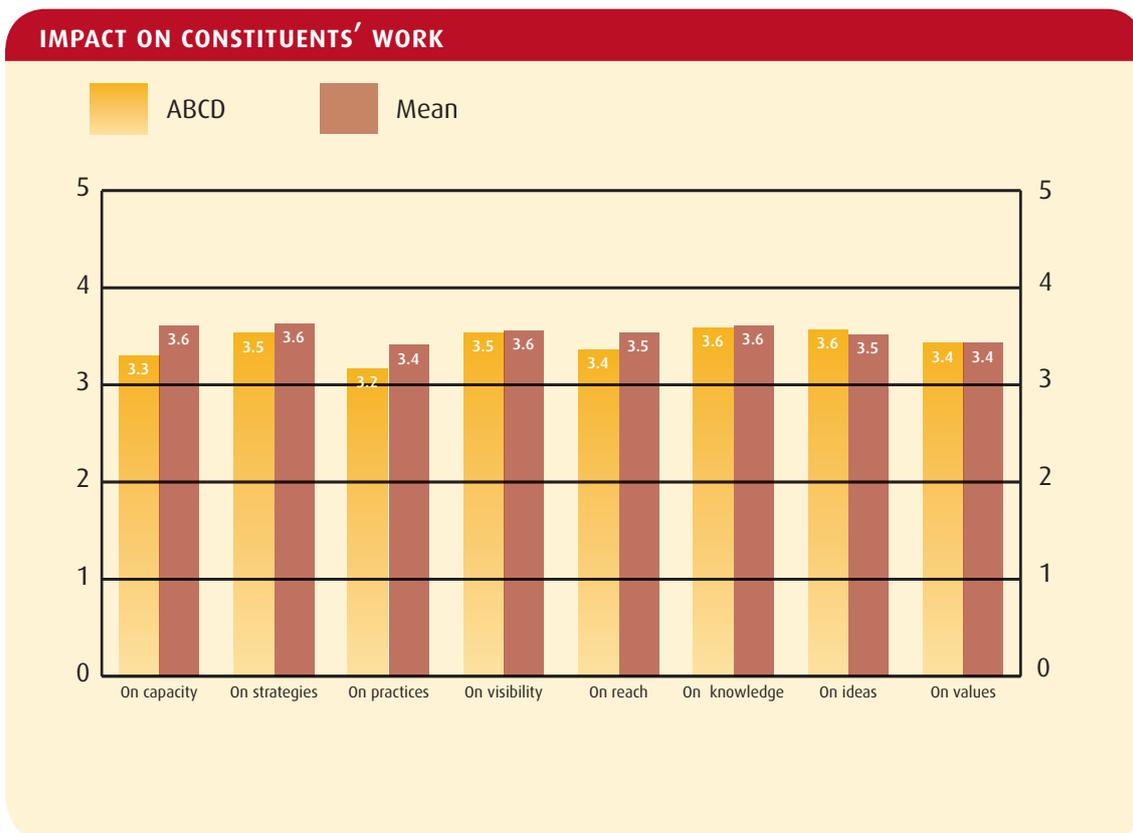
The impact of the ABCD Network

The impact of the ABCD Network



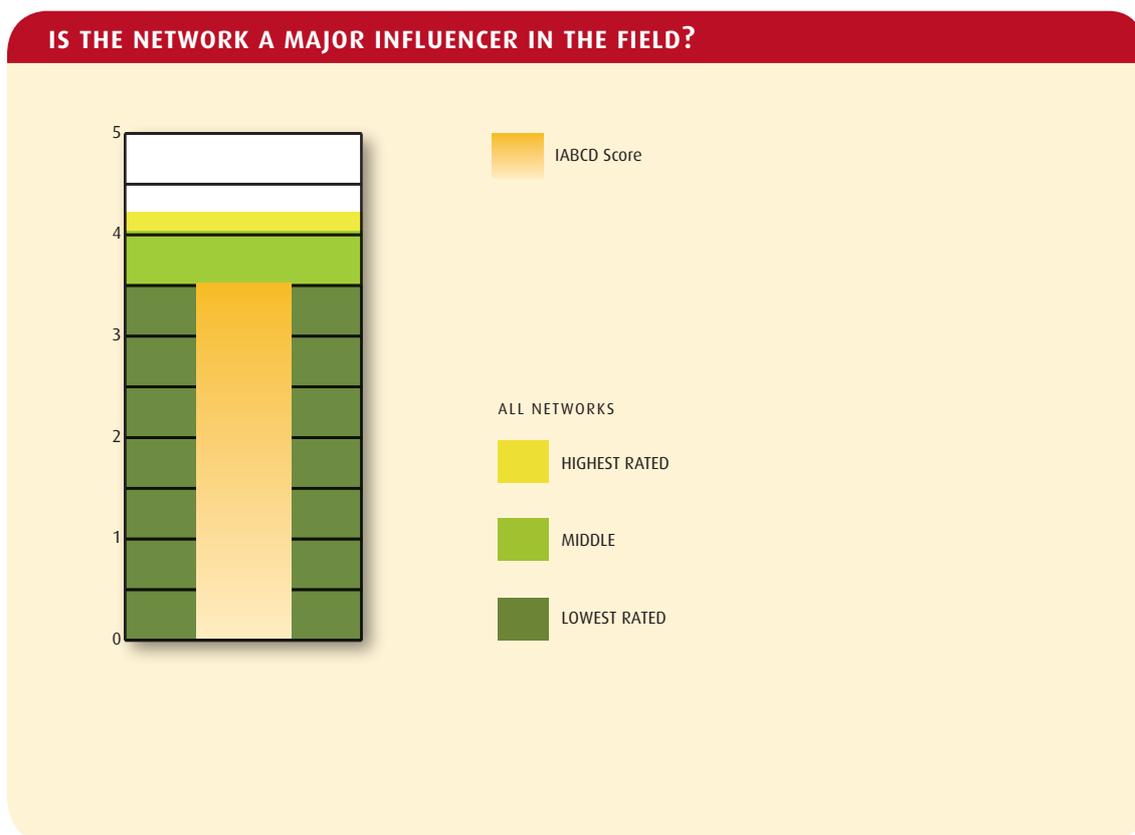
- In terms of general impact on constituents' work, respondents give ABCD a score of 3.6 out of 5, placing it seventh in the group of networks and below the mean of 3.7 out of 5.

The impact of the ABCD Network



- The graph shows the average ratings given by respondents on ABCD's impact on a series of areas relative to the work of its constituents.
- The following percentages of respondents feel that ABCD has had either a “big” or “massive” positive impact:
 - On their capacity by 15%
 - On their strategies: by 22%
 - On the way they work and their practices by 17%
 - On the visibility of their work by 27%
 - On the reach of their work by 27%
 - On the sources of knowledge that they have available for their work by 34%
 - On their ideas and the way they communicate them by 33%
 - On their values and the way they apply them by 36%
 - Across all areas, an average of 17% of respondents said that their participation in ABCD has had “no positive or negative impact at all” on their work - very close to the average for all the networks (18%).

The impact of the ABCD Network



- ABCD receives an average rating of 3.5 out of 5 in its perception by respondents as a major influencer in its area of work. This places ABCD at the top of the lowest performing group of networks.
- ABCD is seen as a major influencer in its area of work by 56% of respondents (19% give it a neutral rating in this area and 22% feel it isn't a major influencer).

In this section, more than a third (36%) of comments are positive, 14% are suggestions about improving the network's impact and 14% express respondents dissatisfaction with the impacts of the network. Some illustrative examples of comments are:

- "Main impact is giving visibility to the [theme] issue, and providing greater 'legitimacy' to local efforts, even if actual forms of direct support are limited".
- "The ABCD should come in support of a member's work in-country especially where international pressure would be required for example on issues of [theme] and [theme]"
- "Minor impacts for the moment" (translation from French).

Conclusions

The findings from this survey present independently gathered data about the value that ABCD's members and other constituents gain from participating in ABCD's network. They are a basis for deliberation and dialogue with constituents in views of driving improvements in the network. The feedback from this survey provides an opportunity for ABCD to discuss these issues with its constituents and consider how it can improve the value generated by its network.

Our analysis is based exclusively on the survey data and comparisons with the other networks in the group. Each network has its own specificities and particular context. ABCD staff and board may add to this analysis with insights from their experience and specialist knowledge of the field in which ABCD operates. Another way to deepen analysis is to explore the report in depth through open conversations with members and other constituents.

The findings from this survey suggest that there is significant scope for ABCD to increase the value that its members and other constituents gain from its network. There appear to be mis-matches between constituents' expectations and ABCD's performance.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Report this survey's findings back to its constituents, along with initial responses to the feedback received. This could be done via its website, newsletter and/or at the next members' assembly
- Identify specific actions for improvements, guided by the highest priority findings in this report. We suggest this might include increasing discussion and clarity around the value that it offers to members.
- Monitor progress in the areas requiring improvement. This could be done by repeating this survey in 1 or 2 years' time. A public commitment to repeating the survey would create strong incentives for improvement and could increase credibility that ABCD is committed to improving
- Consider other ways for collecting feedback, triggered by specific events or interactions with constituents that would be useful for monitoring performance. For instance, ABCD could ask constituents a few short questions at the end of a meeting or through its newsletter. This sort of data collection - using a carefully designed mechanism ensuring independence and anonymity - would provide ABCD with actionable, real time data.

RECOMMENDATIONS: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE NETWORK

The ABCD network is seen by respondents as having mainly a centralised structure. Furthermore, there is a gap between the perception of its current role in supporting members' activities and what this role should be, suggesting that ABCD is not meeting its constituents' expectations in this area.

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Explore further if changes in its structure are needed. Options could include supporting regional sub-networks within ABCD.
- Explore constituents' expectations regarding its role in supporting their actions. Where is the overlap between the secretariat's view of ABCD's role and members' expectations? How can this be strengthened - for instance through targeted communication / dialogue?

Conclusions

RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NETWORK'S BODIES

Constituents give low ratings to how the Secretariat meets their needs, the quality of communications and responsiveness by the Secretariat.

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Review the services provided to constituents by the Secretariat and identify improvements that need to take place (e.g. improved and more transparent flows of information).
- Review its communications strategy with its constituents.
- Explore new ways for communicating with constituents that move away from one-way emails.
- Establish processes for staff and board to effectively respond to feedback they receive from constituents.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NETWORK VIBRANCY

ABCD respondents give a low rating to the value of the relationships that they establish as a result of being part of the network.

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Foster more contact between members within the network. Maybe consider holding more events, especially at the regional level, or other types of opportunities for constituents to network with each other. Events may be held at a distance, on-line, or together in person.
- Consider ways for improving the network's size and diversity by seeking to engage with organisations from different sectors and regions. Explore if particular attention should be given in engaging more the IGOs in the network.
- Consider other approaches to generate more 'buzz' and vibrancy across the networks, such as providing incentives to constituents for participating more actively in the network, or generating engagement around members' key concerns and hot topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS: LEVEL OF SYNERGY WITHIN THE NETWORK

Respondents report a medium level of synergy within the ABCD network. It is up to ABCD to interpret what this means and gain clarity about the level of synergy that is desirable for its network.

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Create opportunities for constituents to debate the network's strategies and express their points of view.
- Review decision-making mechanisms to enable the effective participation of those constituents that wish to be involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS: VALUE ADDED FOR CONSTITUENTS

Half of respondents affirm that their expectations from participating in the ABCD network are being met.

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Map the needs of its different constituencies and identify strategies to address them.

RECOMMENDATIONS: NETWORK'S IMPACT

ABCD is rated below average by respondents in terms of the impacts that it is having on their work .

We suggest that ABCD could:

- Review, in light of the survey data, the areas of potential impact on constituents' work and identify key areas to focus on (e.g. capacity building or knowledge creation).

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