



STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS AFTER THE COVID-19 CRISIS WITH CAF 2020

Final results

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25 April 2023
Maastricht, the Netherlands



Co-funded by the
European Union



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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES
POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES



The project journey has come to an end

November
2021

First semester 2021

June & November
2022

April
2023

Survey

- Recent and existing CAF users
- ID key themes and challenges
- Pandemic explored through the lens of the CAF

Case studies

- Innovations and adaptations identified
- Lessons learned (what could have been done better)
- Further reflection on role of the CAF

Deep-dive workshops

- Deeper discussions on specific CAF components and trends
- Pinpointing characteristics of resilience
- Critical look at the CAF from the Point of View of Resilience

Synthesis report

- Summary of Lessons learned on Resilience
- Recommendations for CAF, organisations, national-level administrations, etc.
- Recommendations for CAF itself

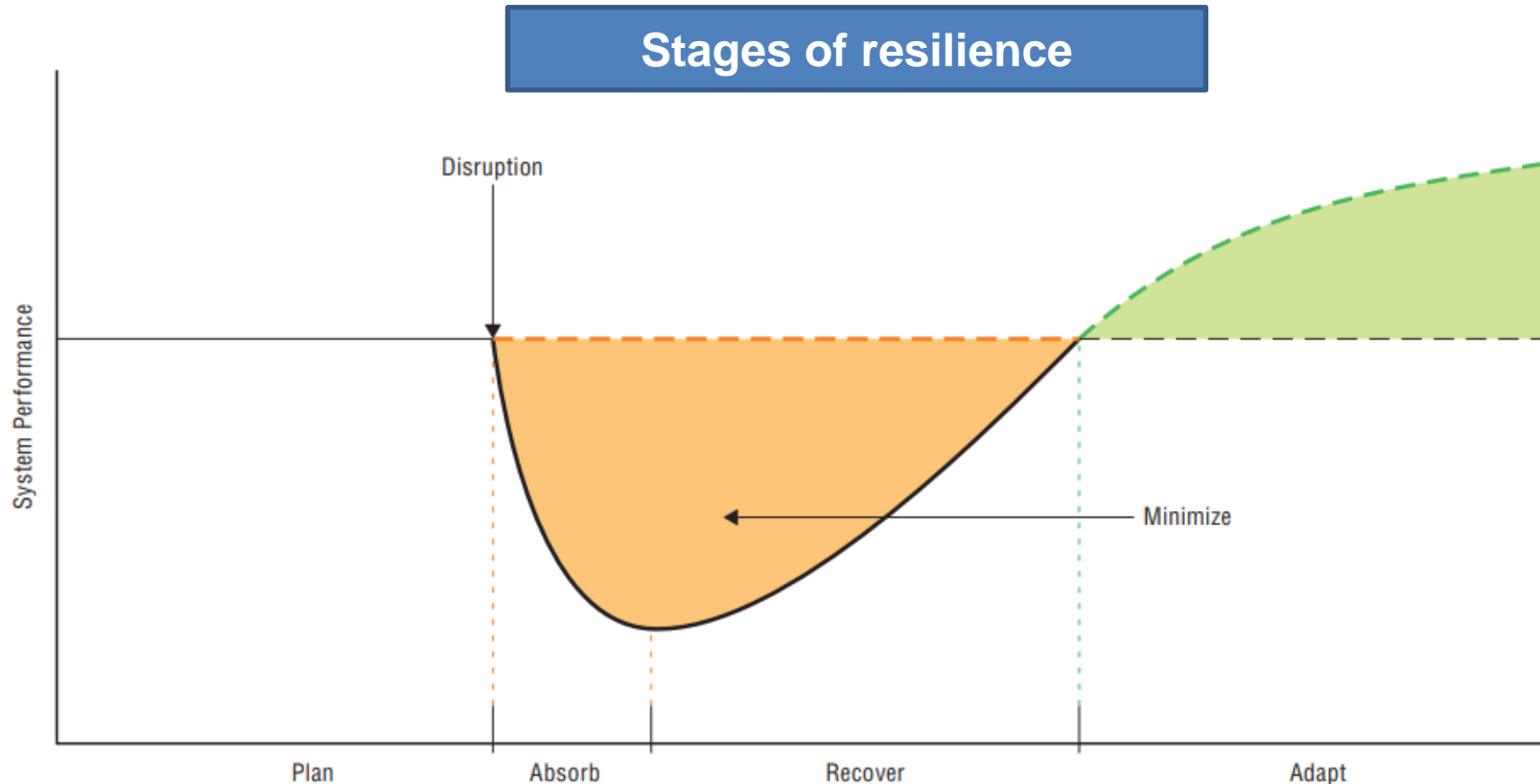
Webinar &
Results presented at
EUPAN DG Meeting

EUPAN DG Meeting
in November



Reminder: a definition of resilience

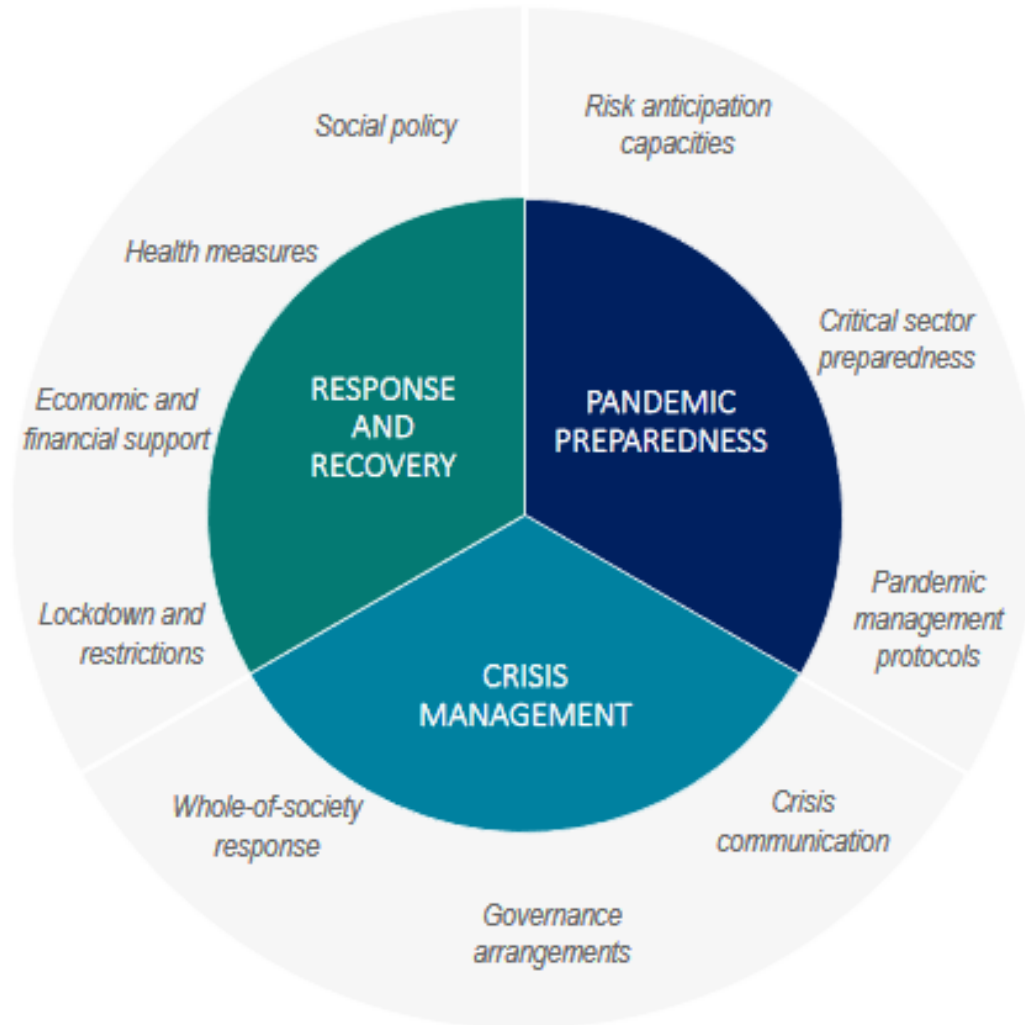
The OECD's definition of resilience is "the capacity of systems to absorb a disturbance, recover from disruptions and adapt to changing conditions while retaining essentially the same function as prior to the disruptive shock".



Source: Linkov, Trump and Hynes (2019^[6]), Resilience-based Strategies and Policies to Address Systemic Risks, [www.oecd.org/naec/averting-systemic-collapse/SG-NAEC\(2019\)5_Resilience_strategies.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/naec/averting-systemic-collapse/SG-NAEC(2019)5_Resilience_strategies.pdf).



Overall, public administrations effectively responded to the crisis, developing health protocols, social safety nets and continuity of service



Some key adaptations

- New governance structures adopted for coordinated decision-making and internal communications
- Crisis plans and risk management measures in place prior;
- New regulations and policies fast-tracked;
- Emergency procedures (financial, procurement, HR) and streamlining;
- Surge capacity/mobile human resources;
- Civil servants demonstrated public service motivation;
- Services adapted;
- Digital channels and tools developed to offer public service delivery continuity;
- New forms of external communications with citizens;
- Greater appetite for real-time performance data and evidence.



....however further improvements could have been achieved in speed, scale and transparency, underlining important lessons for resilience

Challenges remained...

- Issues of multi-level governance and co-ordination remained;
- Low or delayed take-up of social/health policies and benefits, or even non-compliance;
- Saturation or near-saturation of public services, service delays;
- Mis and dis-information hindered the effectiveness of policies and co-ordination;
- Staff burn-out;
- Lack of real-time data and evidence for decision-making;
- Politics sometimes got in the way.

... calling for further building resilience

Learning and adapting
(continuous improvement)



- Surge capacities of public funds, employee skills, information and digital
- Increase strategic planning and coordination capabilities
- Support more proactive, anticipatory innovation
- Develop new forms of user-centered service delivery



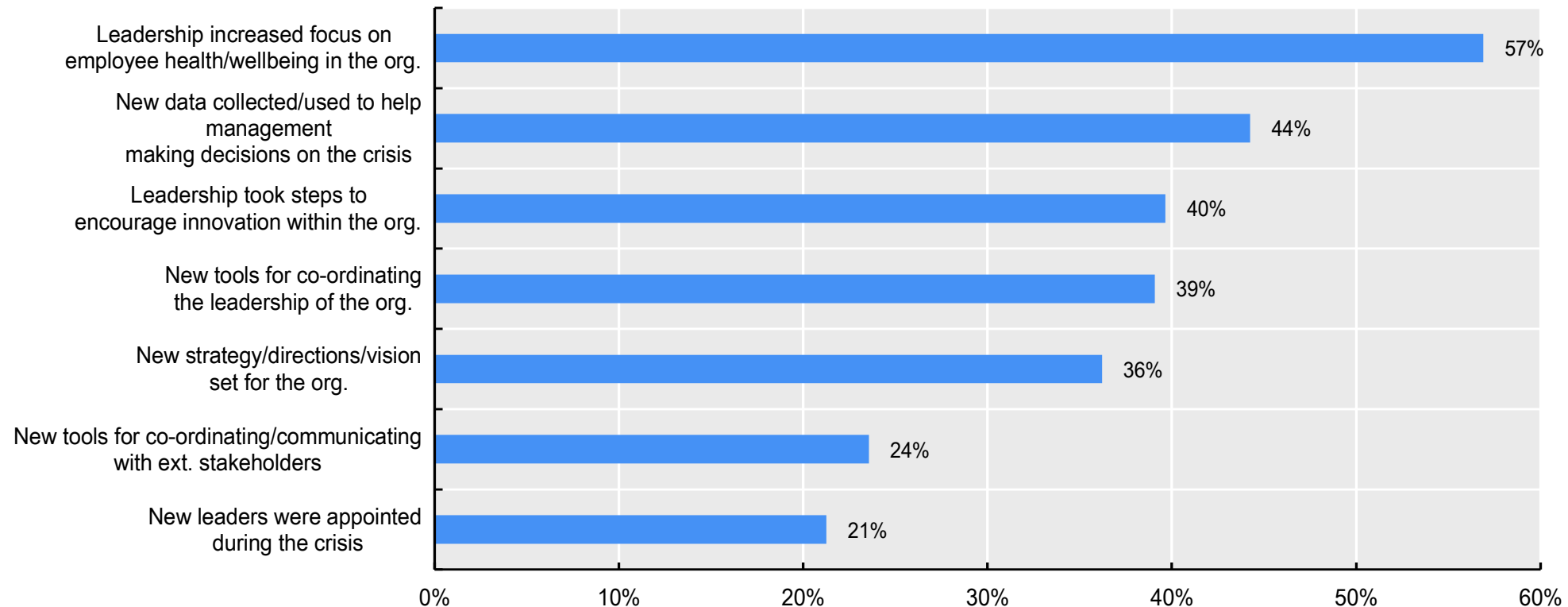
THE IMPACT AND ADAPTATION OF CAF USERS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS



Leadership: Putting “people first” was proven essential

The biggest challenges reported were keeping employees safe while adapting organisational processes to meet the new needs of the moment

Measures taken to adapt leadership and managerial structures during the COVID crisis

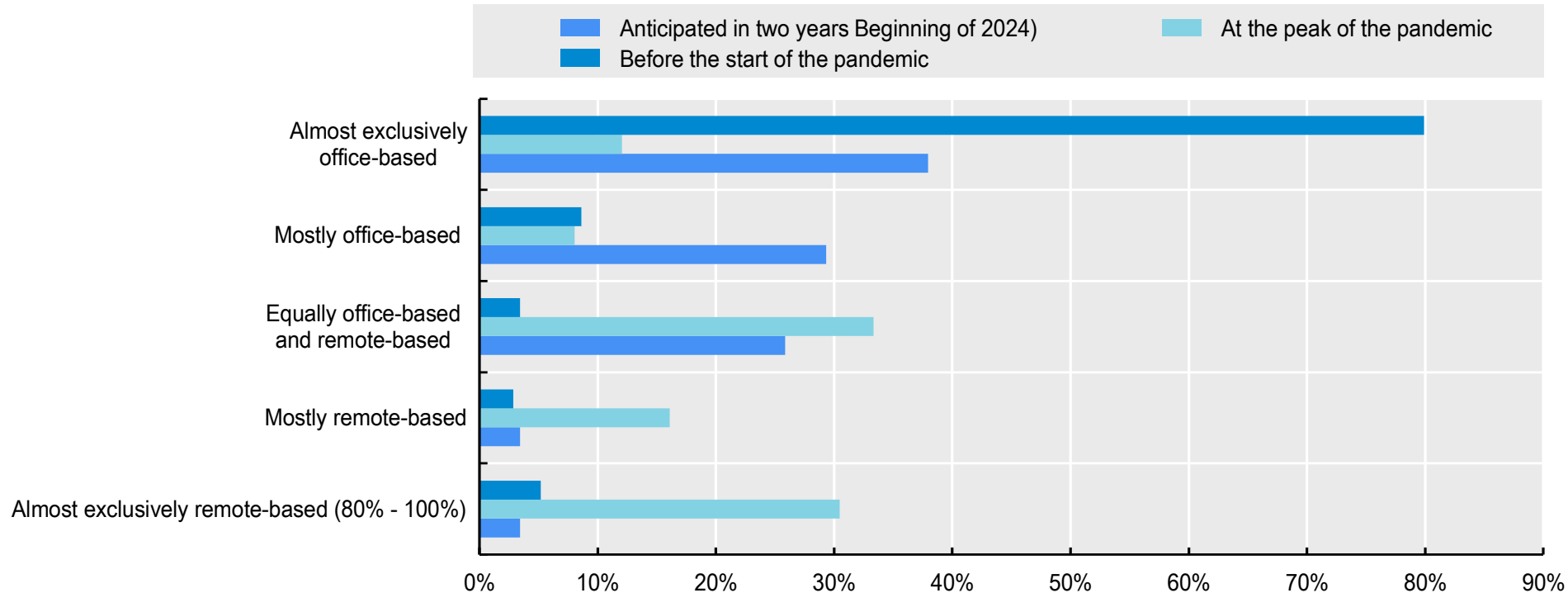




People: Keeping employees safe, engaged and productive

Getting the right staff in the right place to ensure an appropriate response and developing online tools and procedures for staff were key challenges for many

Office-based vs remote working before, during and after the pandemic

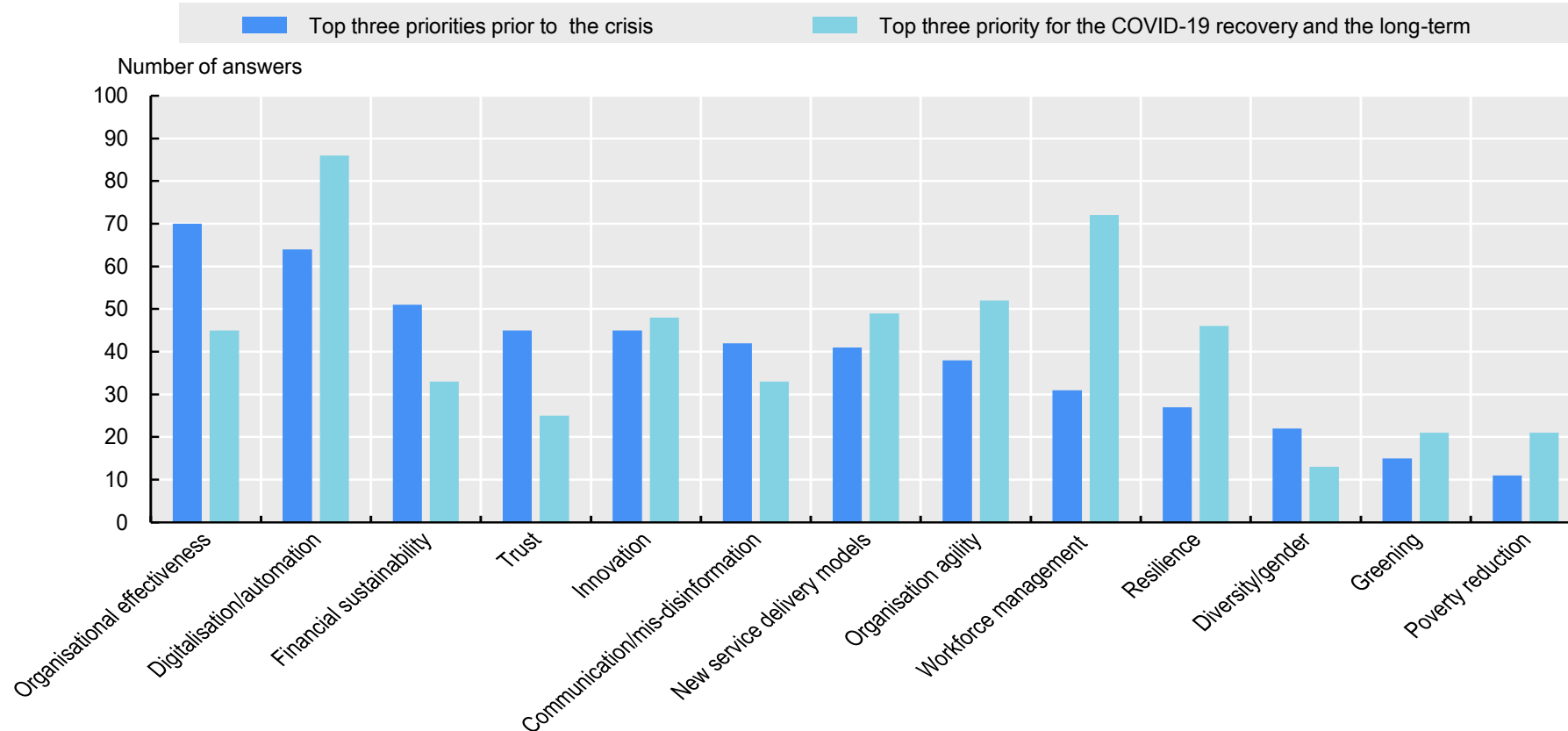




Strategy and planning: Uncertainty led to a high need for adaptability

Not all organisations had crisis plans in place before the pandemic, those who did were still not prepared mainly because these plans were not actionable in the COVID-19 context

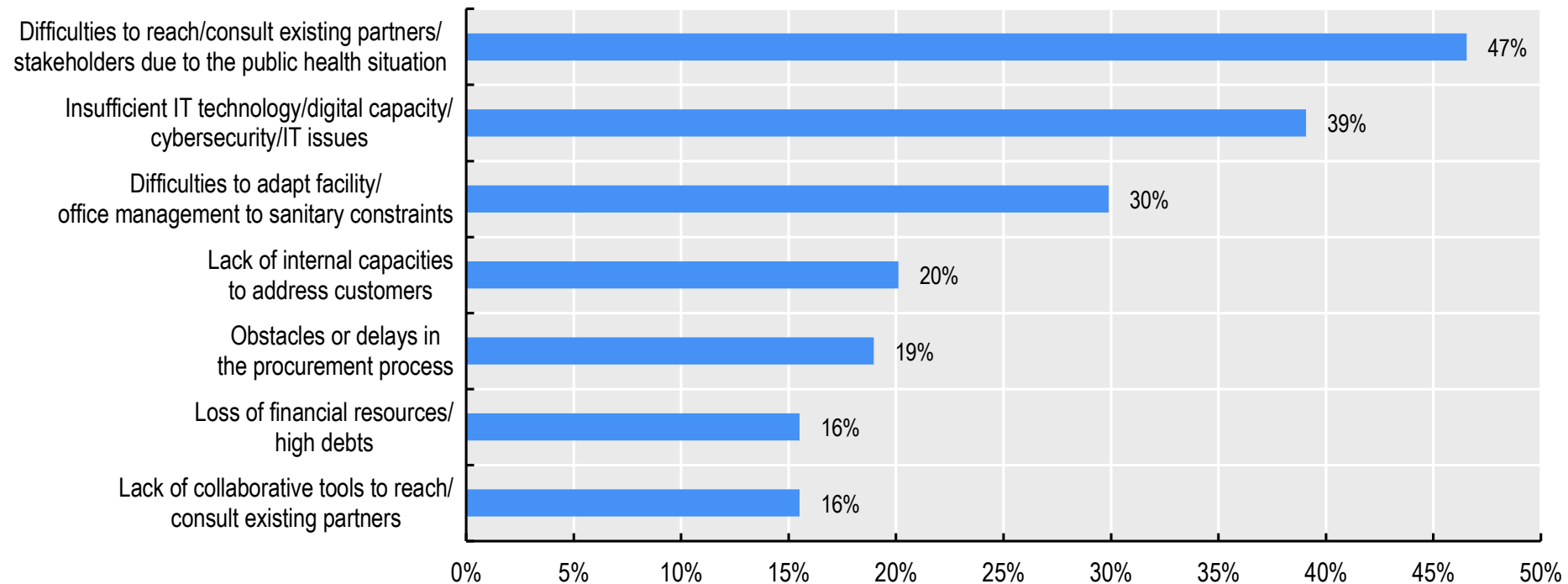
Priorities have shifted with digitalisation and workforce management at the top after the crisis





Partnerships and resources: new ways to reach partners

Main challenges in terms of partnerships and resources faced by public sector organisations during the crisis



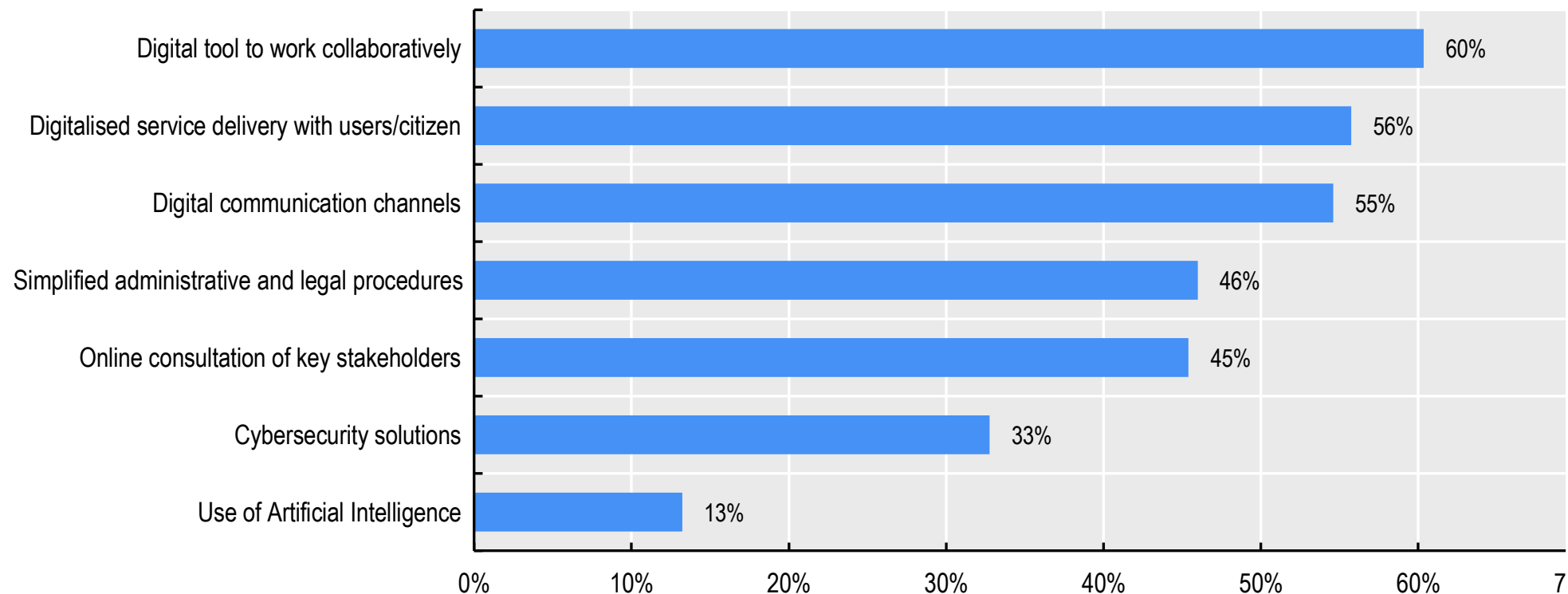
Despite the context, public sector organisations found new ways and opportunities to expand partnerships, resources (digital) and reach out to vulnerable populations



Processes: Digitalisation as a key trend for internal processes and service delivery

The impact on internal processes was high, particularly for communications, IT and HRM

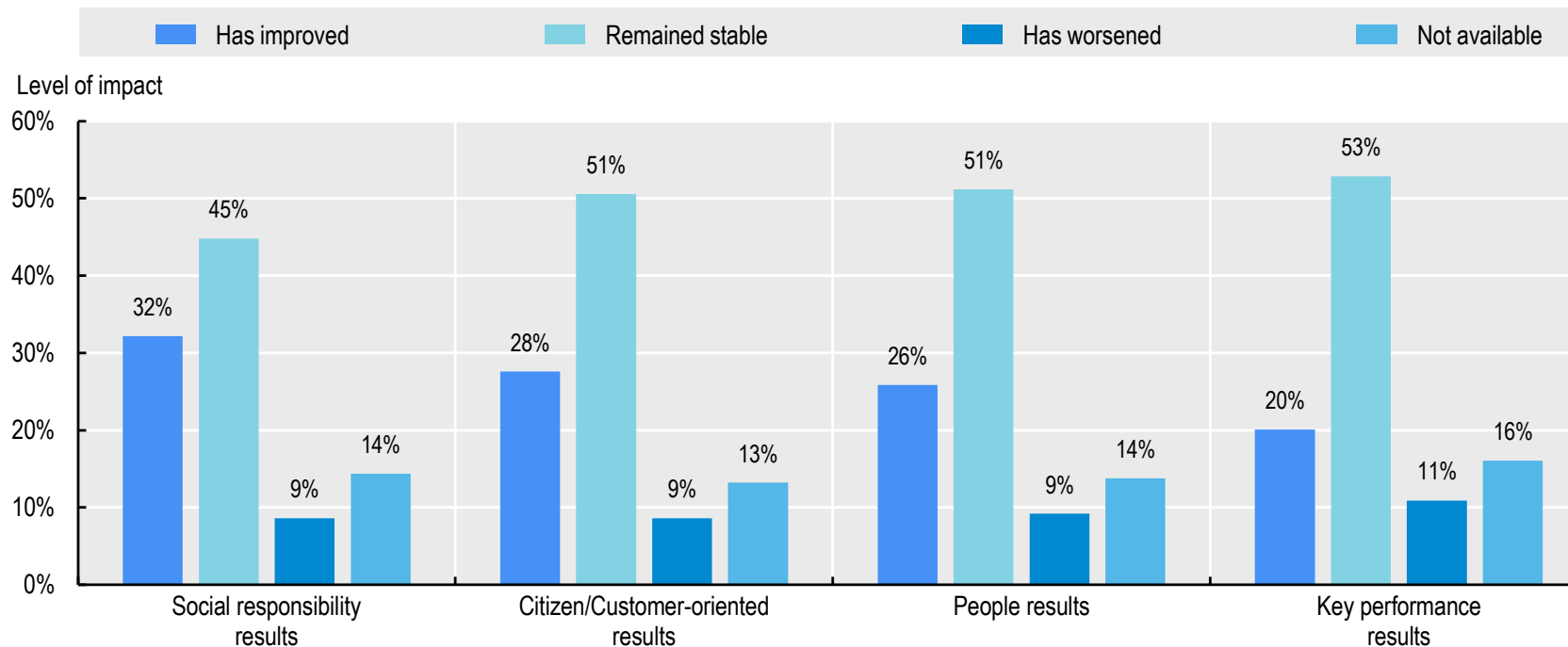
Service delivery model adaptations reported by public sector organisations involved digital solutions





Results: Measurement is key for learning and adaptation

The reported impact of the crisis on perception results according to public sector organisations was limited



Most organisations do not plan to change their measurement indicators and tools, which raises questions on the capacity to measure and improve performance in a new context



Experiences and key lessons learned regarding resilience from case study organisations

- Mimi Yotova, CAF National Correspondent, representing the **Sofia Health Inspectorate**, Bulgaria
- Lluch Hernández Gil, Head of Sustainability Unit, representing **Madrid Salud**, Spain
- Isabelle Verschueren, CAF National Correspondent, representing the **National Employment Office**, Belgium

- Feel free to join the discussion!



POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS ON STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE



Leadership

Resilience requires “crisis leadership”, agile human resources policies and continued focus on employee wellbeing

Findings and policy implications

- Effective leadership is **central to any crisis response** and to building a culture of trust, teamwork and responsibility that values and involves staff.
- The most effective leaders were those who possessed a **deep understanding** of their organisation and provided thoughtful and coherent direction.
- Effective leaders had enough **trust** in their managers’ abilities to delegate the change and innovation required.
- They were able to draw upon well-established professional **networks** to co-ordinate with external stakeholders and collaborators during the crisis.
- **Recruiting and developing** leaders with these leadership skills (foresight, crisis management) is essential to the resilience of public organisations.

OECD recommendations

- Develop/revise a leadership competency framework that emphasises resilience-related leadership competencies on : values-based leadership, open inclusion, organisational stewardship and networked collaboration.
- Invest in developing and deploying these leadership capabilities early.
- Appoint leaders with a solid track record of demonstrating these capabilities.
- Ensure that leaders intimately know their organization and the people that make it work, so that they can spearhead effective crisis responses.
- Invest in tailored learning opportunity for current and future leaders.
- Recognise that leaders are also at risk of burnout.



Strategy and planning

Resilience requires robust and coordinated governance mechanisms, strategic planning and crisis management

Findings and policy implications

- **Agile and robust** strategic planning processes are essential for organisations to adjust their strategies in volatile environments.
- Public organisations should develop **strategic planning capabilities** to adapt to the post-COVID-19 context.
- **Co-ordination mechanisms** should be improved to respond to crises and key challenges.
- Consultative and advisory bodies **involving civil society, the private sector, local actors and subnational entities** can be effective mechanisms for co-ordination.

OECD recommendations

- Develop or revise **existing strategic documents and objectives** and expand internal **capabilities** for doing so.
- Translate strategic objectives into operational action plans that guide and monitor the work.
- Develop **strategic foresight** in order to address uncertainty in policy-making.
- Improve **co-ordination mechanisms** in line with the OECD Recommendation on the Governance of Critical Risks.
- Review **emergency procedures and guidelines** to ensure they are functional and include the lessons learned from the crisis.



People

Resilience requires “crisis leadership”, agile human resources policies and continued focus on employee wellbeing

Findings and policy implications

- The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of the **commitment and dedication** of public sector employees, including frontline service providers.
- The **well-being and personal engagement** of employees are key factors in organizational resilience, as demonstrated by the crisis.
- Public organisations faced **challenges** in terms of deploying staff to the right places and ensuring their health and productivity in a rapidly changing crisis.
- To enhance resilience, **investments in workforce flexibility, including surge capacity, and employee well-being** are essential post-crisis.
- These investments can contribute to maintaining a **resilient and adaptable workforce** that can effectively respond to future crises and challenges.

OECD recommendations

Invest in resilient workers:

- Track employee health and well being through workforce data and employee surveys.
- Recruit workers with transversal skills, competencies and mindsets that contribute to resilience, such as creative problem solving, foresight and systems thinking.
- Developing a learning culture where employees are encouraged to learn on the job and build skills that contribute to resilience.

Ensure resilient HRM systems:

- Undertake regular workforce planning exercises that incorporate uncertainty and help to plan for resilience.
- Experience flexible ways of working.
- Put in place mobility mechanisms and surge capacity plans before a crisis hits.



Partnerships

Resilience requires evidence and strong engagement with stakeholders

Findings and policy implications

- The pandemic highlighted the importance of partnerships in responding to new challenges and circumstances.
- Public sector organisations relied on partnerships, **both new and old**, to access critical information on the impact of the pandemic on citizens and firms, including to reach vulnerable populations.
- The pandemic showed the **untapped value** that can be exploited in normal times as well.
- New **communication and digital channels** have been used to proactively inform, engage and communicate with partners.

OECD recommendations

- Build and facilitate **strong partnerships and networks**, including through a strategic approach, that can be leveraged for resilience in times of crisis and in normal times in line with the OECD Recommendation on Open Government.
- Ensure the use of **mechanisms** to consult citizens and involve them in service design.
- Make use of **digital tools** to generate better access to information and citizen participation.
- Design new **communication strategies**, identify the relevant channels to proactively inform and communicate with stakeholders to fight mis- and disinformation.



Processes

Resilience requires flexibility, responsiveness and accelerating digitalisation in organizations' delivery and internal processes

Findings and policy implications

- As the pandemic forced the world online, **digitalisation of processes** within public sector organisations became crucial.
- Obstacles related to infrastructure, regulation, security, digital skills, and resources must be addressed.
- Innovation efforts **should extend beyond digitalisation** to foster resilience and adaptability in the face of future crises.
- Establishing an **innovation ecosystem** with tools, processes, and incentives can help organisations adapt continuously.

OECD recommendations

- Assess the key digital transformation made during the crisis, and identify areas where it needs to be consolidated or accelerated.
- Consider a **digital strategy/plans** in line with the OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies.
- Ensure the user-centricity of digital services.
- Review the main innovative practices and changes made during the crisis, and do not move back to business as usual.
- Create a conducive environment for **continuous innovation** in the organisation.
- Encourage **piloting and experimentation**.



Results

Organisations require a stronger evidence-base to make informed decisions during a crisis situation and prepare for the next.

Findings and policy implications

- A focus on results and a strong evidence base (data, indicators) have helped public sector organisations make informed decisions and remain effective and responsive during the crisis.
- Establishing **performance frameworks and evidence-informed policymaking** across the organisation can help monitor and increase performance and adjust regularly to new priorities and context.
- Evidence-based policy aims to make effective and successful policy decisions **based on solid data**, new indicators and data sets might be needed to measure new services and priorities.

OECD recommendations

- **Systematise the use of evidence and data** delivered by monitoring efforts to make informed decisions.
- Ensure the systemic collection and analysis of data (financial, perception, performance, delivery, etc.) to measure the progress towards the achievement of the objectives.
- Revise the existing set of indicators in **light of the new activities, services and objectives** developed during the crisis.
- Build **internal capacity** for engaging with performance information and evidence-informed policymaking.
- Consider how to **best publish and share** monitoring information.

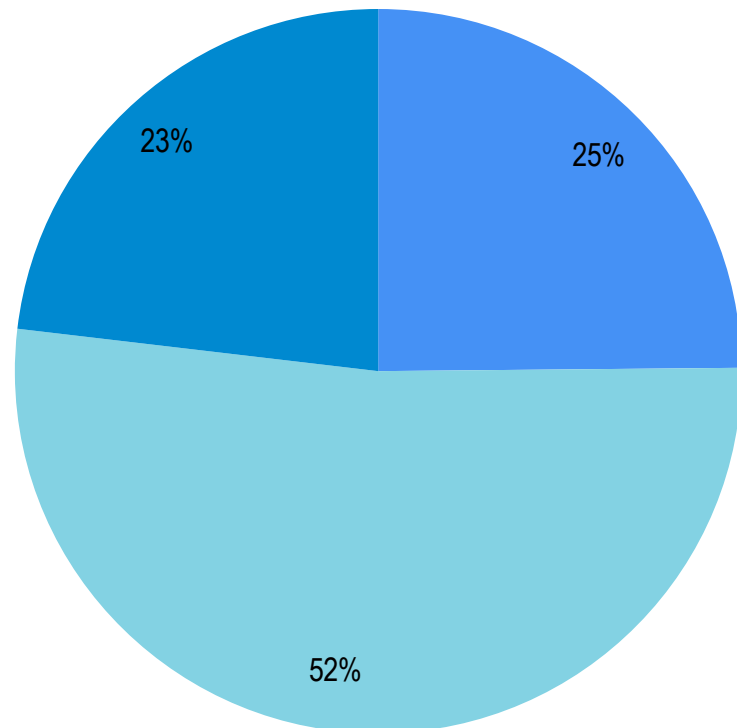
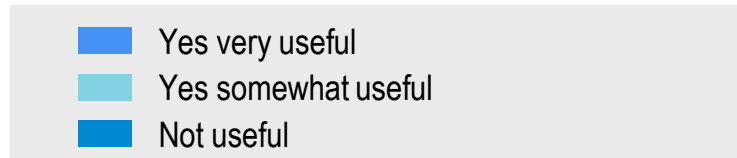


WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CAF?



CAF has proven useful during the crisis

Most organisations found CAF useful or very useful during the crisis



- CAF proved valuable in crisis preparedness and response as a framework for continuous organisational improvement.
- Public sector organisations that engage in regular use of the CAF bring together employees from across the organisation for reflection and self-assessment, helping identify strengths and areas for improvement to make the organisation more effective and better prepared to anticipate and address future risks.
- During the crisis, CAF users could often draw on performance improvement initiatives already underway, for instance on digitalisation and remote working, which helped them weather the most disruptive shocks.



Using CAF more efficiently

CAF users can likely get the most of our CAF for resilience by:

- **Using the CAF regularly**, in cyclical manner to ensure that the kinds of experiences described above become embedded in the organisations' DNA.
- **Being inclusive** – use CAF as an opportunity to bring actors from across the organisations together to learn about one another's work and their strengths and challenges. Using this as an opportunity to build networks and common sense of purpose and drive.
- **Focusing on honest reflection and learning**, not compliance – bringing in a range of different input to hold up a mirror to the organisation.
- **Ensuring that CAF results support the delivery of better outcomes** for the organisation and its beneficiaries - connecting the CAF assessment with the strategic objectives of the organisation for a better achievement of its mission and targets.
- **Embedding its use in foresight** – bringing in ideas and challenges from the outside and focused on future changes are essential to get the most out of the tool from a resilience perspective.



8 ideas for possible developments for the CAF

1. The CAF model can be further improved by **integrating resilience into its framework**.
2. Relabelling the CAF as **a tool for organisational resilience and performance** could support the promotion of the model to new organizations.
3. CAF can aid organizations in **identifying new priorities** and streamlining the development and implementation of new practices.
4. **Mindful leadership** can craft a culture of trust, teamwork, and responsibility that involves staff.
5. Encouraging staff flexibility, self-organisation, and well-being can **foster a culture of innovation** that empowers employees to go the extra mile.
6. **Building more inclusive work approaches and processes internally and externally** can increase collaboration at all levels, enhance transparency and openness, and generate new ideas and practices closer to user needs.
7. CAF should be viewed by organisations as **a working model, expanding opportunities for teamwork** by breaking silos.
8. Mistakes in the use of the CAF model are **learning opportunities for organisations**, helping to develop a **community of best practices**.



THANK YOU.