LEEPS
Learning together to advance Evidence and Equity in Policymaking

What Works in Capacity Strengthening? Insights from Training 1,000+ Evidence Actors in West Africa

Executive Summary

The Challenge

Across West Africa, evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) remains a cornerstone of effective and equitable governance, yet the capacity to generate, interpret, and use high-quality evidence is uneven. While research production in the region has expanded, gaps persist between knowledge creation and its practical application in policymaking. Weak data systems, insufficient analytical capacity, and limited collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and civil society often prevent evidence from shaping the decisions that matter most. Recognizing this challenge, the Evidence Policy Action Centre of Excellence, or EPA Centre (led by the African Center for Equitable Development (ACED)), through the Africa LEEPS Partnership, set out to strengthen the evidence ecosystem by empowering local actors to effectively produce and use data for policy impact.

The Solution

To address these gaps, ACED launched a comprehensive, demand-driven capacity-strengthening program across six West African countries. The initiative identified the most pressing needs through participatory diagnostics and focused on six priority themes: Artificial Intelligence (AI) in evidence use, data quality, evidence-informed decision-making, gender data integration, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and knowledge translation.

More than 1,000 participants, including researchers, policymakers, parliamentarians, and development practitioners, took part in hybrid trainings, combining webinars, in-person workshops, and practical exercises.

Participants share and exchange experiences during Africa LEEPS workshop in Abidjan

Each module blended theory with hands-on learning, supported by practical guides and toolkits developed specifically for the region. ACED also partnered with expert institutions such as FRIARE, Institut Le Baromètre, and the University of Montreal's Team RENARD to ensure technical rigor and contextual relevance.

The Impact

The program delivered measurable improvements in both knowledge and confidence among participants. Post-training assessments demonstrated substantial learning gains—such as a **34-point increase in understanding of gender integration** concepts and a nearly universal **rise in participants' self-rated ability to apply these skills**. Beyond individual outcomes, the initiative fostered a vibrant Community of Practice across seven countries, enabling continued peer learning and collaboration. The use of open-source tools like QGIS, KNIME, and KoboToolbox enhanced accessibility and sustainability, ensuring that participants could continue applying what they learned without reliance on costly proprietary software.

Lessons Learned

Several key lessons emerged. First, **combining participatory design with hybrid delivery maximized engagement** and learning outcomes. Second, the diversity of participants enriched dialogue but also underscored the need for **modular training tailored to different skill levels.** Third, while short-term knowledge gains were significant, **sustained support and mentorship are essential** for long-term institutional change. Finally, contextualized materials rooted in West African realities proved critical for ensuring relevance and ownership.

Learners in the first cohort of ACRES' Evidence-to-Policy Training Program exchange ideas during a workshop held in Uganda

Conclusion

ACED's experience demonstrates that **when capacity strengthening is locally driven, inclusive, and practical, it can transform** how evidence informs public policy. To sustain this progress, ongoing investment in communities of practice, mentorship programs, and regionally tailored learning resources is essential. Policymakers, donors, and development partners are urged to build on this foundation—scaling these proven approaches across the continent to institutionalize a culture of evidence use and ensure that data continues to drive equitable, informed, and sustainable development in Africa.

Introduction: The Evidence Gap in West Africa – A Capacity Challenge

In West Africa, evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) is a powerful lever for advancing sustainable development. The Africa LEEPS Partnership (Learning Together to Advance Evidence and Equity in Policymaking) provides a strategic platform to strengthen the region's evidence ecosystem. The African Center for Equitable Development (ACED), in collaboration with partners such as the Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative (Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale or IPAR), plays a pivotal role in driving this agenda within its broader ecosystem.

Africa LEEPS is rooted in a clear reality: while research output in the region continues to grow, knowledge remains fragmented, and engagement between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers is still limited. As a result, scientific evidence often fails to translate into transformative public policies. This persistent **disconnect between knowledge production and its practical application poses a significant barrier to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

To address this challenge, ACED has developed and implemented an ambitious, multidimensional capacity strengthening program. Its goal extends far beyond training delivery — it seeks to **institutionalize knowledge transfer** as a core mechanism for **more effective, equitable, and inclusive governance**. By building strong and lasting bridges between research and action, the program equips key actors — including researchers, public officials, civil society leaders, and development practitioners — with the skills, tools, and methodologies needed to generate, interpret, and apply evidence in decision-making.

This brief outlines the methodology guiding the initiative, from needs assessment through to activity implementation. It presents the learning materials developed, analyzes activities delivered under each thematic area, shares evaluation results, and distills lessons learned into strategic recommendations aimed at sustaining and scaling the impact of these efforts.

Our Approach: A Blueprint for Demand-Driven Capacity Strengthening

Listening First: How We Identified Real Needs

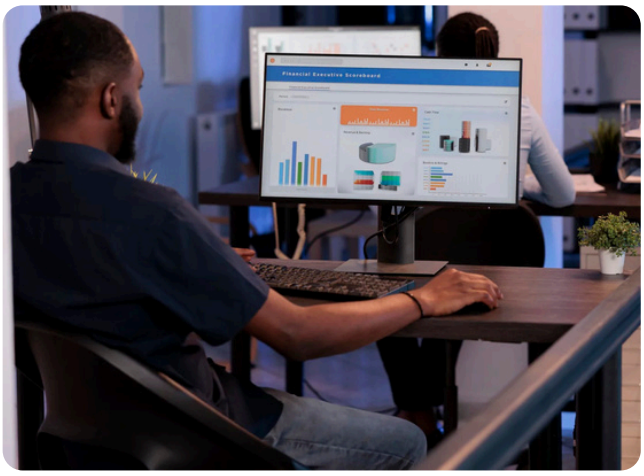
Recognizing that strong capacities are essential to enabling the evidence ecosystem, ACED designed a tailored capacity strengthening plan targeting key actors who play pivotal roles within this system. The plan identified approximately forty sub-themes grouped into ten core thematic areas. ACED applied a two-step, participatory approach in six West African countries to identify the top thematic priorities among these forty themes:

1. **Participatory diagnostic workshops with stakeholders engaged across the policy cycle in the above thematic areas.** These discussions gathered diverse perspectives from researchers, policymakers, civil society, and practitioners to identify capacity strengths, weaknesses, and emerging needs.
2. **In-depth follow-up interviews to refine and validate the findings** from the group discussions, ensuring a comprehensive and context-specific understanding of the gaps.

This capacity strengthening plan was developed using inputs from the participatory process. It is in the early stages of operationalization, guiding ACED's efforts to systematically close the identified gaps and equip ecosystem actors with the tools they need to effectively generate and use evidence in policymaking.

From 40 Themes to 6 Priorities: A Focused, Strategic Selection

The diagnostic covered six countries where ACED previously conducted evidence ecosystem mapping exercises to understand evidence actors, how the actors relate to each other, and key priorities of the actors. Thematic priorities were first determined based on their relative importance as identified in these country-level assessments. This step ensured that the selection reflected a clear demand-driven criterion, grounded in the expressed needs and priorities of national stakeholders.



Finally, emphasis was placed on themes directly relevant to evidence-informed policymaking (EIP) and with the potential to engage all categories of actors within the evidence ecosystem — including researchers, policymakers, civil society, and development practitioners. This dual lens — combining demand-based relevance with ecosystem-wide applicability — ensured that the selected themes would have both high impact and broad uptake across the countries of focus.

The needs assessment revealed several recurring and cross-cutting capacity gaps affecting the effective use of evidence in policymaking. These include:

- Weak mechanisms for data collection and quality assurance, limiting the reliability of evidence.
- Limited alignment between evidence production agendas and national policy priorities.
- Insufficient capacity for data analysis, interpretation, and synthesis.
- Underutilization of existing datasets by decision-makers and practitioners.
- Low integration of modern tools — such as artificial intelligence — into evidence production, mobilization, and knowledge translation.

In response, twelve themes were identified. Please see Appendix 1 for the full list of themes. All themes target a wide range of stakeholders within the evidence ecosystem — including researchers, policymakers, civil society organizations, and development practitioners — and aim to address both technical and institutional barriers to the effective use of data in decision-making.

Given limited resources and time, ACED selected six thematic areas on which to focus their efforts, outlined in the table below.

Theme	Materials	Format Selection & Methodology	Target & Trained People
1. Use of AI in Production, Mobilization, and Use of Evidence	Practical guide	Online training (2) covers the guide's core content, with practitioner-led sessions to share real-world experience applying AI to evidence-informed policymaking	A total of 249 participants were drawn from the Community of Practice established by Centre EPA across seven countries
2. Data Quality	Collection of expert presentations (including: Data Quality: Challenges and Solutions for Data-Driven Organizations; Statistical Data Governance based on the SDMX standard; Data Quality: A Vital Issue for Businesses and Public Health; Strategies to Ensure Good Data Quality in Organizations)	Webinar and in-person training featuring expert presentations and practical discussions on data governance and quality assurance	A total of 303 participants from the Benin Community of Practice and other affiliated members
3. Evidence Informed Decision-Making	Training presentation based on ACED guide contents (Accessing, understanding, and using evidence to improve the design and implementation of food security and nutrition interventions)	In-person training	A total of 31 participants, including members of the Benin Chapter of the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation and parliamentary staff.
4. Integrating Gender Data into Decision-Making	Guide on integrating gender across the policy and research cycle	Online webinar and in-person training	A total of 420 participants from the Community of Practice established by Centre EPA across seven countries
5. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	Guide on using GIS for decision-making	Webinar	Members of the Community of Practice (researchers, policymakers, practitioners) established by Centre EPA in seven countries
6. Knowledge translation	Knowledge translation toolkit (templates, policy brief formats, communication checklists)	Blended approach: Online and in-person training combining toolkit walkthroughs, drafting exercises and peer review	A total of 27 participants, including Centre EPA staff (ACED & IPAR) and selected researchers from the Benin Community of Practice

In total, these training activities involved over 1,030 participants.

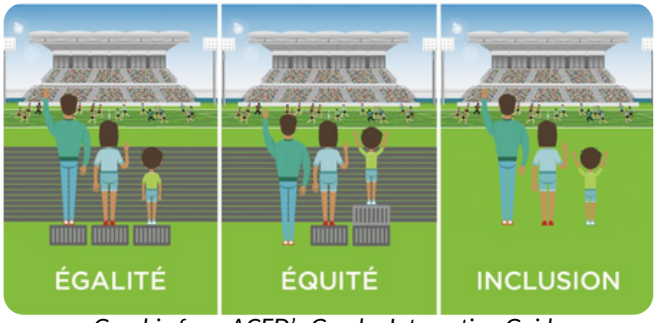
What Worked: Inside Our Hybrid Training Model

Blending Online and In-Person Learning for Maximum Impact

The training curriculum was carefully designed to foster both knowledge acquisition and practical application. For example, training on gender integration began with an online webinar that introduced basic concepts and provided space for discussing the challenges of gender mainstreaming. This was followed by intensive two- to three-day in-person workshops that combined expert-led presentations, collaborative case studies, and interactive restitution sessions. Together, these elements enabled participants to actively engage with the content and translate theoretical concepts into actionable strategies. This participatory design not only deepened understanding but also promoted ownership of the tools and methods shared.

Graphic from ACED's Gender Integration Guide

For other technical areas, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), online webinars introduced key concepts and facilitated cross-country exchange, building on the content developed in the accompanying guides. In the case of Knowledge Translation, a blended learning approach was prioritized to balance accessibility with depth.



Graphic from ACED's Gender Integration Guide

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Expert-developed MOOC modules provided participants with a solid foundation for self-paced study, while in-person sessions consolidated learning through practical exercises, applied case discussions, and personalized coaching. Post-training support was also offered to review the knowledge translation plans produced by participant working groups, serving as a main practical output. This **hybrid strategy maximized flexibility while ensuring that participants developed both theoretical insights and the practical skills needed** to embed evidence into decision-making processes.

The guides and training materials covered a gender integration guide (3 volumes), a GIS practical and training manual, and a guide to the use of AI for evidence. These materials are covered in detail in Appendix 2.

A Deep Dive into Our Knowledge Translation and EIP Modules

Training on Knowledge Translation

The Knowledge Translation (KT) training was structured as an integrated learning path, beginning with an online preparatory phase using MOOC 1 and culminating in an intensive in-person workshop. Participants first acquired a common knowledge base by independently studying Modules 1 and 2, which lay the theoretical foundations: the definition of KT, its different approaches (push, pull, exchange), the types of knowledge use, as well as the key factors and mechanisms that influence research uptake.

The in-person training then provided a deeper, practical, and interactive exploration of the subject through Modules 3 to 7. These sessions covered the strategic planning of a KT approach (Module 3), the essential function of knowledge brokering (Module 4), the creation of impactful communication tools such as policy briefs, infographics, and videos (Module 5), oral communication techniques for persuading decision-makers (Module 6), and the organization of deliberative workshops for the co-creation of solutions (Module 7). Finally, the program concluded with the individual study of Module 8, dedicated to evaluating the outcomes of KT strategies, teaching participants how to develop a logic model and select relevant indicators to measure the impact of their actions.

Training on EIP

Designed for parliamentarians of the Republic of Benin, this in-person training served as a practical guide to effectively integrate evidence into the public policy cycle. The training covered the definition of key concepts, distinguishing between different categories of data (academic, practical, social) and their crucial importance for optimizing resources and informing decisions. A structured six-step methodology for integrating data into the legislative process was then explored, ranging from needs identification to collection, quality assessment, synthesis, and presentation of findings.

To make the learning concrete, an interactive workshop was conducted based on a fictional bill, the "Law for the Reduction of Urban Air Pollution." This allowed parliamentarians to apply analysis and formulation techniques by considering the types of data to collect (pollution levels, health impacts, examples of foreign legislation), analyzing their relevance to the Beninese context, and formulating critical questions about the economic and social feasibility of the proposed measures. The training also involved proposing strong recommendations aimed at institutionalizing a culture of evidence, strengthening intersectoral collaboration, and ensuring more transparent and effective governance.

The Power of Partnership: Leveraging Expert Networks

To deliver these trainings, ACED combined the mobilization of subject-matter experts with the strategic engagement of key partners. This partnership approach was applied in three notable cases:

- FRIARE (Fondation Ratheil pour l'Intelligence Artificielle Responsable et Efficiente): Collaborated on a capacity-building workshop focused on data quality and governance.
- Institut Le Baromètre (specialized in policy evaluation): Partnered to deliver training for parliamentarians on the use of evidence—particularly evaluation results—in decision-making processes.
- Team RENARD, University of Montreal (specialized in knowledge translation in the field of social interventions): Collaborated to design and deliver capacity-building activities on knowledge translation.

Proof in the Results: Measuring Learning and Confidence

The workshops incorporated a mixed evaluation design—pre/post knowledge tests and participant self-assessments—to measure both objective learning gains and shifts in learners' confidence. The **results demonstrate significant and targeted knowledge gains** across nearly all concepts covered, validating the effectiveness of the participatory, practice-oriented pedagogy used in the training.

Key findings from the post-training assessments included improvements in:

- **Conceptual clarity on gender approaches:** Understanding of the conceptual distinction between different gender approaches and the gender continuum rose from 45.5% correct at pre-test to 79.6% at post-test, an increase of 34.1 percentage points. This large gain addresses a previously identified point of major confusion.
- **Understanding of sex-disaggregated data:** Correct responses on the concept of sex-disaggregated data increased from 69.0% to 89.8%, a gain of 20.8 percentage points, an outcome that is fundamental for applying gender analysis in practice.
- **Self-rated competency in gender integration:** Self-assessment of competency showed a dramatic rise in confidence and perceived mastery. Before the training, 42% of participants rated their mastery of gender integration above the midpoint (>5/10). After the training, that proportion rose to 97.8%, with many participants rating themselves 8 or 9 out of 10—an indication that the practical, applied approach substantially boosted participants' readiness to act.
- **Equity vs. equality distinction:** A concept that was already relatively well understood saw a modest consolidation: confusion over the difference between equity and equality decreased from 9.1% at pre-test to 8.2% at post-test.

These results indicate that the **combination of preparatory webinars, intensive in-person sessions, hands-on exercises, and post-training support produced both measurable knowledge improvements and strong gains in participant confidence**. The particularly large increases for previously weak areas (e.g., the gender continuum) suggest that targeted, practice-oriented modules are highly effective at addressing specific misconceptions.

While pre/post-tests and self-assessments provide robust early evidence of impact, they capture short-term learning gains. To assess sustained application and institutional change, we recommend continued follow-up through mentorship, periodic refresher sessions, and monitoring of on-the-job application (for example, review of participants' subsequent work products or organizational practices). These measures will help verify whether the observed gains translate into longer-term changes in evidence use and decision making.

Lessons from the Field: Strengths, Challenges, and Honest Reflections

These capacity-strengthening initiatives demonstrate clear strengths in terms of methodology, content, and tools. The training was praised for its practical tools, effective pedagogy, and the trainer's expertise, which together created an engaging and supportive learning environment. The diversity of participants further enriched discussions, enabling cross-learning and the exchange of perspectives from varied professional contexts. However, it also revealed some structural and pedagogical challenges that offer valuable lessons for future improvements. Key challenges included the limited duration of sessions, which constrained deeper learning and hands-on practice, and the difficulty of meeting the varied needs of participants with different skill levels. Additional barriers arose from reliance on self-directed preparation and persistent confusion around complex concepts, underscoring the need for more guided, iterative, and extended learning opportunities.

Strengths

- **Appropriateness and usefulness of the tools provided:** The strategic focus on recognized analytical frameworks (e.g., the Harvard framework) and accessible open-source software (QGIS, KNIME, KoboToolbox) was particularly well received and reinforced the applicability and sustainability of the training. Participants appreciated that the training equipped them with tools and methods they could immediately apply in their professional contexts, without being constrained by financial barriers or proprietary licenses.
- **Pedagogical effectiveness:** The combination of concise theory, interactive group work, and practical exercises was particularly well received and ensured participants gained both theoretical understanding and practical insights. It helped transform abstract concepts into actionable skills and fostered strong participant engagement throughout the sessions. The balanced mix of concise theoretical inputs, contextualized case studies, and intensive group work emerged as the main factor of success. These approaches proved highly effective in transforming abstract concepts into directly applicable skills.
- **High quality of expertise mobilized:** The "expertise of the trainer," along with their eloquence, availability, and ability to "challenge stereotypes with pedagogy," were consistently cited as strengths in the evaluations. This high level of expertise was instrumental in creating an atmosphere of trust and psychological safety—conditions essential for deep and sustained learning.
- **Diversity of participants:** Bringing together researchers, practitioners, and project managers created a stimulating environment for cross-learning and exchange. This heterogeneity enriched discussions and allowed for the sharing of perspectives across different professional realities.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Time management and depth of content:** The main challenge identified was the tension between the richness of content and the short duration of training sessions (2–3 days). Participants consistently expressed the need for extended sessions to allow for deeper assimilation and more hands-on practice, especially on technical tools such as policy note drafting.
- **Heterogeneity of skill levels:** While diversity was a strength, it also posed challenges for pacing. Meeting the needs of both beginners and advanced participants proved difficult, with some feeling that certain sessions moved too quickly, while others found them less challenging.
- **Limitations of self-directed preparation:** In hybrid training formats, the requirement to complete online modules in advance was a barrier for some participants. Without early pedagogical guidance, achieving a uniform level of understanding prior to the in-person sessions was challenging.
- **Persistent conceptual confusion:** Despite overall significant learning gains, post-test results indicated that some complex concepts (e.g., equity vs. equality) remained partially misunderstood. This suggests the need for continuous reinforcement and iterative learning opportunities.
- **Time management and content depth:** The most frequently cited challenge was the tension between the richness of the training content and the limited duration of the workshops (2–3 days). Several participants expressed the "need to extend the duration of the training" to allow for deeper assimilation and, in particular, to dedicate more time to hands-on practice with specific tools such as policy brief writing.
- **Diversity of participant profiles:** By design, the workshops brought together participants with varied backgrounds (researchers, practitioners, project managers) and differing levels of prior knowledge. While this diversity enriched discussions, it occasionally made it challenging to adjust the pace in a way that met the needs of both beginners and more advanced participants.
- **Limitations of self-directed preparation:** For hybrid trainings (such as the Knowledge Translation workshop), pre-training online modules posed challenges for some participants. A number noted the difficulty of developing a shared understanding of new concepts without direct pedagogical guidance from the outset.
- **Persistence of conceptual confusion:** Despite the overall strong progress achieved, post-test results revealed that some conceptual misunderstandings persisted on complex notions (e.g., equity versus equality). This highlights the importance of ongoing reinforcement and the need to view learning as a continuous process rather than a one-off achievement.

A Practical Guide for Practitioners: Recommendations for Effective and Sustainable Capacity Strengthening Initiatives

Drawing on these lessons, the following considerations are proposed to guide future efforts by ACED and its partners:

- **Adopt a modular, multi-level approach:** To address the heterogeneity of participants, future programs should be structured into basic modules (for beginners) and advanced modules (for experienced practitioners). This design allows in-depth exploration of complex topics without slowing the pace for all.
- **Strengthen practical application and post-training support:** Dedicate more time during workshops to hands-on exercises and simulations. Establish follow-up mechanisms (e.g., post-training webinars, online forums) to sustain a Community of Practice where participants can exchange experiences, raise questions, and receive ongoing support.
- **Systematize and deepen evaluation mechanisms:** Continue using pre- and post-tests across all training activities to systematically measure learning gains. Complement these with follow-up assessments at 6–12 months to track the effective transfer of skills into participants' professional practice.
- **Develop highly contextualized learning resources:** Expand the production of case studies and guides rooted in West African realities. Co-developing these resources with local partners will ensure maximum relevance and ownership.
- **Optimize the hybrid training format:** For blended learning initiatives, consider launching with an online introductory session before self-paced study. This would help participants grasp key concepts early, harmonize baseline understanding, and facilitate deeper engagement in subsequent in-person or virtual sessions.

Conclusion: Sustaining the Momentum

The capacity-strengthening initiative led by ACED has proven highly effective and relevant for the evidence ecosystem in West Africa. By equipping stakeholders with practical skills, robust methodological frameworks, and accessible tools, the program has tangibly contributed to bridging the critical gap between research production and its effective use in policymaking. Measured knowledge gains were significant, and participants expressed exceptionally high levels of satisfaction, validating the chosen pedagogical approach. More than a series of training sessions, the **initiative successfully catalyzed a culture of exchange and collaboration, laying the foundations for an engaged and sustainable** Community of Practice.

The lessons learned from ACED offer a practical roadmap for others seeking to strengthen evidence use in their own contexts. By adopting participatory, modular, and context-driven approaches, organizations can design capacity-strengthening programs that are both scalable and sustainable, ensuring that evidence consistently informs decision-making across sectors and regions.

Appendix 1: Themes Identified after Needs Assessment

The following themes respond to the recurring and cross-cutting capacity gaps identified during the needs assessment that are affecting the effective use of evidence in policymaking.

Theme	Rationale & Key Issues	Challenges
1. Introduction to Evidence	Foundational understanding of credible evidence, how to access it, and how to apply it is essential for all actors.	Limited awareness of standards for reliable evidence; inconsistent use in decision-making.
2. Data Collection and Mobilization	High-quality data is the cornerstone of EIP, requiring robust collection and mobilization methods.	Weak data collection systems; low integration of AI and big data; lack of familiarity with systematic reviews.
3. Data Quality, Ethics, Storage, and Sharing	Ethical, transparent, and well-managed data systems build trust and usability.	Inadequate ethical safeguards; poor storage protocols; limited data sharing mechanisms.
4. Data Processing and Analysis	Data interpretation and analysis turn raw information into actionable insights.	Skills gaps in quantitative and qualitative analysis; limited use of R, Python, Stata.
5. Data Writing and Publication	Evidence has impact only when communicated clearly and credibly.	Weak capacity in scientific writing, synthesis, and dissemination.
6. Evidence-Informed Decision-Making	Embedding evidence into policy enhances decision quality and legitimacy.	Limited understanding of EIP processes; poor integration of evidence in policy formulation.
7. Integrating Gender Data into Decision-Making	Gender-sensitive evidence ensures inclusive, equitable policies.	Gaps in collecting, analyzing, and using gender-disaggregated data.
8. Macroeconomic Modeling	Macroeconomic models provide critical forecasts for economic policy.	Limited technical capacity in econometric and macroeconomic modeling.
9. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	Spatial data improves situational awareness and planning.	Limited skills in spatial analysis; poor management of geospatial databases.
10. Capitalization of Experiences and Best Practices	Documenting and sharing lessons learned strengthens policy and practice.	Lack of standardized capitalization and dissemination processes.
11. Environmental Impact Assessment	EIAs ensure sustainable development and mitigate environmental harm.	Weak institutional capacity for environmental assessment.
12. Evidence Valorization / Knowledge Translation	Maximizing existing knowledge accelerates innovation and impact in policy making	Limited strategies for knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement.

Appendix 1: Guides and Training Materials

Gender Integration Guide (Volumes 1, 2, & 3)

This comprehensive resource, structured into three complementary volumes, provides practical guidance on integrating gender considerations across different cycles. Volumes 1 and 2 address integration within the policy, program, and project cycle, while Volume 3 focuses specifically on the research cycle. The guide presents robust theoretical frameworks (e.g., the integration continuum, ATG approaches), methodological tools (such as activity profiles, stakeholder analysis, and the Harvard matrix), and practical case studies that demonstrate concrete applications.

GIS Practical and Training Manual

Developed as a practical, step-by-step resource, this manual focuses on the application of the open-source software QGIS. It takes learners on a progressive journey—from software installation to the production of advanced thematic maps—while covering essential data management skills (e.g., joins, spatial clipping), data collection using drones, and foundational analytical techniques. With its strong practical orientation, the manual equips participants to confidently apply GIS methods in support of evidence-based decision-making.

Guide to the Use of AI for Evidence

As a pioneering resource, this guide offers a structured approach to demystifying Artificial Intelligence (AI) for evidence generation and use. It introduces key concepts (such as machine learning and natural language processing) and illustrates their application across the three phases of the data cycle: production (e.g., web scraping, KoboToolbox), mobilization (e.g., visualization with KNIME), and use (e.g., bias detection, generating recommendations with ChatGPT). Real-world case studies—including applications in epidemic prevention and agricultural irrigation—demonstrate the practical value of these tools and methodologies.