Embedded Learning Partnerships

What have we learnt?

Six years of IDinsight's embedded learning support to governments

IDinsight

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Six years of IDinsight's embedded learning support to governments

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About IDinsight
IDinsight uses data and evidence to help leaders combat poverty worldwide. Our collaborations deploy a large analytical toolkit to help clients design better policies, rigorously test what works, and use evidence to implement effectively at scale. We place special emphasis on using the right tool for the right question, and tailor our rigorous methods to the real-world constraints of decision-makers.

IDinsight works with governments, foundations, NGOs, multilaterals and businesses across Africa and Asia. We work in all major sectors including health, education, agriculture, governance, digital ID, financial access, and sanitation.

We have offices in Dakar, Lusaka, Manila, Nairobi, New Delhi, Rabat, and San Francisco.

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Executive Summary

Evidence-Informed Policymaking (EIPM) is the use of evidence to design, implement, and refine policy to achieve objectives. Taking an evidence-informed approach to policy contributes to improvements in policy development, service delivery, and outcomes for the citizens that governments serve. For policymakers to better understand, critically appraise, and incorporate evidence where useful, researchers must generate and make accessible evidence that takes policymakers' constraints into account. In addition to being accurate, evidence should be relevant, timely, and easily understood. One way of facilitating this type of EIPM is by integrating teams with research skills into policymaking teams.

Over the past six years, IDinsight has built deep experience in its 'Learning Partnership' (LP) approach. LPs are long-term engagements[1] with clients, during which IDinsight LP teams work in an embedded or co-located fashion with our partners to identify the questions they need answered and generate context-specific evidence to inform decisions. This report will only focus on LPs with public sector clients or "government clients", using a broad definition of government.[2] IDinsight has pursued LPs with a variety of policymaking teams in more than a dozen national and subnational government partner organizations across Africa and Asia, including in Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, the Philippines, and Zambia.[3,4]

IDinsight conducted a reflection exercise to distill learnings from its LP approach of supporting governments. Between November 2021 and January 2022, we reviewed documents and spoke to IDinsight LP teams and government partners to identify critical enablers and barriers to LP success.

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1   Although LPs vary in length, they usually last from 1-4 years, with government relationships often continuing beyond the engagement.
2   Our definition of government includes national and sub-national government entities, government agencies, and parastatal institutions.
3   We provide a detailed list of IDinsight LPs with government partners in Appendix 2.
4   Some non-government IDinsight LPs include a two-year LP with UNICEF that informed the scale up of an integrated sanitation and nutrition program and an LP with Educate Girls that supported the expansion of Educate Girls' activities to improve girls' enrolment in schools in India.

The following is a summary of the key learnings from this exercise.

LP teams should have a deep understanding of the partner's context to identify feasible solutions. LP teams should implement measures to allow them to gain an understanding of the partner's contexts, including stakeholder mappings and further formalizing political economy analyses. Having an inception or scoping phase at the start of an LP is one way of generating and understanding the partner's operating context. Additionally, teams should regularly engage with key champions of partner organizations throughout the LP to ensure that they are well versed with the partner's operating context.

Partners at both the individual and institutional level must be committed to EIPM beforehand. If not, LP activities are unlikely to inform policy decisions. LP teams should screen the commitment of potential partners to use data and evidence. At the institutional level, partners should have displayed some commitment of human capital and resources towards the generation or use of evidence. At the individual level, EIPM champions should be able to advocate within their own teams for enhanced evidence generation and use.[5] Conversations with potential partners and other stakeholders combined with desk research on past actions that potential partners have taken can provide insights on partner commitment to EIPM. A partner's willingness to mobilize their own resources[6] to support the engagement provides a necessary but not sufficient indication of a commitment to EIPM and the LP engagement.

Trust and buy-in of champions from partner organizations is non-negotiable for an LP to be successful. To build trust, IDinsight LP teams should plan for sufficient leadership time pre-engagement and for formal and informal check-ins with key champions throughout the engagement. Over time, IDinsight's LP model has evolved to include up to three times more leadership time compared to other IDinsight engagements.[7] Generating quick wins during the initial stages of the engagement, being co-located with partner staff, and co-creating activities and outputs are other ways to generate and maintain buy-in. Trust can be built by demonstrating integrity, humility, and having partners' best interests at heart. Commencing LPs with a three to four-month inception phase allows each organization involved with the LP to understand the others' strengths and build the LP scope around these strengths. A key part of this inception phase is also formalizing this partnership through an MoU or contract.

LP work needs to align with evolving partner priorities for evidence to be used in policymaking. LP teams should collaborate closely with government partners and external stakeholders to ensure LP activities address priority areas. Additionally, teams could build in measures that allow for flexibility in response to evolving needs, including regarding capacity building. Such measures include budget and workplan buffers and access to flexible and/or unrestricted funds.
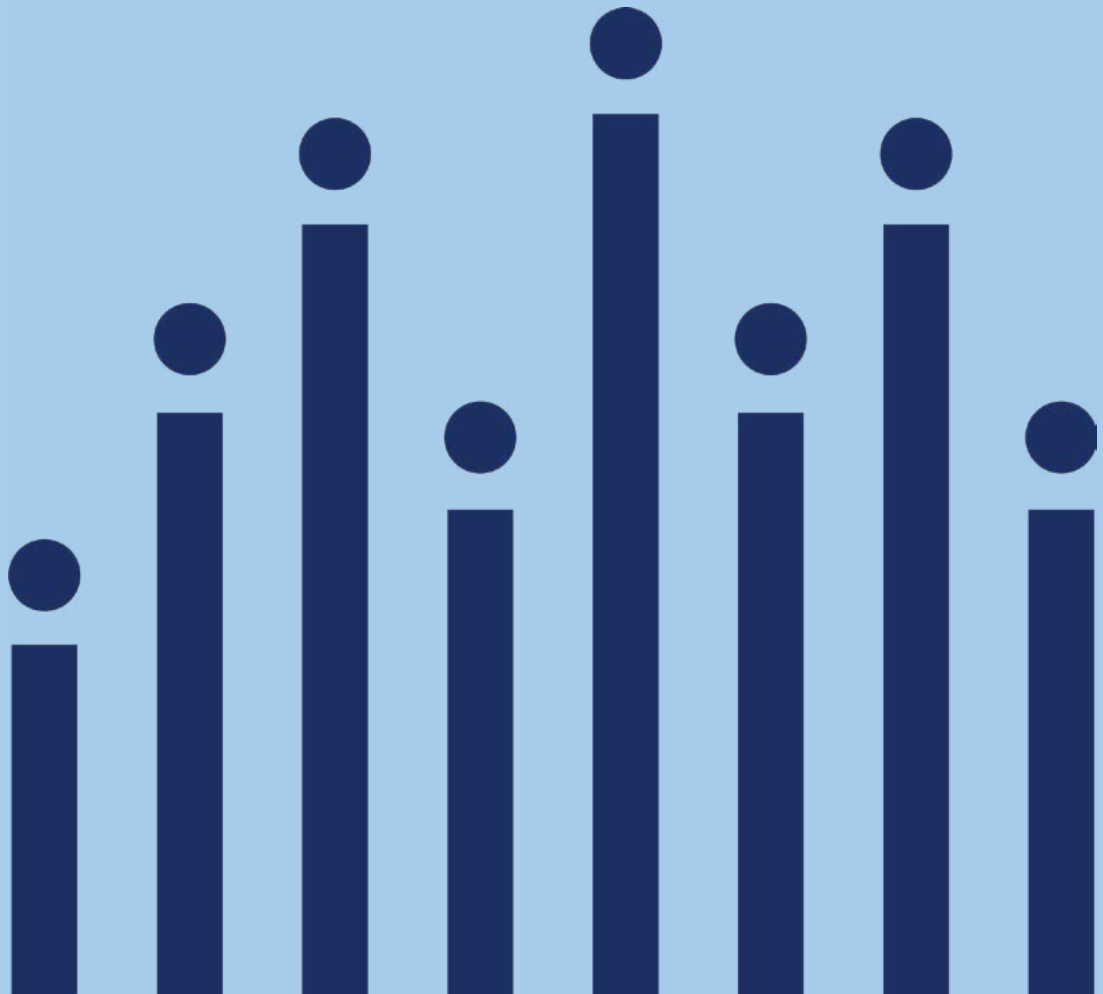
Partner organizations should have the necessary authority and capabilities to implement recommendations. The success of an LP may be limited by any combination of limited formal authority to implement, limited informal authority to influence implementation and/or insufficient resources and capabilities to facilitate the uptake of recommendations. Keeping close tabs on the political economy throughout the engagement is important in ensuring LP teams continue to work with partners who can bring change. Regularly, LP teams do not just provide technical capacity building, but work side-by-side with partners towards a culture of evidence use. LP teams therefore need to align with partners early on how best to play this facilitation role.

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5   We distinguish commitment, or appetite for EIPM, from knowledge of evidence techniques when assessing potential partners. Having a commitment for EIPM, without necessarily having knowledge of evidence techniques may be sufficient to inform policy decisions in selected contexts, if the LP will build the partner's technical expertise.

6   Financial (co-payment), in kind (e.g., making offices available, facilitating logistics), or time availability.

7   While staffing needs vary by engagement, IDinsight plans for ~20% director time per associate (compared to ~10% for non-LP projects) and ~50% manager time per associate (compared to ~33% for non-LP projects).

We summarize actions that teams should take to maximize the likelihood of LP success:

Lesson	Implications
Pre-engagement	
1. Identify institutional partners that are committed to EIPM	Assess whether prior decisions made by a team were informed by data and evidence, and whether human capital and resourced have been dedicated towards EIPM.
2. Establish a strong understanding of the partner organization's context and stakeholder environment	Further formalize existing political economy analyses, stakeholder mapping exercises, and adaptive leadership assessments of champions prior to the start of an LP.
3. Establish trust and buy-in from senior-level staff of partner organizations	Build in sufficient senior-leadership time to lead conversations with partners' senior-level staff. Prioritize staffing of senior leaders who would – because of who they are or their experience – come with a pre-existing "trust capital" on a given LP.
4. Clarify expectations about IDinsight's role in technical and soft capacity building to establish and facilitate an evidence use culture	Adopt an approach to capacity building that combines formalized activities to build technical capacity and working shoulder-to-shoulder to foster an organizational culture of EIPM. Whenever relevant, factor in costs for formal capacity activities that go beyond staff costs e.g., to allow for provision of per diem or stipends and/or request partners to cover such costs.
5. Define what success looks like	Aim to measure impact on both specific decisions informed by evidence, and broader evidence culture, and incorporate feedback from partners within these metrics.
During Engagement	
Inception phase	
6. Understand/deepen understanding of the partner organization's context and stakeholder environment	• Refine stakeholder analyses during the inception phase of the LP • Review/update the analysis periodically during the LP • Formalize the structure of the collaboration through an MoU
Implementation phase	
7. Maintain relationships, trust, and buy-in with senior-level staff of partner organizations	• Build in senior-leadership time for formal and informal check-ins with key champions from partner organizations beyond the norm. • Co-locate IDinsight staff with the partner organization. • Prioritize individuals with strong relationship management skills, and aim to staff country nationals, or colleagues with deep contextual knowledge on the project.
8. Allow for resource reallocation to facilitate responses to ongoing needs	• Build in greater budget and workplan buffers, and set aside funds for ad hoc, flexible support in addition to core work-streams. • Bring funders onboard with the flexible nature of LPs and focus funders on the problems the LP aims to solve, rather than specific deliverables or methods used.
9. Carefully consider partner capacity building needs (formal and informal) and expectations	• Formalize needs assessments before capacity building and tailor content to needs identified from this assessment. • Tailor capacity building efforts to be integrated in the partner institution's standard operating procedures (e.g. as part of hiring, training, staffing).
Post-engagement	
11. Conduct a post project review	• Solicit feedback from partners to identify key lessons for the future. • Document decisions made by partners. • Maintain relationships with partners. • Where possible, provide a small budget advisory support by senior leadership following the engagement.

We hope that the insights reflected in this report will help teams that support government partners on EIPM. IDinsight aims to use these insights to further adapt its LP model and - supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Development, Policy, and Finance team - to scope embedded learning opportunities in public financial management of African countries with a focus on improving service delivery outcomes.

Summary of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

CUCI	COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention
DPAF	Development, Policy, and Finance
EIPM	Evidence-Informed Policy-Making
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office, former DFID
IGC	International Growth Centre
INASP	International Network for Advancing Science and Policy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
LP	Learning Partnership
MOF	Ministry of Finance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PDIA	Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation
PFM	Public Financial Management
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Program
SHC	Soil Health Card
TOC	Theory of Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Good evidence is useful throughout the policy cycle, from identifying and defining problems, assessing policy options that address these problems, implementing and refining identified policies, to monitoring and evaluating implemented policies to assessing their effectiveness. Taking an evidence-informed approach to policy can contribute to improvements in policy development, service delivery, and outcomes for the citizens that governments serve.[8]

To increase the uptake of EIPM by governments, researchers must make evidence more accessible to policymakers. In other words, evidence needs to be policy-relevant, available in a timely manner, actionable, and come from a trusted source. One way of making evidence more accessible in the manner described above is by integrating teams with research skills into policymaking teams.[9] Having policymakers work alongside such teams facilitates the generation of evidence tailored to their needs and promotes sustained interaction between researchers and users of research.[10,11]

Between November 2021 and January 2022, IDinsight conducted a reflection exercise to distill learnings from its Learning Partnership (LP) approach to support governments. Over the past six years, IDinsight has built deep experience in integrating teams of researchers into a variety of policymaking teams across Africa and Asia through its LPs. The main objective of this reflection is to identify critical enablers and barriers to the success of learning partnerships. This report outlines the learnings from this exercise.

1.2 Overview of IDinsight Learning Partnerships

IDinsight LPs are long-term engagements with clients, which often occur for a period of one to four years, during which IDinsight staff work closely - typically in an embedded or co-located fashion[12] - with our partners to identify the questions they need answered and generate context-specific evidence to inform partner decisions. This report focuses on LPs with public sector clients or "government clients".[13] The long-term nature of these engagements facilitates the flexibility to design, test, and iterate policy based on newly identified and emerging government evidence needs.

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8   Productivity Commission. 2010. "Strengthening Evidence-based policy in the Australian Federation Volume 2"

9   Philip Davis. 2004. "Is Evidence-Based Government Possible?" Jerry Lee Lecture, presented at the 4th Annual Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Washington DC

10   Sophie Sutcliffe and Julius Court. 2005. "Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries?"

11   Abeba Taddesse. 2021. "Meeting Policymakers Where They Are. Evidence-to-Policy and Practice Partnership Models"

12   Being embedded or co-located involves working on-site alongside partners to understand their context, resources, and challenges. LP teams may be located within the partner's offices or may be located within the same city or town to facilitate close collaboration with partners.

13   Our definition of government includes national and sub-national government entities, government agencies, and parastatal institutions.

Through LPs, IDinsight aims to foster a culture of EIPM among partners and strengthen their capacity to generate and use their own evidence to inform policy. To-date, IDinsight has executed ten LPs with more than a dozen policymaking teams in national and subnational governments in Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, the Philippines, and Zambia.[14],[15]

IDinsight's LP model exists within an ecosystem of models to support government partners. Other organizations implementing EIPM-related support models include bilateral organizations e.g. the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office (FCDO) (former DFID); multilateral organizations e.g. the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; advisory groups e.g. McKinsey & Company, the Boston Consulting Group, and the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change; research organizations e.g. the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and the International Growth Centre (IGC); think tanks e.g. the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and development organizations e.g. International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP). Each of these organization's support models have their own design and merit.

IDinsight's approach focuses on working side-by-side with civil servants in an open-ended and flexible manner, supporting their specific needs as they arise.[16] Maintaining the open-ended mandate and flexible approach facilitates the identification and deployment of the right "tools" to respond to evolving questions as they arise, while the embedded nature of the partnerships helps to ensure that solutions are grounded within an understanding of the local context.[17]

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14   Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of IDinsight LPs from 2017 to date.

15   Some non-government IDinsight LPs include a two-year LP with UNICEF in Kenya and the Philippines that informed the scale up of an integrated sanitation and nutrition program and an LP with Educate Girls that supported the expansion of Educate Girls' activities to improve girls' enrolment in schools in India.

16   Refer to Appendix 2 for a table that outlines the features of IDinsight LPs.

17   Typical IDinsight services provided in an LP include in-depth program design efforts, evidence reviews, data analysis, and support to performance monitoring systems as well as process evaluations to assess program implementation.

2. Approach

Drawing on existing theories and concepts of the evidence to policy cycle, we developed a high-level Theory of Change (TOC) that describes an LP's stylized path to impact. [18] At a high level, the TOC hypothesizes that integrating teams with research skills into policymaking teams facilitates the generation of evidence that enables governments to make informed decisions, resulting in sustainable solutions. We used this TOC to inform interviews with current and former IDinsight staff and clients involved in LPs.

2.1 Learning Partnership Theory of Change

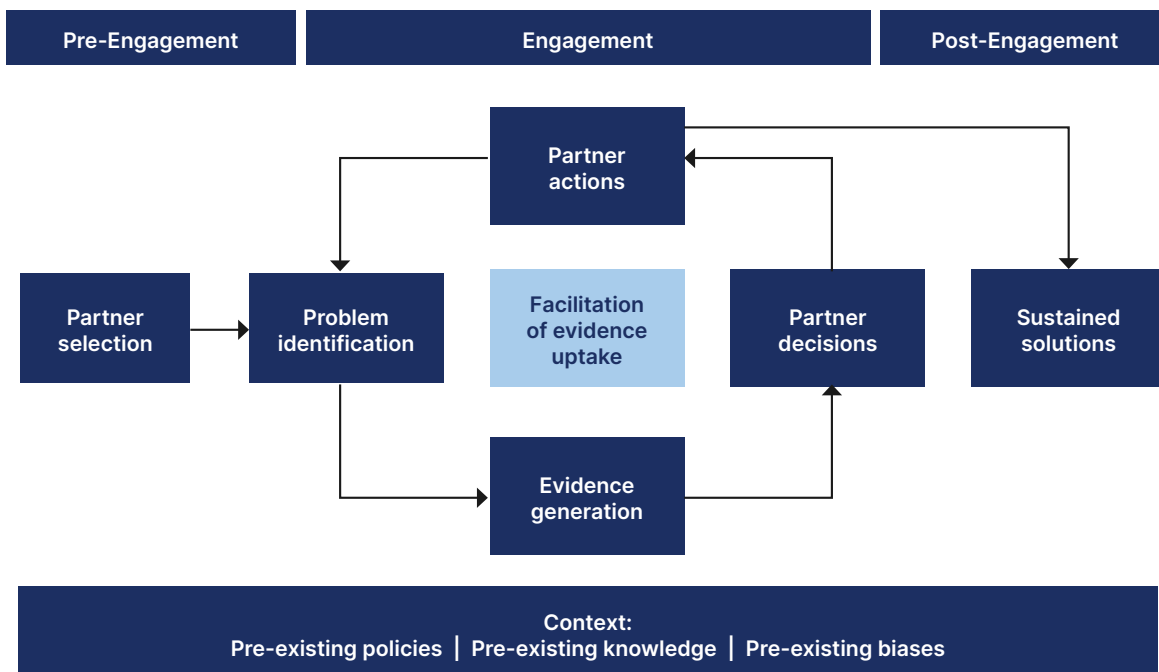**Figure 1: High-level IDinsight Learning Partnership Theory of Change**

Figure 1 above illustrates the high-level TOC of IDinsight's LP approach. Before LP engagements are formalized, IDinsight teams identify, scope, and establish collaborations with suitable partners. In parallel, IDinsight teams seek to understand these partners' context, e.g. existing policies, knowledge, and biases, and identify pressing evidence needs. Having aligned on these needs and a scope of work to address them (as well as having secured the resources required to enable the work), the LP engagement is formalized. Oftentimes, these steps are operationalized through an inception or scoping phase during which an IDinsight team engages with the government institution for three to four months on a discrete workstream while simultaneously absorbing the context and building an understanding of the deeper evidence needs. An inception phase also allows partners to better understand one another and provides an opportunity for the partner organization to understand what IDinsight's support means in practice.

18   These include Laurence Langer. 2021. "A Framework to Assess What Works, How, and Why"; David Booth. 2013. "Facilitating Development. An arm's length approach to aid"; Andres, Matt, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock. 2015. "Doing Problem Driven Work"

To get the most out of the inception period, LP teams focus on 1) better understanding the partner's program through activities such as co-developing a Theory of Change and conducting stakeholder interviews, and 2) generating quick wins that enhance the partner's buy-in and understanding of IDinsight's approach through activities such as the analysis of existing, administrative data and capacity building.

In a next step, the engagement usually proceeds with generating tailored evidence and support, while working with stakeholders to facilitate its use. The hypothesis is that the generation of evidence and the facilitation of evidence use enables government partners to make well-informed decisions and take actions that - when institutionalized in the government system – can ultimately result in sustained solutions to the needs identified.[19]

Initially identified evidence-needs may evolve, or new ones may emerge based on the actions taken, insights from generated evidence, or the emergence of new partner priorities. Thus, the envisioned EIPM cycle is adaptive and iterative in nature.[20] For example, in one case, we collaborated with a government partner on the design of a decision-focused evaluation to inform whether to scale up a preschool program. However, when a change of cabinet turned this evaluation redundant, it prompted a shift in scope towards establishing a robust monitoring system for the program instead.

We hypothesize IDinsight's LP approach is perceived as valuable among partners because it is a process of learning by doing, rather than just a mechanism to generate an output or action. While the TOC presented here highlights what LP teams aspire to do in theory, this report aims to shed light on how the LP model has been implemented in practice.

In the rest of this section, we describe each of these elements of the TOC in further detail and highlight characteristics that we hypothesize to be important. In doing so, we draw from the Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach and IDinsight's contribution measurement framework. These concepts are explained in Boxes 1 and 2.

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19   The identified needs often address a multitude of factors such as the absence of evidence or existing evidence being insufficient to appropriately target the policy under investigation, providing a more in-depth analysis of existing evidence, or trying to change mindsets towards the use of evidence. IDinsight LP teams should identify and integrate such underlying assumptions in tailoring their support.

20   Although the TOC outlines the hypothesized path to impact of an LP engagement as a whole, a subset also applies to individual LP workstreams e.g., individual workstreams may experience multiple iterations across the problem identification to sustained impact phases, resulting in various iterations across an LP.

Overview of the Problem Driven Iterative Approach

The PDIA approach is a process of pursuing development interventions that ensure sustained improvements based on four core principles:

1. Solve locally nominated and defined problems,
2. Push problem driven positive deviance,
3. Try, learn, iterate, adapt,
4. Scale through diffusion.

The three "A"s are features that should be in place for change to take place:

1. Authority to implement change,
2. Acceptance of the need for change,
3. Ability to implement change, informed by the available resources and capacity of implementers of change.

Refer to the PDIA toolkit for further information.[21]

Overview of IDinsight's Contribution Measurement Framework

IDinsight's contribution measurement framework outlines conditions that should be in place for IDinsight projects to be impactful. The latest iteration of this framework highlights five conditions:

1. Impact alignment i.e., a logical pathway to social impact of the project/program focus,
2. Clarity on critical aspects of the project design,
3. Client and funder commitment to using data and evidence,
4. Sufficient capacity (resources) and capability (abilities) to engage during the project and implement proposed solutions post-engagement,
5. Sufficient consideration of the project's operational and political context.

1. Partner selection

The first step in an LP is to scope, identify, and establish a collaboration with suitable government organizations. The organization should have the legal, procedural, and informal authority to engage with the LP, implement identified solutions, and/or hold other stakeholders accountable in enabling change.[22]

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21   The PDIA toolkit can be found at https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/PDIAtoolkit.
22   For instance, newly created institutions may inherently be riskier to engage with given their lack of track record compared to well-established government ministries.

Within these organizations, IDinsight seeks to identify "champions" with whom LP teams would work closely. Ideally, we identify champions among both high-level civil servants, who are decision makers within their departments and can thus drive buy-in for the LP, and mid-level civil servants who would support the implementation of day-to-day LP activities during the engagement.[23] Champions within the government organization should have three key features:

1. A commitment to using data and evidence in decision making i.e., the willingness or dedication to engage during the problem identification and evidence generation phases and implement recommendations. Sometimes this can also be shown by the partner's willingness to dedicate human capital or additional resources towards generating or using evidence.
2. A genuine interest in the proposed LP scope of work.
3. Sufficient time to institutionalize change within the partner institution. This consideration is particularly important when working with champions who are political appointees.

Beyond these three main features, other characteristics of champions that may have varying importance depending on the context include an institutionalized respect for the civil service, a long tenure within their respective position or department and a connectedness to and soft influence over other relevant stakeholders in government.

As part of this phase IDinsight teams also seek to understand the potential partners context such as the political economy and risk factors as well as other external factors.[24] These factors inform the decision on whether to seek a partnership within a given context and with a particular government organization, as well as inform which individuals might serve as suitable champions for this work in a given context. As one goal of LPs is to foster a culture of evidence use among partners, the decision of whether to partner with an organization is also informed by the part(s) of the organization that will benefit most from the experience. IDinsight incorporates these considerations into the decision process to start and/or fund a new LP.

After the partner selection phase, LP teams should have clarity on the key decision makers within the partner organization to engage with, their context and institutional environment, and aim to build trusted relationships with these individuals.

2. Problem identification

The main goal of the problem identification phase is to identify the priorities and evidence needs of the partner organization and ultimately define the LP's scope of work. IDinsight's approach to problem identification is demand-driven and seeks to identify key government priorities without a predetermined influencing agenda. Problem identification occurs in close collaboration with champions from the partner organization and involves conversations to identify key priorities and feasible opportunities for the use of data and evidence in decision-making. The PDIA process emphasizes the identifying locally driven problems, clarifying what the "problem solved" will look like, and defining entry points to solve the problem during the problem identification phase.

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23   IDinsight typically works with civil servants, rather than champions at the political level.
24   Examples of external factors include political or civil unrest, other safety and security risks e.g., risks of terrorist attacks or risks due to ongoing events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

A good problem is one that addresses an actual problem defined by local actors through shared consensus.[25]

A secondary goal of the problem identification phase is to help government partners ask better questions, rather than just deliver answers to existing questions. "Better questions" are those that are more precise, more actionable, and are feasible to address with the available resources. For many government institutions, the LP presents an opportunity to increase their focus on evidence-use and they could use the support of seasoned researchers to help them identify which questions can be answered meaningfully. Thus, problem identification may involve an iterative process of: 1) identifying all questions that partners want answered, 2) identifying the questions that can actually be answered among these, 3) understanding the partner's envisioned actions after their questions are answered, and 4) readjusting to identify the questions the partners want answered, that can be feasibly answered, and that are most likely to result in partner action. Our hypothesis is that going through this iterative process with government partners will allow them to then carry forward this skill of identifying "good" questions and use it in the longer term.

The insights from the problem identification activities, considerations regarding IDinsight's technical and sectoral expertise, the financial resources available, and the feasibility of implementing solutions based on findings all inform the scope of work and tools that IDinsight chooses to engage.

Following the problem identification phase, there should be clarity on four critical elements of the LP. These factors are usually described in a concept note:

1. The program or intervention that is the focus of the LP,[26]
2. The stakeholders who should be and will be involved with the project,
3. The priority questions that IDinsight will look to answer,
1. The actions envisaged by the partner based on the evidence that the LP generates.[27]

3. Evidence generation

With the scope of work defined, IDinsight typically proceeds by deploying tools to generate data and evidence. A starting point could be a literature review or the creation of a program's Theory of Change as the basis to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework or a measurement system.

Often, evidence generation activities lead to the identification of refined or completely new priority issues or topics. In one case, while an IDinsight LP team designed a monitoring system for assessing program implementation, the team uncovered a more fundamental question in program design that become higher priority to address.

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25   Andrews, Matt, Lant Pritchett, Salimah Samji, and Michael Woolcock. 2015. "Building capacity by delivering results: Putting Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) principles in practice"

26   LPs could also be focused on internal, organizational efficiency issues, rather than public-facing programs e.g., a health service may want to know about the causes and effects of financial disbursement delays on its health facilities, for which evidence activities are focused on the organization itself.

27   The problem identification phase is iterative, not just as circumstances change, but as all participants get a better understanding of what questions are 1) most important and 2) actually feasible to answer.

Additionally, ongoing collaborations and conversations between policymakers and the IDinsight team may reveal shifts in partner priorities. In some cases, the IDinsight LP teams are co-located with the partner to facilitate close collaboration between policymakers and the IDinsight team.[28] Thus, the IDinsight LP teams aim to be flexible to address needs that emerge from ongoing activities and shifting partner priorities, adapting the evidence generating activities as necessary.

We hypothesize that the following conditions are critical during this phase for an LP to be impactful:

1. The IDinsight LP team should have gained the necessary appreciation of the partner's context to be sensitive and responsive to evolving needs.
2. The IDinsight LP team should already have or should have plans in place to acquire the technical expertise to deliver on the scope of work. Whereas IDinsight deploys methods from its evidence toolkit, skills across the different methods in the toolkit vary among staff. Sometimes, individuals with expertise may not be available to join the LP team or support the LP team deliver on the scope of work. In such cases, the LP team makes plans to either transition the relevant staff member into the team or receive ongoing support from the relevant team member, if they are unable to join the team full-time.[29]
3. The IDinsight LP team should be in a position to allocate adequate staff time and resources to the project. Sometimes team may face budget or staffing constraints that limit the amount of resources that can be dedicated to the engagement.
4. The partner(s) should have sufficient technical expertise to productively engage with the LP activities during the engagement and/or the willingness to further develop this expertise should it be needed, as well as sufficient resources (i.e., human, financial) for the engagement and beyond

4. Facilitating Evidence Uptake

Using the generated evidence, IDinsight identifies actionable, context-relevant recommendations that address the identified priority policy needs. To ensure that recommendations are feasible and increase the likelihood that they are taken up, we aspire to effectively communicate the insights from the evidence generation phase and their implications to the partner, co-create solutions that address identified problems and test the feasibility of possible solutions with the partners. We also aim to integrate capacity building into all aspects of the LP activities and go beyond building technical capacity by working shoulder-to-shoulder with civil servants to establish and support an organizational culture that is built on asking for and using evidence.

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28 During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, LP teams collaborated with government partners remotely.

29 This includes both internal and external technical expertise. Internally, teams such as IDinsight's Data Science, Engineering, and Monitoring (DSEM) team or specific members of IDinsight's team with deep sectoral experience may be able to quickly provide more technical input. Externally, IDinsight sometimes seeks the support of sectors experts if that experience is unavailable in-house.

Feasible solutions have three key qualities:[30]

1. They are politically supportable given the partner's stakeholders and influence.
2. They are administratively feasible given the financial and human resources that are readily available to the partner, and the partner's decision-making authority.
3. They are technically correct and emerge from evidence regarding what can work in the partner's context.

After being presented with the evidence-informed recommendations, an important next step is for partners to decide to act on these recommendations. IDinsight LP teams have facilitated this process by 1) engaging with high level decision makers to generate buy-in for identified solutions e.g., by presenting key findings and recommendations to senior leadership within the respective ministry, and 2) co-creating an implementation plan or roadmap with the partner that outlines the process of executing the proposed recommendations.

For change to take place, partners must follow through on their decisions. In some LP contexts, existing evidence needs are reassessed and adapted, restarting the LP cycle from the problem identification phase, in line with the iterative process of the EIPM cycle.

It is important to note that specific recommendations not being acted upon by government partners does not automatically mean the LP has not been successful. A significant value of the LP for partners is the building up of skills, culture, and routines of creating and using evidence for future evidence needs and questions.

5. Sustained solutions

Following the engagement, partner actions result in resource allocation adjustments and/or process improvements that are sustainable and improve the wellbeing of the communities they serve. The interpretation of sustainability being achieved varies from context to context, but centers around the idea of solutions persisting even after IDinsight's engagement has concluded. For instance, government partners continuing to use and maintain data systems beyond the engagement, governments continuing to conduct their own assessments using protocols developed and capacity gained beyond the engagement, and governments implementing processes to generate and use their own evidence following the engagement are indicators of sustainable solutions. Government partners having an increased demand for evidence and awareness of how it can be used is also an indicator of a sustained change in the culture of evidence use.

To facilitate the sustainability of solutions, IDinsight LP teams aim to support government partners to set up and oversee processes for continued evidence use. For example, ensuring governments can use and maintain a dashboard following its development.

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30   This framework of the three qualities of good solutions comes out of the PDIA approach. Refer to the PDIA toolkit for more information.
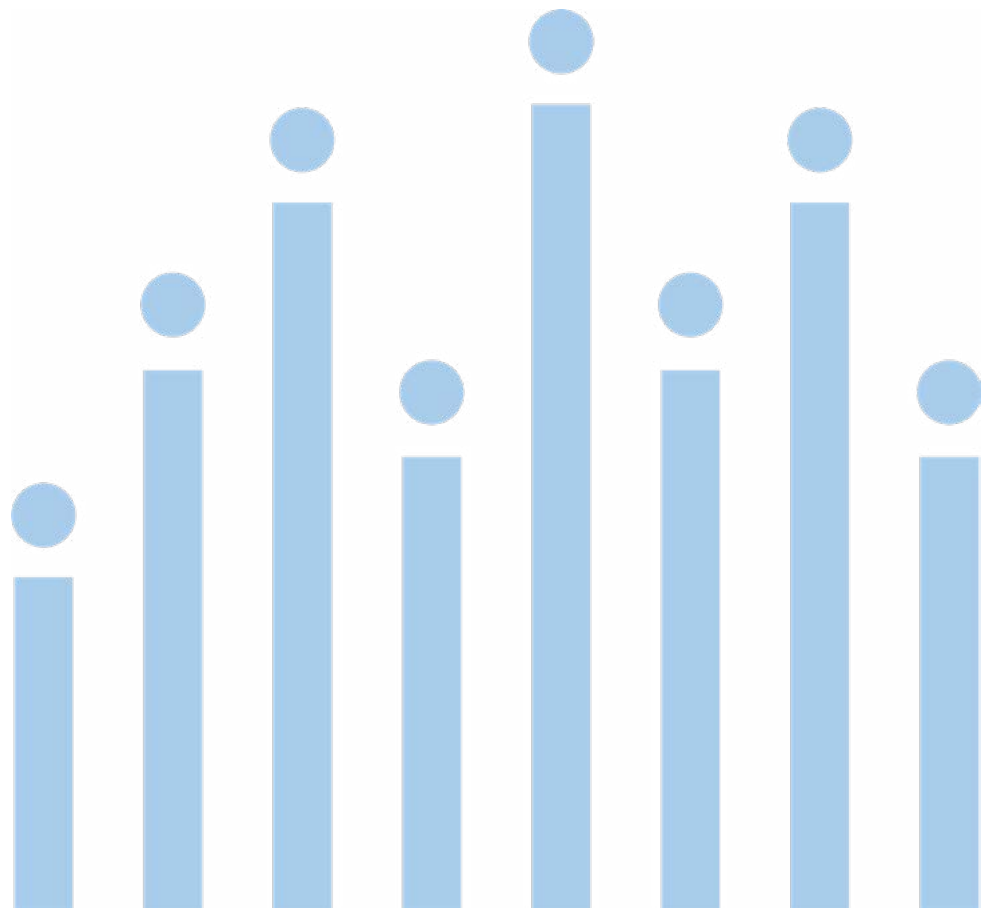
2.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Between 6 December 2021 and 31 January 2022, IDinsight reviewed project documentation and conducted a total of 14 semi-structured interviews with IDinsight staff and government partners involved in executing LPs with governments across Africa and Asia.

The interviews were informed by the IDinsight TOC and hypotheses outlined in the previous sub-section and aimed to assess the extent to which IDinsight LPs achieved their objectives and identify the key factors that enabled and hindered these achievements.

Specifically, the interviews focused on understanding:

- How each project defined success and an assessment of the extent to which project objectives have been met.
- The enablers and barriers of the success of an LP across each phase of an LP's path to impact.
- The strengths and weaknesses of IDinsight's LP approach as perceived by IDinsight LP teams and partners.

To mitigate the risk of social desirability bias, a scenario where respondents overreport positive feedback to appeal to the interviewer, we 1) encouraged respondents to be candid when setting up the conversation, 2) framed the questions in an open-ended manner to allow for both positive and negative reflections, and 3) probed into both positive and negative reflections that respondents shared. In line with research ethics, we reassured respondents of their confidentiality and therefore do not include their names in this report to protect this.

3. Findings

In line with the LP Theory of Change presented above, we find the cross-cutting objective of IDinsight LPs is to generate data and evidence to inform the design and implementation of partner programs with the goal of improving lives and achieving a positive social impact. Our findings suggest that IDinsight's LPs can achieve their objectives if structured in a way that harnesses potential enablers and mitigates possible barriers, while carefully considering both throughout the engagement. In this section, we provide an overview of the areas in which IDinsight LPs have been able to achieve success. We also discuss enablers and barriers to achieving impact alongside reflections for teams working on EIPM partnerships with government partners.

3.1 Areas of Success of IDinsight Learning Partnerships

Respondents from seven of the ten IDinsight current and former staff and all government partners interviewed perceived their LPs to have at least partially achieved their objectives. Successful LPs have achieved successes across three key areas:

1. Informing policy and program design
Respondents observed that IDinsight's work with governments contributed to EIPM by generating data and insights to inform the design of government policy and programs. For example, IDinsight supported NITI Aayog and the Government of India's Ministry of Agriculture to improve India's Soil Health Cards (SHC) after an IDinsight study found that farmers found it difficult to understand the card.[31,32] Following this work, IDinsight supported the redesign of the SHCs and new cards were introduced to replace the old ones. An impact evaluation conducted after the adoption of the new cards found that they improved farmers' comprehension of fertilizer recommendations significantly.

2. Improving program implementation
Respondents also observed that IDinsight LPs have provided actionable recommendations and developed systems to strengthen the implementation of government programs. For example, IDinsight has supported the Government of Malawi to improve the design and implementation of its Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP) by strengthening data systems and providing evaluation support. As part of this work, the IDinsight LP team developed an interactive dashboard that visualizes key SCTP data and related monitoring processes resulting in improved program targeting strategy and monitoring systems.

3. Enhancing government capacity
LPs can enhance government capacity in two key ways: 1) improving the skills of staff within partner government organizations and 2) improving organizational processes. IDinsight staff often conduct capacity building activities alongside LP activities, on topics related to research methods, data collection, management, analysis, and visualization. On some LPs, we found the capacity building activities to have strengthened partners' ability to generate and use their own data and insights. For instance, officials from the Government of Ghana's Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation were able to conduct assessments of government programs on their own following capacity building activities. Capacity building was perceived as sustainable among some but not all LPs. Specifically, respondents from four LP teams mentioned challenges with capacity building efforts. For instance, some respondents mentioned frequent turnover in the civil service and differences in expectations as a hindrance to their capacity building efforts.

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31   NITI Aayog is a policy think tank of the Government of India that designs strategic and long-term policies for the Government of India and fosters cooperative federalism by involving State Governments in the policymaking process.
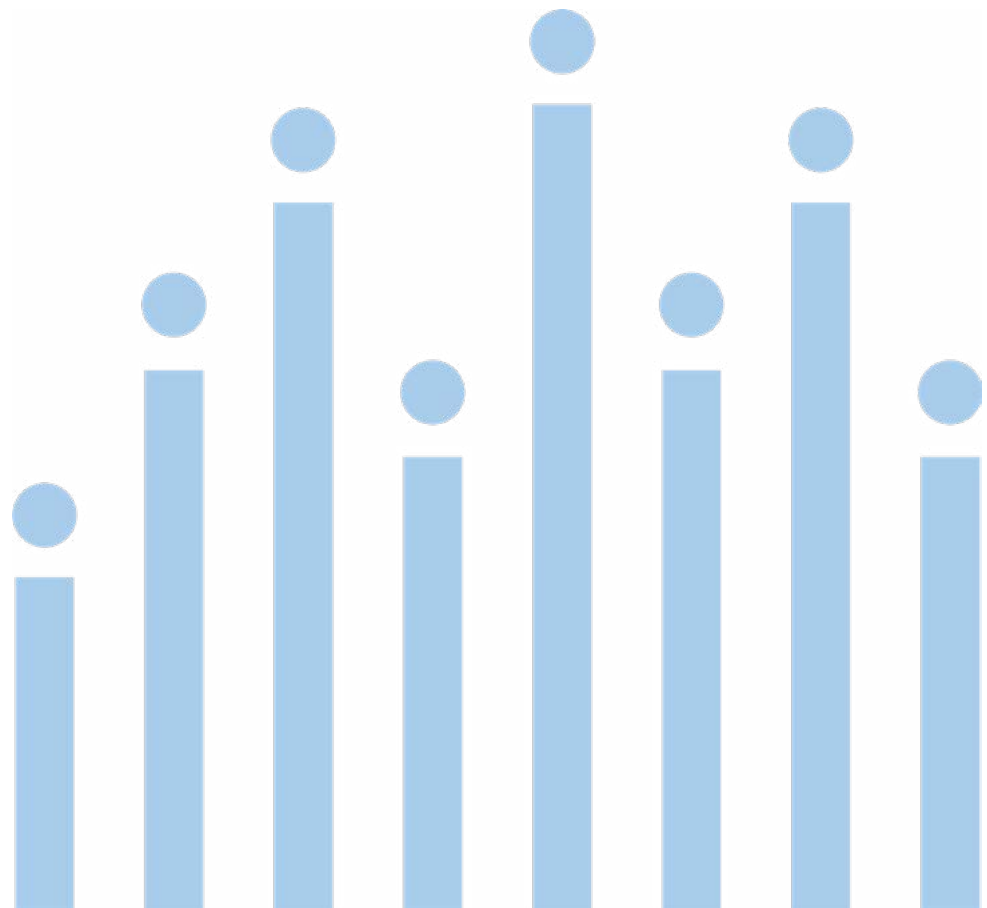
32   Inefficient application of fertilizer is a critical issue affecting agriculture in India. Farmers often do not have information on how much fertilizer to apply to improve their yield. The Soil Health Cards scheme, launched in 2015, aims to address this by providing personalized fertilizer recommendations to farmers via a Soil Health Card.

3.1.1 Attribution of Success to IDinsight

Whereas we find LPs to have achieved successes in the areas outlined above, the goal of this reflection is not to empirically assess IDinsight's contribution to these successes. By definition, our partnerships integrate into the long-term nature of the policymaking and implementation process. In addition, governments often work with several stakeholders such as implementing partners, organizations that provide policy support, and funding agencies at a given time. In fact, we may consider partnerships as effective when government partners perceive to have led the process of generating and using evidence independently. Given this complexity and the objectives of this reflection exercise to guide IDinsight LP teams approach in establishing and executing LPs, this report does not develop in-depth case studies that draw conclusive relationships between enablers or barriers and the impact of an engagement. Instead, we aggregate the experiences of LP teams and partners across contexts to present recommendations that apply universally.

3.1.2 Sustainability of LP Success

IDinsight's LP TOC hypothesizes that LP engagements can result in sustained solutions to the identified needs. Regardless of what the solution looks like in a particular context, respondents agree that they require a certain degree of "institutionalization" i.e., integrating them into government processes and standard operating procedures, putting things on file, and having government partners "own" the solution. The extent to which the solutions developed by IDinsight LPs have been sustained is mixed (and hard to measure for ongoing engagements). Government partners whose teams received capacity building recognize that their teams have had capacity improvements that extend beyond the engagement. At the same time, some IDinsight LP teams observe that governments do not always continue to use data systems and dashboards developed during engagements. We dive deeper into factors that have facilitated the successes LPs have achieved and shortfalls LPs have experienced in the following sections.

3.2 Enablers and Barriers to LP Success
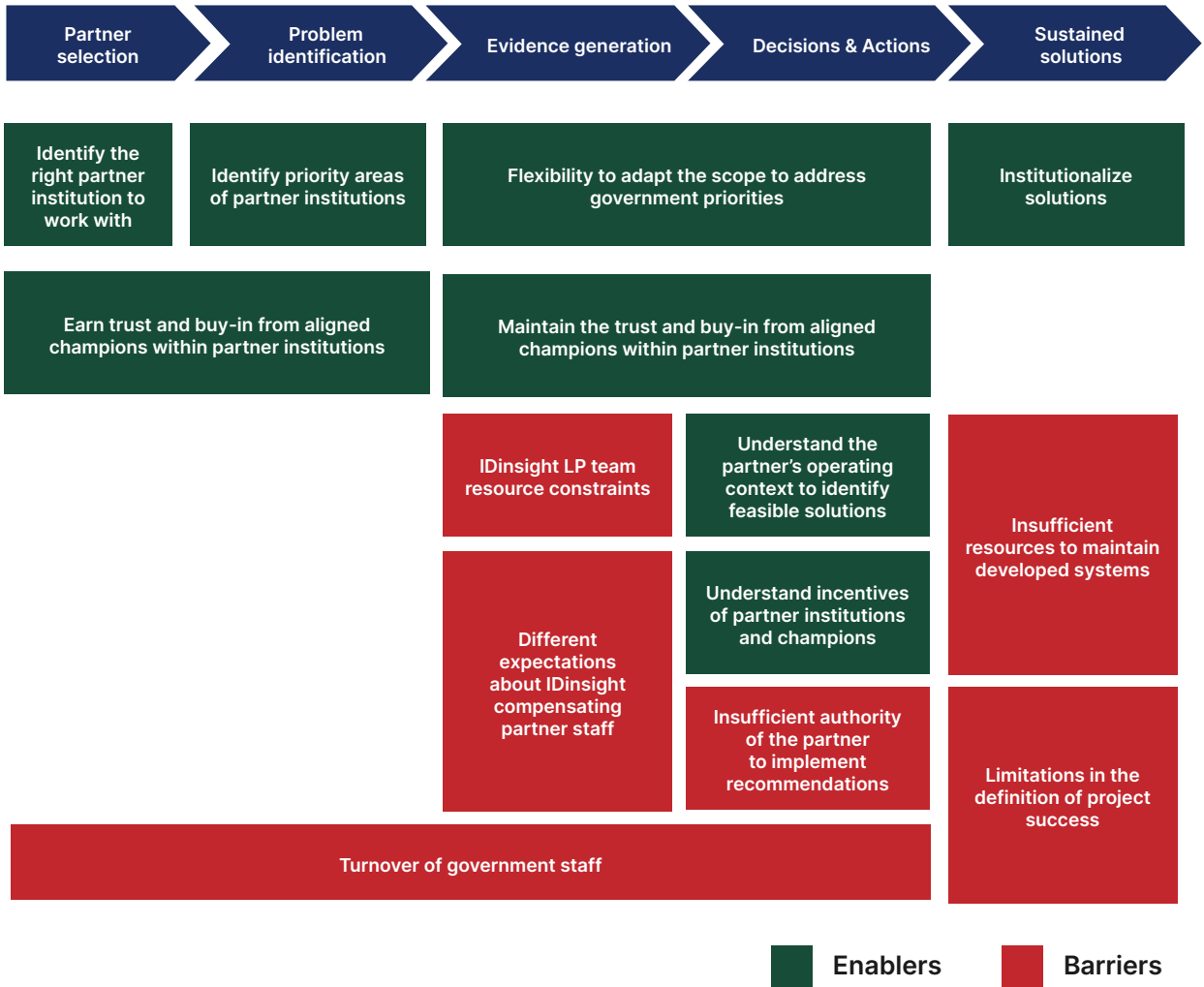
3.2.1 Overview of Enablers and Barriers

We summarize the key factors respondents identified as enablers and barriers of LP's success, mapped across the LP TOC, in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Factors that facilitate and hinder the success of IDinsight's LPs

We summarize the actions that facilitate the enabling factors and recommended actions to address barriers in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Summary of enabling factors and their facilitating actions

Enabling factor	Facilitating Actions
Identify the right partner institution to work with	• Assessing the institution's track record in EIPM • Assessing the institution's willingness and ability to convene and mobilize government resources to support the engagement • Establishing formal agreements with partner institutions, such as memoranda of understanding • Being opportunistic in taking advantage of existing personal and/or institutional relationships • Considering the political cycle, where key partners may change with a change of government
Earn trust and buy-in from aligned champions within partner institutions	• Extensive relationship building via meetings with government officials of potential partner organizations
Identify priority areas of partner institutions	• Stakeholder mapping that goes beyond the partner institution and aims to understand the broader ecosystem • Engaging regularly with relevant government and other stakeholders, beyond the partner institutions • Conducting a needs assessment prior to capacity building activities
Flexibility to adapt the engagement scope to address government priorities	• Having flexible funding to allow for redirection of resources to address emerging needs • Building in budget and workplan buffers to facilitate the addressing of ongoing/ changing needs • Having a flexible project structure that allows for the evidence generated to correspond to the partner institution's needs, constraints, and decision-making timelines, rather than to rigid deliverables and timelines
Maintain trust and buy-in from champions	• Investing in building and strengthening partner relationships throughout the engagement via formal and informal channels • Generating quick wins e.g., by producing high quality work on discrete areas of high priority within the initial stages of the relationship • Co-locating IDinsight staff with the government partner institution • Staffing individuals with strong relationship building skills as well as citizens of LP focus countries • Co-creating LP activities and outputs with partner staff • Registering as a legal entity and having offices within LP focus countries
Understand the partner institution's operating context to identify feasible solutions	• Implementing an inception or scoping phase to better understand the partner's context • Regularly engaging with government partners and their stakeholders
Understand incentives of both partner institutions and champions	• Being cognizant of the key priorities of both the partner institution and the individuals within it
Institutionalize solutions	• Engaging with high-level decision makers to build buy-in for proposed solutions and recommendations • Establishing partner ownership of proposed solutions and recommendations • Co-developing an implementation plan • Conducting capacity building efforts that persist within the partner institution

Table 2: Summary of barriers and suggested mitigating actions

Barrier	Suggested Mitigating Actions
Turnover of government staff	• Spreading relationships with officials within the partner government institution, as well as within organizations that work closely with the partner institution. LP teams should ideally have champions at various levels of seniority within the partner institution • Building in budget and workplan buffers to allow for onboarding and capacity building of new partner staff • Institutionalizing LP activities within the government department i.e., integrating solutions into government processes and standard operating procedures, putting things on file, etc. • Maintaining informal relationships with champions who have transitioned off the LP • Avoiding building relationships with government departments where staff turnover is common • Working with political appointees who have longer-term, fixed tenure periods
Unplanned IDinsight staff turnover	• Managing expectations of IDinsight LP team members when staffing LP projects and aiming to staff new colleagues for a minimum of one year • Ensuring overlap between existing and new IDinsight LP staff, and building the cost of overlap in project costs • Staggering turnover of the IDinsight LP team staff • Continuing to aim to hire team members with maximum contextual knowledge to minimize contextual "training" of new teammates • Continuing to maintain strong internal standards (hiring, training) to minimize individual discrepancies in how a given project or task is handled • Managing government partner expectations regarding the potential turnover of IDinsight staff at the start of the LP
IDinsight LP team resource constraints	• Staffing individuals with strong topical expertise (e.g., public health, education) in the LP focus area as well as technical skills in specific tools used in the LP (e.g., monitoring, evaluation designs, statistical software skills) to facilitate timely responses to partner requests • Standardizing having budget buffers across IDinsight LP teams, • Managing government requests while being able to leverage new requests that could yield additional impact, for example in the form of creating core and flexible/undefined workstreams for the LP team to support
Different expectations about IDinsight compensating partner staff	• Understanding and managing expectations with partner staff during the partner selection and relationship building phase of the LP • Deciding whether compensation such as per diem or stipends will be offered beforehand and identifying available government resources or building activities into the LP budget accordingly • Where necessary, channeling compensation through the partner institution, rather than to individuals directly
Insufficient authority of the partner institution to implement recommendations	• Assessing organizations by conducting a political economy analysis and assessing the adaptive leadership of specific champions according to the Heifetz principles during the partner selection phase to identify partners that have implementing and/or influencing authority[33] • Forming strong relationships with stakeholders that have authority to implement or influence recommendations in settings where government implementers differ from the policymakers

33   Heifetz, Ronald A., Marty Linksy, and Alexander Grashow. "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World." A summary of adaptive leadership can be found here: https://impact.fpg. unc.edu/glossary/adaptive-leadership

Insufficient financial and/or human resources to implement recommendations	• Aligning recommendations with current government programs and policies such as sector strategies, short- and medium-term plans, and existing projects that typically have funds allocated • Conducting a budget analysis to understand the aspects of the program that are funded and what funding priorities are and tailoring recommendations towards aspects that are funded and are priority • Timing LP activities and recommendations with the government budget cycle • Partnering with implementing organizations that have the ability to implement proposed recommendations
Insufficient resources to maintain developed systems	• Using platforms in which government partners are well versed in when developing systems e.g., dashboards • Building solutions based upon existing government systems and administrative data • Training partners on skills needed to maintain developed systems
Limitations in the definition of project success	• Incorporating metrics that capture both the hard (e.g., developing a data system to facilitate program monitoring) and soft wins (e.g., building a culture of evidence demand and use within the partner institution) on LPs to contribution measurement systems • Systemizing post-engagement follow up of partners to document decisions made after an LP • Assessing the partner's capabilities and needs prior to the engagement

Section 3.2.2 dives deeper into the enablers of LP success and their facilitating actions, and the barriers to success and recommended actions to mitigate them across the various stages of the hypothesized LP TOC.

3.2.2 Detailed description of Enablers and Barriers

🤝 Partner selection

✓ Enablers of Success

Identify the right partner to work with
A key step in establishing an LP is to identify a government partner committed to EIPM. The absence of partner commitment may stall problem identification and evidence generation activities or result in partner failure to act on recommendations that emerge from LP activities, limiting the success of the engagement. In particular, the traditional combination of technical assistance with larger funding programs may often leave government partners with little choice, but to engage, regardless of the existing vision for EIPM. We found IDinsight LPs to limit this concern to some extent because they typically are not tied to larger funding programs. Irrespective, it is important for supporting organizations to assess government partners' interest in EIPM.

IDinsight LP teams have taken the following actions to gauge partners' genuine commitment to EIPM:

- Assessing partner institution's track record in EIPM. Often, but not always, partners committed to EIPM take actions that demonstrate this commitment, such as partnering with organizations to generate evidence to inform the programs and policy decisions they oversee. Conversations with potential partners and other stakeholders, alongside desk research on past actions that potential partners have taken can provide insights on a potential partner's EIPM track record.
- Assessing the partner institution's willingness and ability to mobilize government resources to support the engagement. A government partner's willingness to use their own resources during the engagement is an indication of their vested interest in its success. Examples of the use of government resources include using existing government data collection systems, dedicating (and hiring) government staff capacity to work alongside the IDinsight team, and funding aspects of the LP.
- Establishing formal agreements with partners, such as memoranda of understanding. One respondent who worked with a government partner in India mentioned that partners are often hesitant to codify agreed upon arrangements in written form. At the same time, formal agreements by themselves may not always be indicators of commitment: Some LP engagements that did not gain much traction had formal agreements with their government partner. Therefore, in contexts where codification has high significance LP teams should seek to establish formal agreements with government partners.
- Being opportunistic in taking advantage of existing personal and/or institutional relationships. When identifying potential partners, IDinsight also leverages existing relationships within LP focus countries to identify partners who are committed to EIPM.
- Considering the political cycle, where key partners may change with a change of government. Frequently political appointees and to some extent civil servants change after a change in government, resulting in the need to re-establish partnerships and re-identify champions within government partner organizations. This risk makes it essential that LP teams also consider the political cycle when identifying and forming partnerships.

Earn trust and buy-in from champions

When the "right" partner is identified, it is vital to build strong relationships and obtain buy-in from officials within the partner government department or organization. For the team to have champions among government partners is non-negotiable due to their critical role in the success of an LP.

Establishing strong relationships with officials at both senior and mid-levels and gaining their trust is important. Senior level officials determine how government resources are used and thus influence whether recommendations are taken up. On the other hand, mid-level technical officials are responsible for supporting day-to-day activities such as providing access to data systems and executing recommendations.

Senior-level buy-in is critical at the start of an LP and can be more difficult to obtain once an engagement starts. One respondent noted that the team anticipated that they would obtain senior-level buy-in once the engagement started. However, this turned out to be challenging due senior officials' limited availability.

Combined, trust and buy-in facilitate the iterative and adaptive nature of responding to ongoing needs and adapting LP activities to address emerging partner needs.

Extensive relationship building during the partner selection phase of the LP facilitates the building of trust and buy-in. The aim of these meetings is to generate a deep understanding of the priorities of senior-level officials, the partner's stakeholder landscape, the political economy, and other important factors related to the partner. Approaching these conversations with humility and an openness to listen to partners is key to building trust. For example, IDinsight staff working with a government partner in Morocco mentioned putting in countless hours of in-person meetings and back and forth dialogue with the partner counterparts prior to the start of the engagement to get the buy-in. Having team members with strong relationship building skills and planning for sufficient time facilitates the relationship building process.

It is important to keep in mind that some partnerships may not work, for a range of reasons. Thus, organizations that aim to form partnerships should consider instances where partnerships do not work as an expected outcome, rather than a failure. This implies that support organizations should be willing to end failing LPs prematurely and redirect resources to partnerships that are working or to start new partnerships.

× Barriers to Success

Turnover of government staff

Turnover of government staff may break the continuation of ongoing conversations. Particularly, turnover of senior-level champions from partner organizations could halt ongoing relationship building activities during the partner selection phase.

Government staff turnover continues to be a barrier in the evidence generation phase by slowing down conversations that aim to understand the partner's evidence needs. Respondents observed that government civil servants are often transferred across departments during their tenure.

To mitigate adverse effects of the turnover of key partner champions, LP teams could:

- **Spread relationships with officials within the relevant government department.** Forming strong relationships and engaging with more than one influential person is one way to ensure that relationship building proceeds despite the departure of a key champion from the relevant department. Often, leveraging on the departing champion's network and maintaining a relationship with them may be important for the continuation of conversations and for other LP activities down the line e.g., getting buy-in for recommendations or the required approvals for LP activities like data collection.

- **Avoid building relationships with government departments where staff turnover is common.** An IDinsight staff member who works in India mentioned that some state governments and departments are known to have high turnover than others and that IDinsight LP teams consider such factors when scoping partnerships with departments.
- **Work with members of the political executive or political appointees who have fixed tenure periods and are thus unlikely to leave their post abruptly.** For example, an IDinsight team working in India chose to work directly with a deputy chief minister and vice president of a government think tank because they operated with fixed tenure periods that were unlikely to be cut short.

🔎 Problem identification

✓ Enablers of Success

Identify and work on government partners' priority areas

By definition, IDinsight's LP approach aims to be demand-driven. It is therefore important to establish a working relationship that facilitates the identification of priority needs. Working on areas that are a priority for both the government and other stakeholders strengthens buy-in and support for LP activities, increasing the likelihood for proposed solutions to be sustained. For example, a respondent who worked with a government partner in Malawi reflected that supporting a program that also had the support of various stakeholders was a contributing factor to the wins that the LP has had.

IDinsight LP teams have taken the following actions to ensure that they work on priority areas of partners:

- **Stakeholder mapping that goes beyond the partner institution and aims to understand the broader ecosystem.** Assessing stakeholder roles, activities, and interests facilitates an understanding of the sector priorities and the stakeholder landscape. Understanding the sector priorities and the stakeholders who support the government partner also allows for the identification of the unique value that IDinsight brings to the table.
- **Engaging regularly with relevant government and other stakeholders.** Systematically engaging with stakeholders such as government officials, funders, and other organizations that support governments is one way to get insights on the direction in which the LP focus sector is heading. This in turn enables the identification of partner priority areas. Another benefit of regularly engaging with other partners that the partner government department works with is the clarification of the role that IDinsight plays among these partners, and the facilitation of a collaborative approach rather than an approach where IDinsight competes with the other stakeholders in the landscape.

The demand-driven nature of IDinsight's LP approach extends to capacity building activities. Respondents observed that well executed capacity building is targeted to the needs and expectations of partner staff, is relevant and applicable to their day-to-day work, and occurs over several sessions rather than one-off sessions to allow trainees to dig deeper into and better understand the topic.

IDinsight LP teams mentioned conducting a needs assessment prior to capacity building and tailoring content to the needs identified from this assessment ensures that it is well targeted to partner staff. A needs assessment identifies current strengths and weaknesses of the partner staff. Tailoring the content to address gaps identified in the needs assessment ensures that the training adds value. IDinsight staff and government partners also observed that it is important to build in the appropriate time to cover the topic area in sufficient depth.

Evidence generation

✓ Enablers of Success

Flexibility to adapt the engagement scope to address government priorities

Given government priorities often evolve over time, it is vital for LPs to build in flexibility in the LP scope to inform decision making. IDinsight LP teams report that being able to pivot based on changes in partner needs is one aspect of the LP approach that ensures that ongoing work informs priority decisions. The flexibility of the LP approach has been especially helpful for government partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, some IDinsight LP teams have pivoted their work to support government partners' COVID-19 response. Such shifts would not have easily been possible in a more conventional engagement defined by specific deliverables and pre-defined use of resources.

Respondents identified the following ways to achieve and maintain flexibility:

- **Flexible funding allows teams to redirect resources towards emerging needs.** Several teams noted that flexible resources enabled them to respond to government needs that were not envisioned at the start of the engagement. For example, a respondent who worked on an LP in Zambia noted that the IDinsight team supported a data collection exercise that was not directly tied to the LP activities but was important to the government department that was directly involved with the LP.

  Whereas respondents recognized the value of flexible funding, some observed that few funders are comfortable with ambiguity and by implication, the flexibility of IDinsight LPs. Typically, funders seek to know the outcomes their funding will achieve.

  One way to go around funder requirements is to have government partners fund LPs, if possible. Respondents who worked on an LP that was funded by the government partner observed that one advantage of being client funded was the absence of third-party funder procedures and checklists, which can be time consuming to meet. Another benefit is that the government partner may have more involvement with the LP activities and be more responsive as they have made a direct financial investment that they would like to gain from.

- **Building in budget and workplan buffers to facilitate the addressing of ongoing or changing needs.** Some respondents mentioned that budgeting for extra staff time makes it possible for the IDinsight LP team to temporarily bring in more staff to work on an activity that was not initially envisioned in the work plan without going over budget. Additionally, extra time in work plans provides LP teams with the space to tweak and iterate on LP activities to address emerging needs.
- **Having a flexible project structure that allows for the alignment of evidence generation to correspond to the partner institution's needs, constraints, and decision-making timelines, rather than to rigid deliverables and timelines.** Partners observed that the IDinsight aligns LP activities to their priority questions, rather than conduct studies for their own stake. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Malawi rolled out a COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) to support urban residents that were most affected by the pandemic. The government requested IDinsight's support to conduct a rapid assessment of the CUCI program to understand the experiences of program participants. The program was a high priority for the government and the rapid assessments were to be conducted at a short turnaround time to inform subsequent iterations of the program. The IDinsight team quickly prioritized this work, conducted a rapid assessment of this program, and generated recommendations which helped to inform subsequent iterations of the program.

Maintain trust and buy-in from champions

Maintaining the trust and buy-in is important to ensure that the LP has support from key decision makers within the government partner institution. Relationship building begins in the partner selection phase and extends throughout the engagement, with the bulk occurring during the evidence generation phase.

Respondents mentioned taking the following actions during the evidence generation phase to maintain and deepen trust and buy-in:

- **Investing in building and strengthening partner relationships throughout the engagement via formal and informal channels.** Having individual check-ins with government officials e.g., via meetings at partner or IDinsight offices, over a meal, or via calls to solicit feedback enhances partner trust. Requests for feedback often pleasantly surprise the officials, as some counterparts reported that partners that they work with rarely ask for feedback. Individual check-ins also provide an opportunity to air concerns and give IDinsight an opportunity to address these concerns.
- **Generating quick wins.** Producing high quality work on discrete areas of high priority within the initial stages of the relationship can win-over partners for long-term engagement. One respondent who worked on an engagement that has had two phases mentioned that the high-quality outputs that IDinsight provided after the first phase strengthened buy-in. This played a role in the carrying over of the strong relationship between the IDinsight team and the government partner into the second phase of the LP. Continuing to produce high quality work throughout the engagement maintains the trust gained in the early stages of the engagement.

- **Co-locating IDinsight staff with the government partner institution.** IDinsight staff and government partners who worked on LPs in Ghana and Malawi observed that being co-located allowed the IDinsight teams to work closely with government officials. This close collaboration with officials generated trust in the IDinsight team among partner staff. Respondents also observed that being embedded and/or co-located enhanced their availability for in-person meetings with partners, including on short-notice. This was noted as being of great value add for the establishment and maintenance of trust. Co-location also deepens the IDinsight team's understanding of the partner's stakeholder environment by easing their ability to meet with other stakeholders that work with the partner.
- **Staffing individuals with strong relationship building skills as well as citizens of LP focus countries.** Having individuals with strong relationship building skills on LP teams is key to maintaining trust and buy-in given the importance of meeting and engaging with partners. Additionally, the presence of citizens from LP focus countries also helps to deepen the relationship with partners. For example, a respondent who worked on an LP in Zambia observed that the presence of citizens on the team eased the partner's concerns about sharing sensitive data with the IDinsight team. It also reassured partner officials that IDinsight was supportive of nationally-defined development agendas and was not pushing its own agenda. Staffing citizens of LP focus countries may also enhance the LP team's understanding of the country's political and local context due to their contextual understanding.
- **Co-creating LP activities and outputs with partner staff.** A government partner in Asia noted that the IDinsight team's involvement of the government officials in co-creating the LP approach and outputs through activities such as joint work sessions enhanced their buy-in for the project and recommendations.
- **Registering as a legal entity and having offices within LP focus countries.** A former IDinsight staff member noted that IDinsight often faced pushback when working with government partners in countries in which IDinsight was not registered. IDinsight's local presence and legal recognition allows government partners to mention that they are working with a domestic organization rather than a foreign one, which may enhance buy-in for an LP. A government partner from a country in which IDinsight is not registered observed that being registered would ensure that LP recommendations are taken up at a higher level that extends beyond the ministry that IDinsight engages with, as implementing recommendations often involves more than one government ministry.

✕ Barriers to Success

Unplanned IDinsight staff turnover

Turnover of IDinsight staff on LP teams stalls relationship building between IDinsight and partner staff and temporarily reduces the pace of LP activities. While some government partners felt transitions did not lead to a loss of quality or time of the LP work, another government partner noted that IDinsight staff turnover created a disconnect in LP activities as time was spent briefing the new team members and re-establishing the relationship between the government officials and the IDinsight team.

Frequent turnover also raises concerns among government officials regarding the continuity of conversations and confidentiality of LP activities. A former IDinsight staff member observed that government officials were concerned about the confidentiality of the data that they had shared with the team following the movement of various IDinsight staff out of the LP team. Additionally, a government partner mentioned that some early-stage conversations between the relevant government department and the IDinsight team fell through the cracks following changes in the IDinsight LP team.

Below are suggestions for how to mitigate the adverse effects of LP staff turnover:

- **Manage expectations of IDinsight LP team members when staffing LP projects.** LP staff are typically expected to stay on an LP for at least one year to build long-term relationships and allow for continuity in implementing LP activities.[34] LP projects also differ from other IDinsight projects in that activities adapt to emerging partner needs on an ongoing basis. They may also require a different skill set than other projects, depending on the scope of work. For instance, some LPs may need individuals with more people skills than a typical project. Additionally, staff who are assigned to an embedded LP may need to relocate if they are not based in the LP focus geography. Therefore, it is important for potential LP staff to be aware of these factors prior to being staffed on an LP. This would give the opportunity for staff who may not align with these conditions to opt out, limiting staff turnover.
- **Ensure overlap between existing and new IDinsight LP staff.** This overlap period may ease the transfer of LP contextual knowledge to newly staffed individuals. Additionally, holding joint partner meetings with both older and newer LP staff present to discuss the partners' areas of interest may ease partner concerns regarding having important conversations stalling.
- **Stagger turnover of the IDinsight LP team staff.** Rather than having a full LP team change at once, turnover of LP staff could be staggered to maintain some continuity of the individuals that government partners engage with. Staggering departures may also ease the transfer of contextual knowledge to newly staffed individuals.
- **Continue to maintain strong internal standards to minimize discrepancies in how a project or task is handled.** Having strong hiring and training standards is one way to ensure that tasks and projects are handled with high quality standards by all individuals within the organization.
- **Re-examine the recruitment and staffing policy to understand staff who stay and staff who leave and identify key learnings for the recruitment and staffing process.** Unplanned IDinsight staff turnover may be due to underlying factors related to the recruitment and staffing process. Therefore, it may be worth re-examining the recruitment process, staffing policy, and tenure of IDinsight LP staff to understand trends between staff who stay and staff who leave and identify key learnings to reduce unplanned turnover.
- **Managing government partner expectations regarding the potential turnover of IDinsight staff.** As IDinsight staff regularly move from one project one to another, it may be worth sensitizing government partners to the reality that staff may not stay for the full duration of the LP.

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34   IDinsight staff on non-LPs typically move from one project to another every six months or so.

Government partner staff turnover

Government staff turnover may adversely affect the progress of evidence-generating activities in three main ways:

1. It may result in the loss of buy-in for LP activities.
2. It may result in loss of contextual knowledge among the government partner department that is directly involved with the LP.
3. It may contribute to the loss of knowledge gained from capacity building activities within the relevant government department, resulting in the need to retrain the newly transferred officials.

IDinsight LP teams suggested the following steps to mitigate the negative effects of government staff turnover during the evidence generation phase:

*   **Build in budget and workplan buffers to allow for onboarding and capacity building of new government partner staff.** Buffers ensure that the relevant government department retains the contextual knowledge and relevant skills needed to engage with the LP activities despite the transfer of government officials. The retention of contextual knowledge within the relevant department also facilitates the continuation of ongoing conversations.
*   **Institutionalize LP activities within the government department.** Institutionalization reduces the reliance on champions to see things through and ensure the LP is a success. Examples of institutionalization include using existing data systems for data collection activities, having a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the department and the supporting organization, and having the LP activities be included in the government department's annual work plans.
*   **Maintain relationships with government officials who transitioned off the LP.** Former staff from government partner departments could be strong champions of IDinsight in their new department or organization, facilitating the formation of new partnerships, and could continue to advocate for the LP activities among their former colleagues.

IDinsight LP team resource constraints

IDinsight LP teams do not always have the resources and capability to respond to ongoing partner requests, especially those not envisioned during the establishment of the LP. Some respondents noted that IDinsight LP teams sometimes have insufficient staff members or expertise to respond to requests that were not initially envisioned. Insufficient expertise may increase the time it takes to respond whereas insufficient staff may result in LP teams overstretching themselves while responding to requests. Examples of ongoing requests IDinsight LP teams have received from government partners include requests to support data collection exercises or contribute to sector strategies on short notice.

To mitigate resource constraints, LP teams could:

- **Staff individuals with strong topical expertise (e.g., public health, education) in the LP focus area as well as skills (e.g., monitoring, evaluation designs, statistical software skills) to facilitate timely responses to partner requests.** LP teams should have a good mix of individuals with strong expertise vs those with less expertise in the LP focus area.
- **Standardize having budget buffers across IDinsight LP teams.** Whereas some respondents mentioned that building in budget buffers facilitated their ability to respond to ongoing needs, others mentioned having insufficient funding to address ongoing needs. For instance, one respondent observed that insufficient funding limited their LP team's ability to add new team members to assist the team to address newly identified needs.
- **Manage government requests, while being able to leverage new requests that could yield additional impact.** To avoid cases where LP teams are overburdened, teams should learn to turn down requests gently and respectfully during periods when the LP team is deeply engaged.

Different expectations about IDinsight compensating partner staff

- **IDinsight does not compensate government partner staff for participating in LP activities.** However, respondents who have worked on LPs in African countries observed that government partners typically expect stipends or per diem for participating in LP activities such as data collection exercises and co-creating activities and outputs. One respondent who engaged in technical capacity building activities with partner staff in an African country as part of LP activities noted that attendance was an issue as the staff had little incentive to attend because they were not receiving per diem. Precedents set by other organizations that support government partners may contribute to a mismatch in the expectations of the type of support that IDinsight provides.

To mitigate adverse effects of discrepancies in partner expectations, LP teams could:

- **Understand and manage expectations with partner staff during the partner selection and relationship building phase of the LP.** Clearly outlining the role IDinsight will play during the engagement, how IDinsight differs from other organizations partners typically work with, and whether IDinsight will provide any benefits, such as per diems, would limit mismatches between partners' expectations against their actual experience.[35]

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35 For example, one government partner mentioned expecting to receive software from IDinsight that would enable staff from the partner department to conduct data analysis. However, this expectation was managed once they understand the type of support IDinsight provides, which in this case was supporting the partner to generate data and evidence to strengthen and inform an ongoing program.

- **Decide whether compensation such as per diem or stipends will be offered for engaging in LP activities beforehand and build it into the budget accordingly.** IDinsight could consider following government norms regarding provision of stipends in situations where government staff typically receive stipends e.g., for staff to attend an out-of-town seminars or events. In such cases, compensation should be channeled through the partner institution, rather than to individuals directly. It is important to note that providing partner staff with stipends comes with a risk of creating misaligned incentives among the staff. For example, staff may only participate in LP activities because they will receive a stipend. Therefore, this risk should be carefully considered when deciding whether to provide compensation.

⚖️ Facilitating Evidence Uptake, Decisions, and Actions

✓ Enablers of Success

Understand the partner's operating context

Having a deep understanding of partner contexts facilitates the identification of recommendations that are contextually (i.e. politically and technically) feasible for partners to implement. This is especially important as it is unlikely for recommendations that are not contextually feasible to be taken up.

IDinsight LP teams have taken the following actions to understand the partner's operating contexts:

- Implementing an inception or scoping phase to better understand the partner's operating context.
- Regularly engaging with key champions of partner organizations throughout the problem identification and evidence generation phases.
- Co-creating results dissemination and solution finding workshops to identify recommendations within the feasible solution space.

Understand individual incentives of government partners

Demonstrating a strong understanding of the incentives and goals of both partner institutions and/or departments as well as the champions within these institutions facilitates the buy-in of proposed recommendations. Government organizations and officials often have incentives that extend beyond improving the livelihoods of the communities they serve. For example, a partner department may want to establish more informal authority within their institution and believes that this can be achieved by strengthening a dataset that they manage. Or perhaps a government institution may want to get good recommendations from multilateral partners. At the individual level, a department head may want to appear to be improving the implementation of a program their department oversees or may want to get recognition from higher level government officials. Appealing to these priorities when proposing politically and technically feasible recommendations may further enhance the chances of uptake of proposed recommendations.

Understanding partner incentives extends from being cognizant of their key priorities. Regularly engaging with government partners and other stakeholders who support the government partner builds an understanding of the incentives of key champions

× Barriers to Success

Insufficient authority to implement recommendations

Engaging with government partners who have limited authority to oversee the implementation of recommendations may reduce the level of meaningful impact that an LP achieves. Respondents on two IDinsight LP teams observed that the government department they engaged with could not always see proposed recommendations through as they were not directly responsible for implementing the recommendations.

To mitigate this, LP teams should take the following actions:

- **Conduct a political economy analysis during the partner selection phase to identify partners that have implementing authority.**[36] A political economy analysis and assessment of specific champions would facilitate identification of the key policy formulation and decision makers within the LP focus sector.
- **Form strong relationships with stakeholders that have authority to implement recommendations in settings where government implementers differ from the policy makers.** In some government set ups, the governmental body responsible for making policies differs from the body that implements policies. In such settings, it is important to form strong relationships and work closely with both early on in the evidence generation phase.

Insufficient resources to implement recommendations

Governments typically have various competing priorities which need government resources. For this reason, the resources needed to implement proposed recommendations may be tied to other government priorities, limiting their uptake. This was an emerging theme from respondents in Africa and Asia.

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36   For example, Heifetz and others formulate principles of leadership that facilitate change. Heifetz, Ronald A., Marty Linksy, and Alexander Grashow. "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World."

LP teams should:

- **Align recommendations with current government programs and policies** such as sector strategies, short- and medium-term plans, and existing projects that typically have funds allocated. Tailoring recommendations to fit in with ongoing government priorities, and ensuring they are budget neutral where possible, would increase the likelihood that they are taken up.
- **Conduct a budget analysis to understand the aspects of the program that are funded and what the funding priorities are.** Budget analyses also facilitate the identification of areas in which the government has the most discretion with regards to budgetary and spending decisions.
- **Time LP activities and recommendations with the government budget cycle.** Tying recommendations to the budget cycle would increase chances that the government allocates funds to see the recommendations through in upcoming budget cycles, facilitating their uptake.
- **Partner with implementing organizations that have the ability to implement proposed recommendations.** When identifying possible solutions, LP teams could identify implementing organizations that work within the LP focus sector and bring them into the partnership to support the implementation of proposed recommendations.

An important factor that informs the uptake of recommendations that emerge from an LP is how feasible (politically and technically) it is to implement the identified recommendations. Thus, LP teams should aim to identify questions that could generate solutions that can be implemented in the problem identification stage, in addition to striving to partner with organizations with the authority and resources to implement recommendations.

Sustained solutions

✓ Enablers of Success

Institutionalize solutions

Institutionalizing solutions within government systems increases the chances that they persist following the engagement. The result of institutionalization is the integration of the solution into the government processes and/or procedures.

Respondents identified the following actions that teams could take to institutionalize solutions:

- **Engaging with high-level decision makers to build buy-in for proposed solutions and recommendations.** Key decision makers could involve the civil servants that oversee the team that would implement and maintain the solution and any political actors with decision making power in the LP focus area. Without the buy-in of such decision makers, proposed solutions may not persist following the engagement.
- **Establishing partner ownership of proposed solutions and recommendations.** Partner ownership could be generated by co-creating solutions and closely involving partners during the evidence generation and solution identification process.

- **Co-developing an implementation plan.** Presenting government partners with a roadmap that outlines the activities that they could take to implement the suggested solutions demystifies what implementation would involve and facilitates the uptake and institutionalization of recommendations. The roadmap could include the stakeholders who should be bought-in for the solution to be implemented, possible partners the government could work with to implement the solution, and the resources that would be required. Ideally, final recommendations should be presented along with ways that they could be implemented. This could then begin a phase in which the supporting organization supports the government partner action on the recommendations.
- **Conducting capacity building efforts that persist within the partner organization.** Ideally, such efforts go beyond simply transferring knowledge to partner staff to building in a mindset of evidence use. For example, one government partner noted that having junior government staff shadow IDinsight associates is one way of improving partner capacity.

× Barriers to Success

Insufficient resources to maintain developed systems

Governments often have competing and shifting priorities, which may result in the reallocation of resources needed to maintain systems that were developed during an LP. Resource reallocations typically happen with governments, and thus the risk of reallocation of resources needed to maintain systems should be minimized. Additionally, governments may not always have the level of technical capacity required to maintain such systems. For example, IDinsight staff who developed a dashboard that was coded in Python to support a government program noted that the partners had insufficient technical skills to maintain it.

LP teams should:

- **Use platforms in which government partners are well versed in when developing systems such as dashboards.** Using platforms which government partners have skills in enables them to maintain them following the engagement.
- **Train partners on the skills needed to maintain developed systems.** Capacity building is one way to ensure that government partners have the required skills to maintain systems that were developed during the engagement.
- **Build solutions off existing government systems and administrative data.** Using existing government systems, wherever possible, even if flawed or imperfect, can ensure that government partners continue to use the solutions post-engagement.

Limitations in the definition of project success

IDinsight LP teams observed that due to the evolving nature of LP objectives and activities, IDinsight's internal impact measurement system could be improved to better capture the successes that LPs have achieved.[37]
Additionally, LP contexts vary and thus a one size fits all approach of defining and measuring success may not be suited to LPs.

IDinsight could do the following to better capture the success that LPs have achieved:

- **Incorporate metrics that capture both the hard and soft wins on LPs to contribution measurement systems.** LPs often have "soft" wins that are difficult to quantify and measure but are important for the LP context. Examples include contributions to a government national sector strategy, contributions to government program improvements, and building a culture of data and evidence within the partner organization. One way of incorporating such metrics is to have a section of the contribution measurement system dedicated to LPs. This section could document metrics that are unique to LPs e.g., number of government policies contributed to, number of programs that IDinsight has informed, etc. Alternatively, IDinsight could rethink how to define LP objectives and measure LP successes and come up with a new LP-specific impact contribution measurement system, rather than have a section of the current system dedicated to LPs.
- **Systemize post-engagement follow-up with partners** to document decisions made after an LP and assess the sustainability of implemented solutions. Maintaining relationships with government partners is important to facilitate this.
- **Assess the partner's capabilities and needs during the partner identification process** to facilitate the identification of what "success" or a "sustainable solution" looks like. LP teams could use this information at a later stage to identify success and their sustainability.

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37   IDinsight's internal impact measurement system aims to capture the organization's contribution to client social impact across three main areas: 1) having a direct impact on people's lives, 2) improvements in resource allocation, and 3) improvements in client capabilities.

4. Lessons Learnt and Implications for LP Engagements

This reflection exercise sought to identify critical enablers and barriers to the success of learning partnerships. To achieve this, we formalized a high-level TOC that describes an LP's path to impact and conducted stakeholder interviews with current and former IDinsight staff and government partners that have been involved with LPs. While analyzing the interview insights, we reflected on the TOC to identify the key factors that LP teams should consider before, during, and after an LP engagement to ensure that their LP drives decision making and results in sustained solutions. This section presents the key lessons from these insights and their implications for LPs.

We summarize these lessons and their implications across the engagement stages of an LP in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of key lessons and their implications for LPs

Lesson	Implications
Pre-engagement	
1. Form partnerships with partners that are committed to EIPM	• Screen the commitment of potential partners to using data and evidence to inform decision making
2. Establish trust and buy-in from senior-level staff of partner organizations	• Build in sufficient senior-leadership time to lead conversations with partners' senior-level staff • Prioritize staffing of senior leaders who would – because of who they are or their experience – come with a pre-existing "trust capital" on a given LP
3. Establish a strong understanding of the partner organization's context and stakeholder environment	• Conduct a political economy analysis, stakeholder mapping exercise, and adaptive leadership assessment of champions prior to the start of an LP
4. Clarify expectations about IDinsight's role in technical and soft capacity building to establish and facilitate an evidence use culture	• Explain IDinsight's approach to capacity building consisting of both formalized activities to build technical capacity and working shoulder-to-shoulder to foster an organizational culture that asks for and thinks about the use of evidence when making decisions • Whenever relevant, factor in costs for formal capacity activities that go beyond staff costs e.g., to allow for provision of per diem or stipends and/or request partners to cover such costs
5. IDinsight should redefine what success on an LP looks like	• Incorporate metrics that capture both hard and soft wins to contribution measurement metrics, and that include the partner institution's opinion of wins
During Engagement	

Inception phase	
6. Understand/deepen understanding of the partner organization's context and stakeholder environment	• Refine the analysis during the inception phase of the LP • Review/update the analysis periodically during the course of the LP
Normal engagement/non-inception phase	
7. Maintain relationships, trust, and buy-in with senior-level staff of partner organizations	• Build in senior-leadership time for formal and informal check-ins with key champions from partner organizations beyond the norm of a typical project • Co-locate IDinsight staff with the partner organization • •rioritize individuals with strong relationship management skills (as opposed to technical skills) for staffing LPs • Aim to staff citizens of LP focus countries on LPs, or colleagues with particular contextual knowledge
8. Allow for resource reallocation to facilitate responses to ongoing needs	• Build in greater budget and workplan buffers (compared to standard IDinsight projects) • For LPs funded by a third party, set aside unrestricted funds for ad hoc support • Bring funders onboard with the flexible nature of LPs and focus funders on the problems the LP aims to solve, rather than specific deliverables or methods used
9. Carefully consider partner capacity building needs (formal and informal) and expectations	• Consider conducting a needs assessment before capacity building and tailor content to needs identified from this assessment • Set aside sufficient time for capacity building activities – whether formal or informal (i.e., working shoulder to shoulder) at all levels (i.e., through interactions led by IDinsight senior leaders and through interactions led by associates) to support an evidence use culture • Consider leveraging internal IDinsight materials for capacity building (i.e., bootcamp, toolkit) • Manage capacity building expectations among partner staff
10. Build in measures to facilitate the continuation of on-going conversations and activities in the event of staff turnover	• Document important takeaways from key conversations and activities • Have a longer period during which IDinsight staff who are new to an LP overlap with staff who are moving out of the LP as part of the LP onboarding process – longer compared to non-LP projects • Limit turnover of IDinsight LP staff – more so than in non-LP projects
Post-engagement	
11. Conduct a post project review	• Solicit feedback from partners to identify key lessons for the future • Document decisions made by partners • Maintain relationships with partners • Provide a small budget for a tail of advisory support by senior leadership during the implementation phase

Taken together, we hope that these lessons and implications are interesting to teams that support government partners on EIPM and further strengthen their work. We also hope that the reflections in this report fit into the broader reflection of the use of rigorous evidence to inform government policy and decision making.

Appendix 1: Overview of IDinsight Learning Partnerships

Region	Country	Government Counterpart	Focus	Engagement Time
Africa	Ghana	Ministry of Monitoring and Evaluation	One District One Factory, Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Program	2018-2021
		Ministry of Education	Free Senior High School Program	2018-2021
	Kenya	County Government of Meru's Efficiency and Monitoring Unit	COVID-19 Response	2020
		County Government of Meru's Department of Health	Community health volunteers program strategy	2021
	Malawi	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare	Social Protection	2018-ongoing
	Morocco	Not disclosed (1 / 2)	Not disclosed	2019-ongoing
		Not disclosed (2 / 2)	Not disclosed	2019-ongoing
	Zambia	Ministry of Community Development and Social Services	Social Protection	2018-2020
South Asia	India	NITI Aayog	Aspirational Districts Program, Agriculture, Health, Sanitation, Capacity Building*	2017-ongoing
		NITI Aayog	Monitoring of CIFF Matrix program	2019-ongoing
		Government of India	Mission Karmayogi	2020-ongoing
		Delhi Government	COVID-19 Response	2020-ongoing
Southeast Asia	Philippines	Department of Health	Vaccines Hesitancy	2021-ongoing

Note: * Summarizes several learning partnerships across different government units.

Appendix 2: Features of IDinsight's LP approach

Feature	Description
Intentional project selection	LPs are selected and initiated with the main goal of achieving a positive social impact
Demand-driven	LPs aim to respond to government needs without any influencing agenda
Flexibility	LPs answer partner evolving priority questions as they arise
In-house expertise	The IDinsight team is well versed with a range of analytical tools and deploys the "right" tool for the partner's evidence needs
Local grounding	The IDinsight team is often co-located with partner staff and has in-depth knowledge regarding the LP focus country's local operating context
Partner involvement	IDinsight LP teams aim to update and involve partners across each major step

Appendix 3: Summary of Operational Learnings for LPs teams

In this Appendix, we summarize the operational learnings and insights on how to set up LPs to ensure that they are effective and operate smoothly from an operational perspective. While these insights may overlap with the points made in the main body, we hope these to serve as a brief go-to resource.

We group the operational aspects of an LP into three: 1) staffing and 2) finances, and 3) defining and measuring success. These insights are summarized in the table below.

Area	Learning
Staffing	
Team composition	• Tailor staffing configurations to each LP • Build in more leadership time for formal and informal check-ins with key champions from partner organizations beyond the norm of a typical project • Have a mix of both citizens and non-citizens of LP focus countries on LP teams • Staff members of the technical team within the same time zone as LP teams
Team skills	• Staff individuals with the right mix of hard and soft skills on LPs • Train LP staff on LP-specific skills
Team turnover	• Manage expectations of LP staff regarding staffing duration • Ensure overlap between existing and new IDinsight LP staff, and building the cost of overlap in project costs • Stagger turnover of the IDinsight LP team staff
Embedding	• Embed teams within partner organization, if possible • Implement measures to ensure that embedded teams feel supported
Finances	
Budget	• Standardize having budget (and workplan) buffers across all LPs to facilitate responding to ongoing/changing partner needs
Funding	• Ideally, have access to flexible funding to facilitate responding to ongoing/changing partner needs • For LPs funded by a third party, set aside unrestricted funds for ad hoc support in explicit 'flexible' workstreams.
Defining and measuring success	
Impact measurement	• Incorporate impact metrics that capture both hard and soft wins and the varied progress of LPs • Systemize post-engagement follow up to document partner decisions made after an LP and assess the sustainability of implemented solutions

IDinsight