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African
Climate &
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Initiative

Measuring adaptive capacity among local organisations

A case study in Namakwa District
Municipality, South Africa

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The study focused on the NDM as a first step:

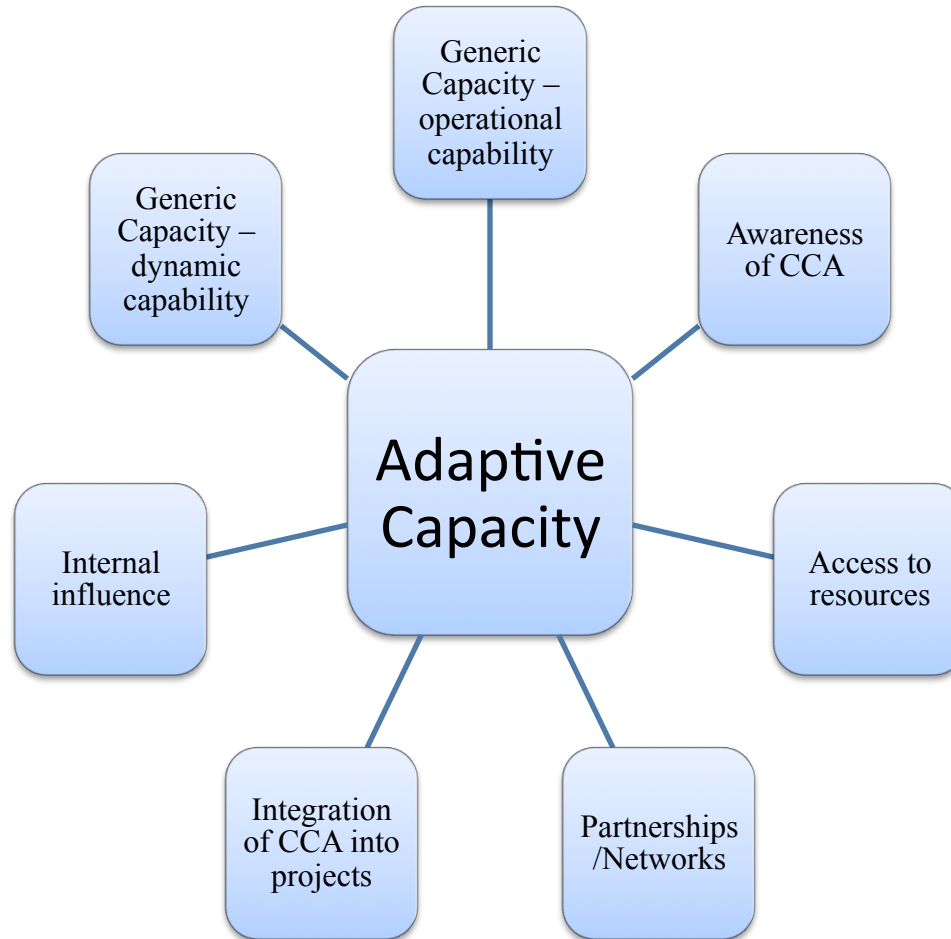
Mixed research approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data through interviews conducted with small organisations (15 NGOs, 8 CBOs and 7 governmental units) identified as potential applicants to the SGF project in the NDM

Aim:

- 1) to assess adaptive capacities among local organisations before the SGF project starts;
- 2) to identify gaps in terms of knowledge and understanding of what CCA is ;
- 3) To inform facilitating agencies about needs for capacity buildings

Follow-up interviews will be conducted during the course of the SGF project to track progress in adaptive capacity and observe concrete impacts in terms of enhanced adaptive capacity among local organisations

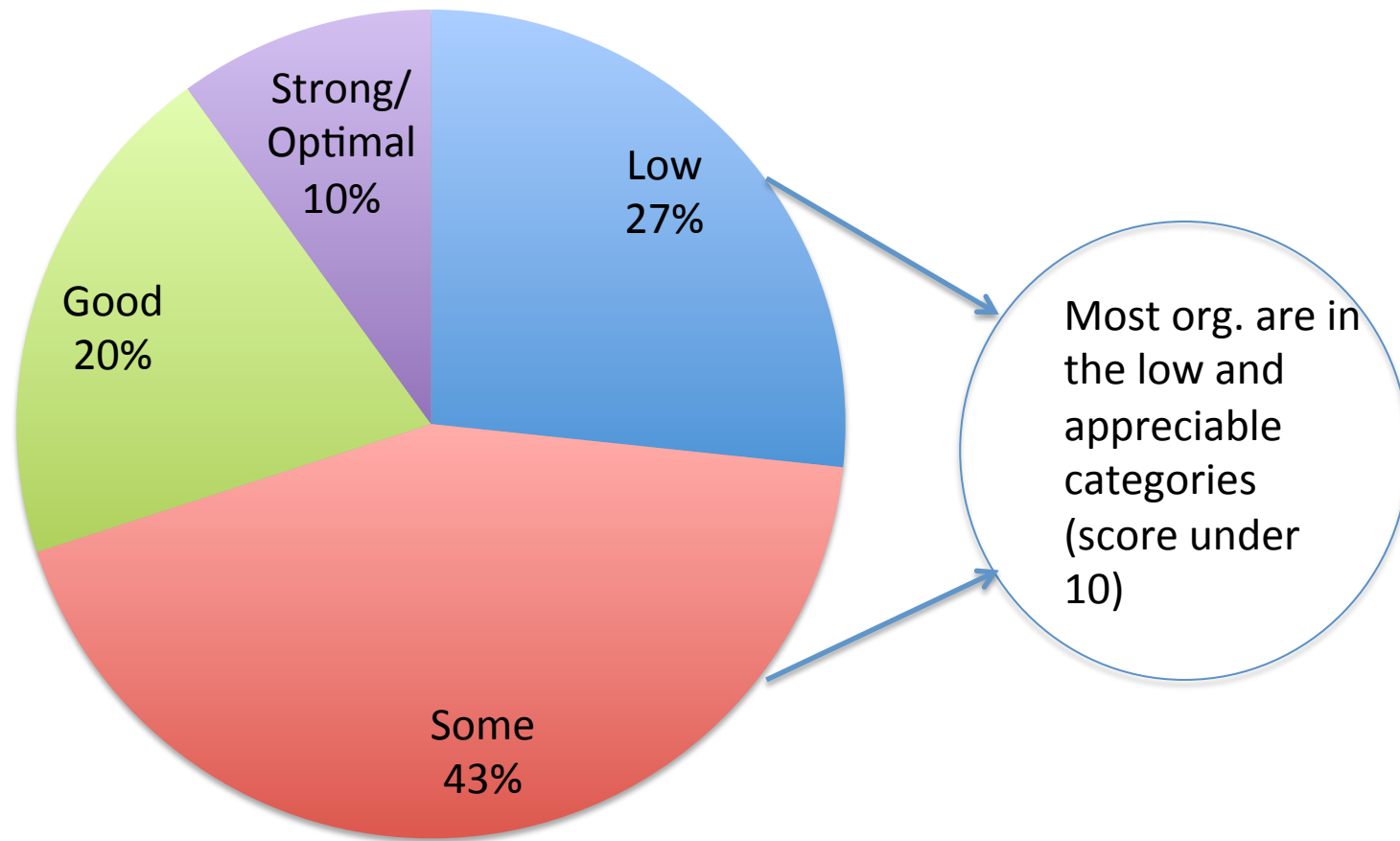
2. Framework of the interviews



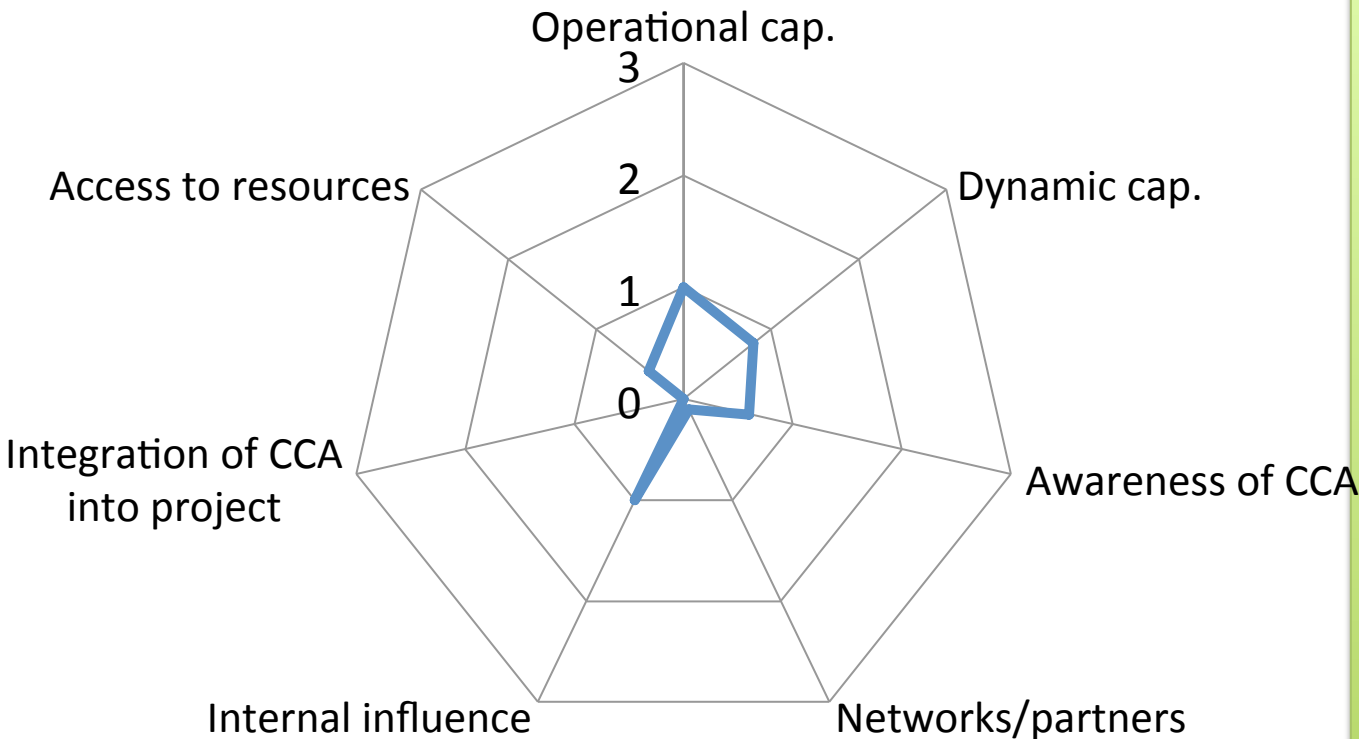
2. Method: Adaptive Capacity Score

Score	Description
Low adaptive capacity (0-5)	Very limited level of performance (low generic and adaptive capacities) – no clear understanding of/ interest in CC and CCA or no capacity to implement CCA
Some adaptive capacity (6-9)	Appreciable/good generic capacities with basic – practical – understanding of CC yet no clear understanding of how CCA could contribute to improve current activities/ some interest but limited experience in the field (because of lack of resources or focus on other priorities)
Good adaptive capacity (10-15)	Good performance and reasonable formal and practical understanding of CCA; experience integrating climate-related threats in specific categories of projects (eg. environmental)/ strong interest in engaging more in the field
Strong adaptive capacity (16-20)	Strong generic and adaptive capacities with good understanding of CC and CCA; good experience planning and implementing CC-related projects
Optimal adaptive capacity (>20)	Optimal level of capacity as CCA is integrated and a part of everyday practice. Outcomes have reshaped routines among the institutions and continue to do so in continuous cycles of activity

3. Results: Level of adaptive capacity among 30 local organisations



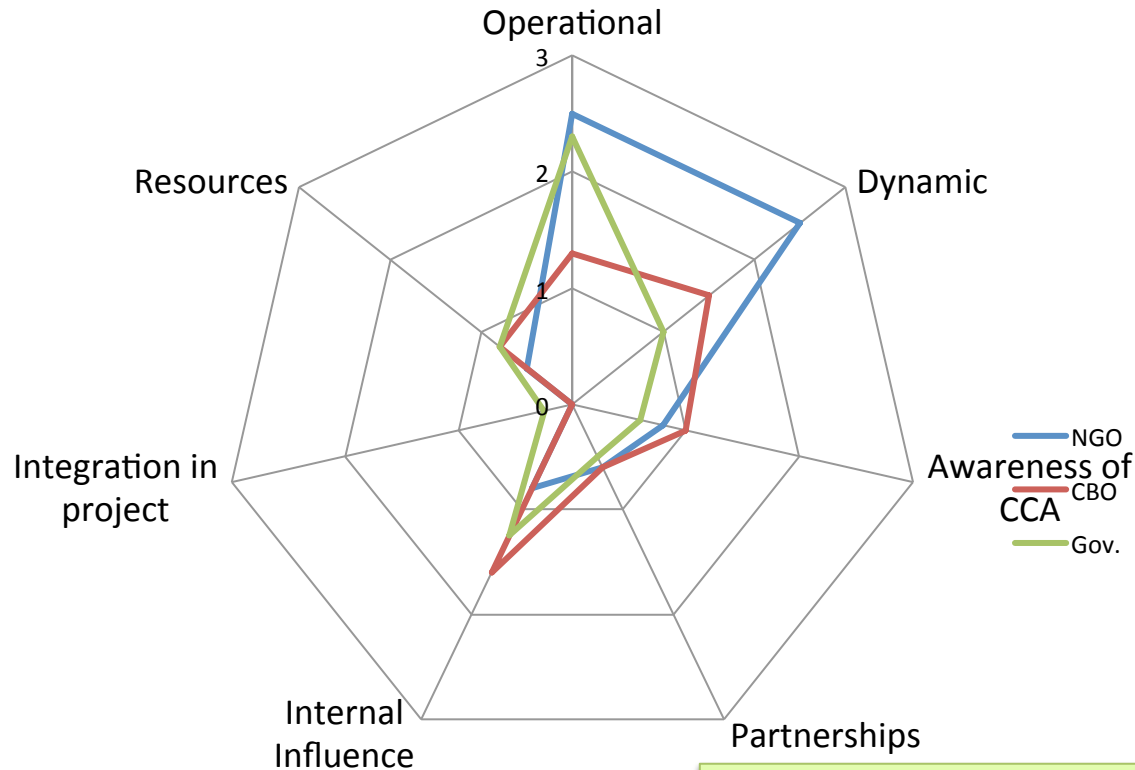
4. Results by group: Low adaptive capacity (n=8)



Characteristics of the org.:

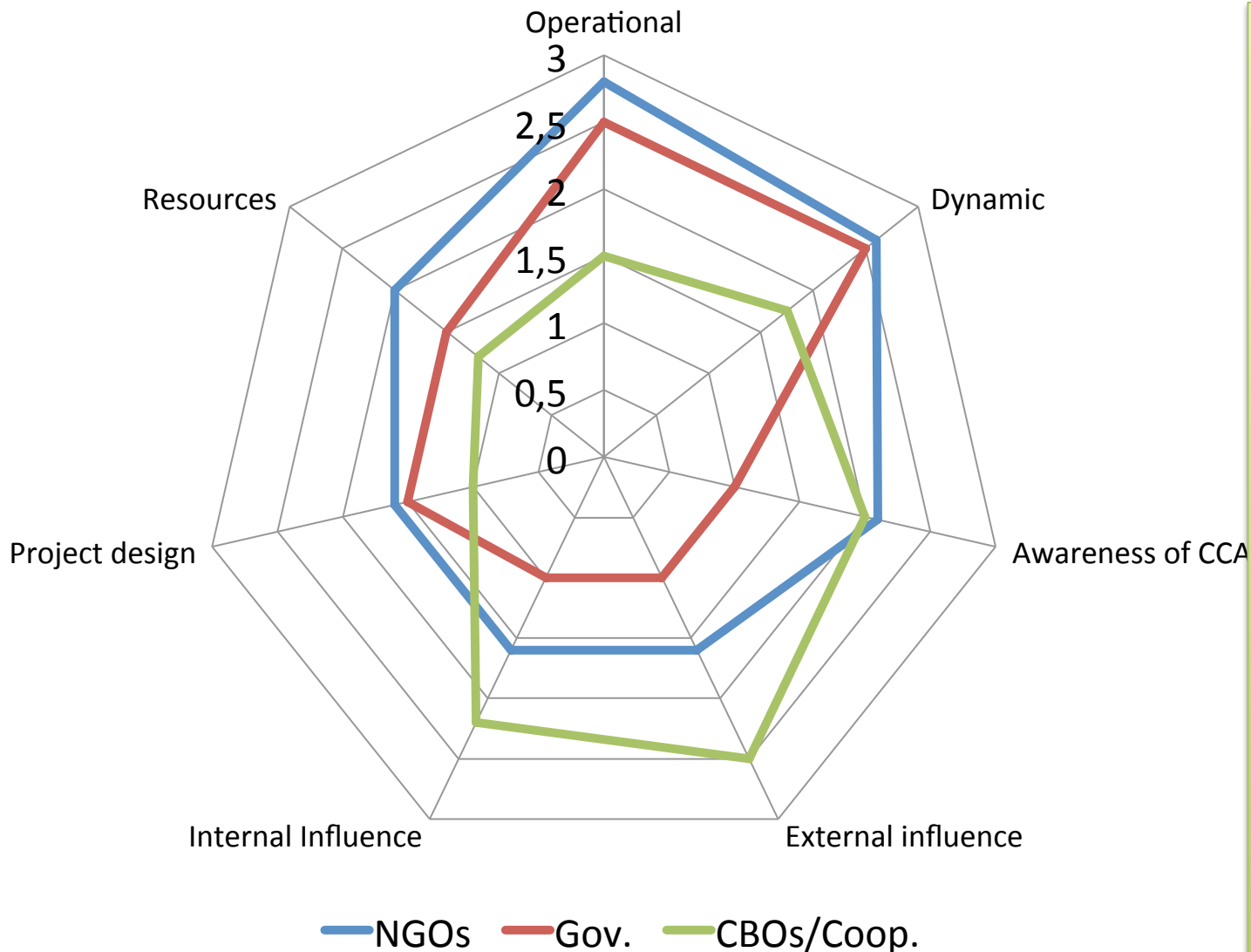
- Most of them are located far from town (isolated location);
- Limited access to technology;
- Very limited generic capacity (org. are not operational due to lack of budget and staff);
- No external support for CCA;
- No engagement with CCA yet due to lack of understanding or prioritization of other social issues

4. Some adaptive capacity (n=13)



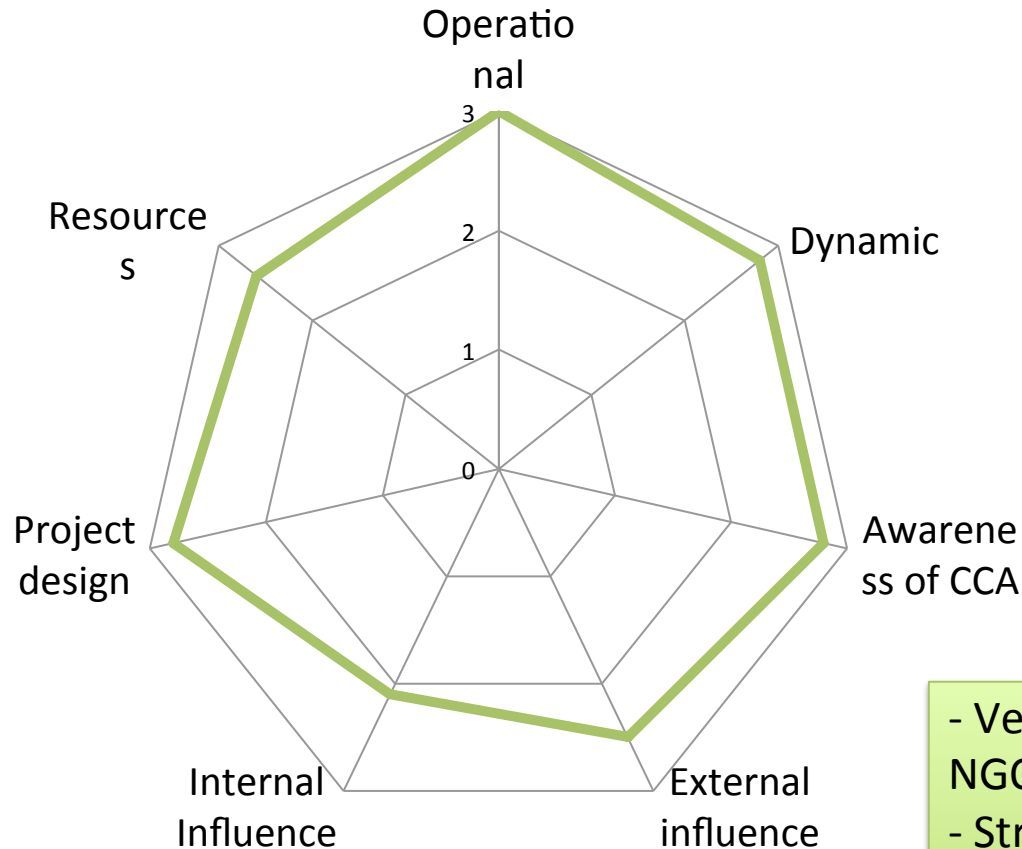
- Good functionality (exp. CBOs);
- No experience with CCA and limited understanding;
- Priority on socio-economic dev.;
- Resources not used to inform on CCA;
- Higher interest in CCA within CBOs

4. Good adaptive capacity (n=7)



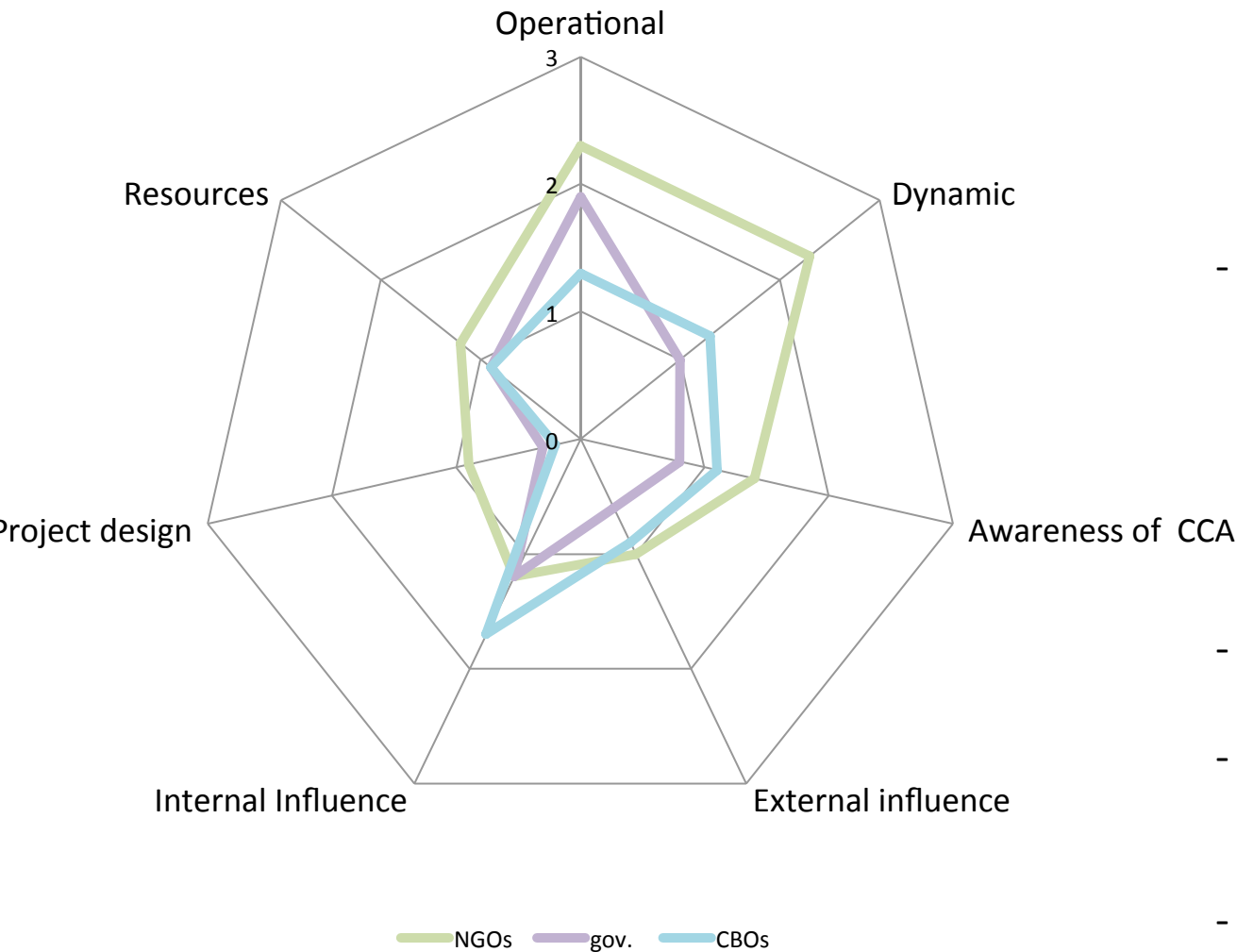
- Good functionality and flexibility (even for gov. org.)
- Most are working in a field related to the environment → experience, understanding of, interest in CCA
- Most have good partnerships that provide information and training support – esp. important for CBOs or isolated org.

4. Strong to optimal adaptive capacity (3 NGOs)



- Very functional and flexible NGOs;
- Strong experience dealing with CCA;
- Effective partnerships;
- Implement CCA training to help other org.

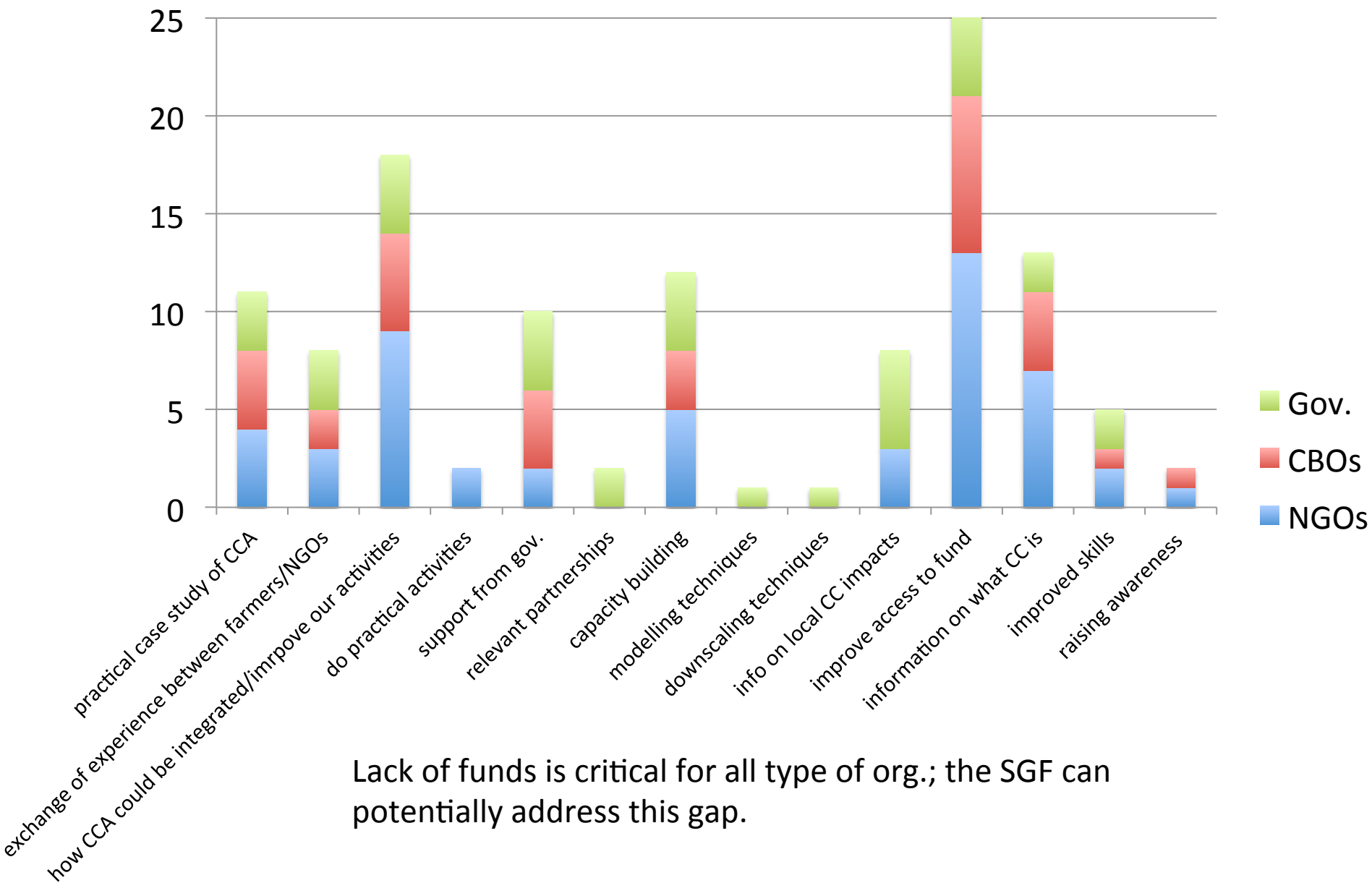
5. Comparison: NGOs, CBOs and gov. units



General observations:

- NGOs are most effective on the ground and flexible; gov. units lack flexibility while CBOs have limited capacity to implement activities due to limited budget
- NGOs have a good understanding of CCA and experience designing projects; CBOs have some level of understanding through observation of climate change impacts
- Partnerships are not well developed yet
- Not all org. perceive the links between their activities and CCA
- It is important to look at how resources are used to support CCA

6. How to foster CCA on the ground according to the interviewees



7. Main findings

Most local organisations have limited adaptive capacity – the capacity to conceive and implement CCA activities.

This is either linked to limited generic capacity (no funds or staff to perform and implement projects, no experience writing proposals, limited flexibility to integrate CCA into existing strategy) OR because of their major focus on socio-economic development:

- Strengthening generic capacity is critical to enable local org. to effectively operate on the ground; in this case, partnerships are an option to explore;
- Highlighting the links between CCA and socio-economic development is critical to enable local org. conceive projects that could be funded through CCA funds

To note: **NGOs with experience in the environmental field have higher adaptive capacity.**

Yet, because of the significance of socio-economic development in the NDM, it is critical to foster adaptive capacity among local entities working on such issues

A few important points to note:

- Communication and access to information for small org. with low capacity, often located in remote areas, is an issue preventing them from being in the loop when opportunities such as the SGF appear. This gap must be recognized and addressed not to leave the most vulnerable entities and groups out of the capacity building process
- Some org. think they are not concerned by CCA; many do not know how to link CCA with their activities. The links between CCA and socio-economic dev. should be highlighted and methods to integrate CCA with development plans should be presented
- Training on CC basic science is needed; but sharing experience and concrete cases of adaptation techniques is also critical for all org. especially for farmers in CBOs
- A lack of support from the gov. to CCA is noted – interestingly by more than half of the local gov. entities interviewed

7. Concluding points

- Local NGOs and CBOs, especially those located in remote areas, critically need external support. Their lack of budget and staff is currently a significant barrier to adaptive capacity. Building partnerships is a way to address this gap;
- Different types of partnership are important: professional to increase operational capacity (implement projects jointly); informative to train and give relevant information on CC; financial to provide adequate resources;
- NGOs that already work on environmental issues are often aware of CCA; yet most NGOs and CBOs in the NDM focus on socio-economic development and do not always see the link between CCA and what they do. This link should be highlighted to foster capacities to develop CCA projects that improve livelihood conditions for the most vulnerable;
- Overall, most local organisations need training on climate change and CCA. Making information available in a proper format and indicating where such information can be found is thus critical;
- Informative session should include concrete example of CCA: many organisations have a limited understanding of CCA, sometime mixing adaptation with recycling project or reducing pollution. Thus clarifying what CCA means is one of the first step to build adaptive capacity at the local level and, ultimately, increase organisations' capacity to access international funding for CCA.

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