

Advancing capacity sharing

Working Group 5 (WG5) focused on strengthening the global capacity to produce, translate, and utilise evidence in ways that are equitable, context-sensitive, and systemically embedded. Many low-resource regions and sectors lack access to high-quality training, mentorship, tools, or infrastructure for evidence synthesis and knowledge translation. Existing efforts remain fragmented, underfunded, donor-dependent, and often overlook local leadership, resulting in a limited pipeline of skilled practitioners and insufficient institutional support. WG5 proposes a set of interlinked solutions to build a globally connected, regionally led, and locally responsive capacity-sharing system. These solutions aim to move from isolated, project-based efforts toward sustainable, embedded structures that reflect local priorities, support professional development, and enable collective learning.

The landscape: who needs capacity sharing and why?

Demand for capacity strengthening is widespread. Policymakers, researchers, practitioners, civil society actors, and evidence users across various sectors are calling for more meaningful involvement in the production and translation of evidence. Localised, interdisciplinary approaches that respond to context-specific challenges are increasingly sought after, yet current training, capacity-sharing infrastructure and systems remain fragmented, underfunded, and often duplicative. Institutions in the Global South have prioritised regionally led training, mentoring, and networks to build lasting capacity. Evidence synthesis organisations also recognise the need to strengthen the pipeline of skilled professionals and provide better support for early and mid-career practitioners.

Capability gaps and maturity: where are we now?

Despite strong interest, most regions lack the institutional infrastructure to deliver training or host collaborative evidence projects on a large scale. Capacity-strengthening efforts in evidence synthesis and knowledge translation are unevenly distributed, short-lived, and often externally driven. Training remains ad hoc, concentrated in academic settings, and poorly aligned with the practical needs of policymakers, practitioners, and citizens. Most initiatives focus narrowly on systematic reviews and policy briefs/dialogues, with limited integration and institutionalization of knowledge translation, interest holder engagement, and contextualization for sustainable impact. The absence of globally endorsed competency frameworks and interoperable digital systems further constrains innovation, collaboration, and sustained learning. A key gap lies in connecting government agencies, training institutions, and civil society into shared learning ecosystems, an essential step toward building a resilient, globally distributed evidence infrastructure.

Key issues: what is holding us back?

Capacity-strengthening and sharing efforts are constrained by short-term project cycles, siloed funding streams, and a lack of coordination across sectors and donors. Many training programs are externally developed, lacking contextual relevance and long-term sustainability. Weak incentives for institutions and individuals, especially outside academia, limit engagement in synthesis work, while low investment in learning systems stifles continuous improvement. There is limited institutional support for integrating evidence-related roles into career pathways, and knowledge translation is rarely embedded alongside synthesis training. Persistent digital divides and a lack of localisation in tools, curricula, and leadership opportunities further marginalise those most in need. These structural barriers undermine the equity, quality, and reach of capacity-strengthening across the evidence ecosystem.

Solutions for progress: what can we do next?

WG5 proposes ten interlinked solutions to advance capacity sharing and to build both foundational and adaptive infrastructure to strengthen and institutionalize capacity for evidence synthesis and knowledge translation at scale.

5.1 ESIC knowledge hub: A centralised platform to achieve system interoperability and improve discoverability of evidence synthesis and KT resources, including tools, curricula, networks, and training materials, reducing duplication and fragmentation.

5.2 AI tools for knowledge translation: An AI-driven application to automate the knowledge translation process, designed to streamline the adaptation of evidence into multiple formats, audiences, and languages, enhancing accessibility and use.

5.3 Regional and country-based learning and development centers: Regional hubs to strengthen capacity for evidence synthesis and knowledge translation, facilitating south-south learning and regional ownership, with embedded governance structures to ensure local responsiveness. This aligns with the regional demand-side secretariats (WG1 1.1)

5.4 Mentorship and train-the-trainer programs: Structured programs to enhance skills among synthesis producers and evidence intermediaries, linked to regional hubs. They will build a cadre of trainers and mentors to support sustainable capacity strengthening across regions. This aligns with support to intermediaries (WG1 1.2).

5.5 Continuous professional development modules: Ongoing education to maintain competencies in evidence synthesis and knowledge translation.

5.6 Competency frameworks: Standards for skills and behaviours related to evidence synthesis and knowledge translation. Frameworks will guide curriculum design, professional standards, and performance assessment across sectors.

5.7 Curriculum for UN and national training institutions: Curriculum to embed evidence synthesis and knowledge translation in public sector training systems, supporting institutionalisation of synthesis competencies in government and strengthening linkages between evidence and evaluation.

5.8 Innovation grants for synthesis production and knowledge translation: Funding for innovation in evidence synthesis and knowledge translation initiatives.

5.9 Funders forum: A mechanism for aligning investments in evidence synthesis, facilitating dialogue, transparency, and coordination among funders to reduce duplication and maximise impact (WG4 4.3).

5.10 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning system: A system to assess the impact of capacity-sharing initiatives across ESIC, enabling shared learning, adaptive improvement, and accountability for progress across the global community.

Outcomes: what is likely to change?

Together, these solutions will foster a more connected, capable, and collaborative global evidence ecosystem. By investing in infrastructure and dynamic learning systems, WG5's recommendations will:

- Improve access to high-quality training and resources across regions.
- Strengthen institutional capacity to produce and use evidence adapted to real-world contexts.
- Foster south-led innovation and leadership.
- Enable continuous learning and accountability through shared evaluation systems.
- Align funder investments toward sustainable capacity strengthening, addressing persistent gaps often neglected in current funding models.

Enhance efficiency by improving coordination, minimising duplication, and strategically aligning capacity-sharing efforts. These efforts will help ensure that the benefits of evidence synthesis are equitably distributed and that local actors have the means to shape, adapt, and act on evidence that matters most to them.

