



Laboratory Leadership of the Future in Africa: Status Report and Blueprint

April 2025



Agenda

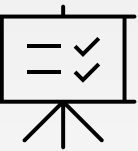
Status Report

- Methodology
- Scope and coverage
- Desk review
- Survey
- Interviews

Blueprint

- Framework concepts
- Actions
- Key considerations

Status Report



Status Report on Laboratory Leadership in Africa

OCTOBER 2024

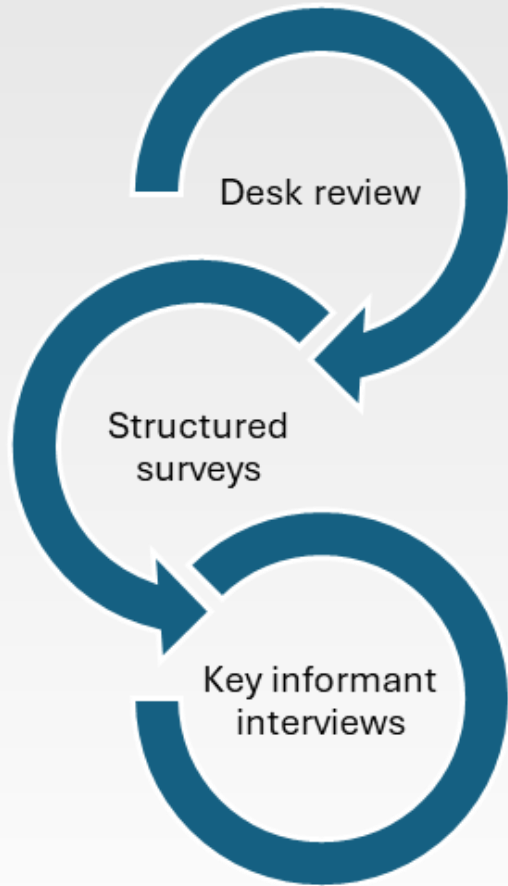


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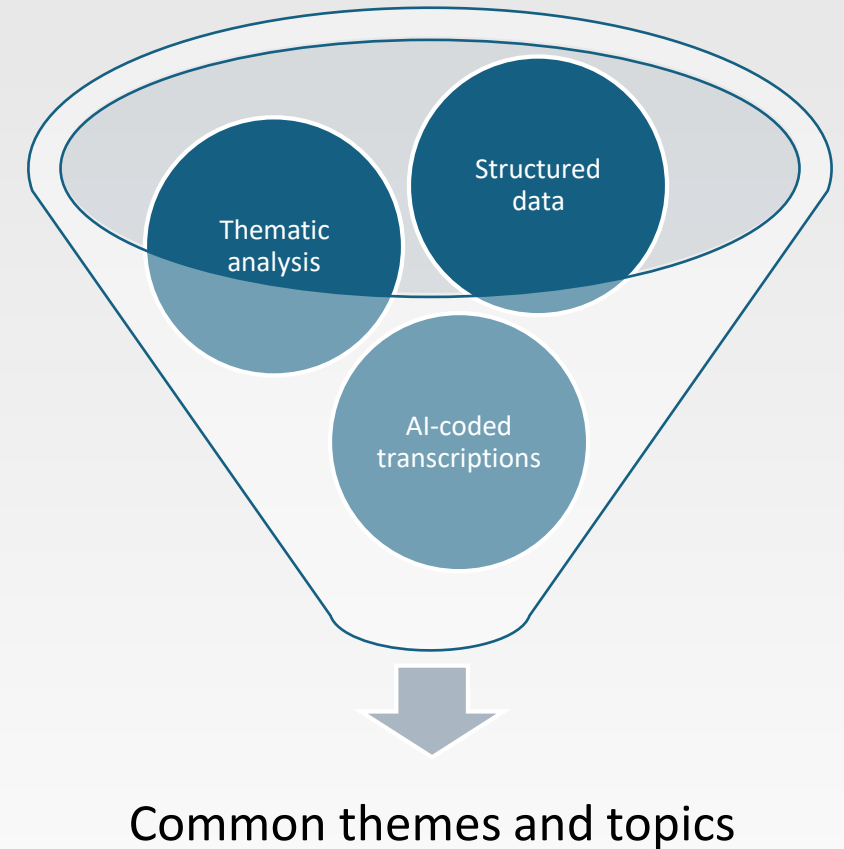
Now published on
ASLM's website

<https://aslm.org/resource/status-report-on-laboratory-leadership-in-africa/>

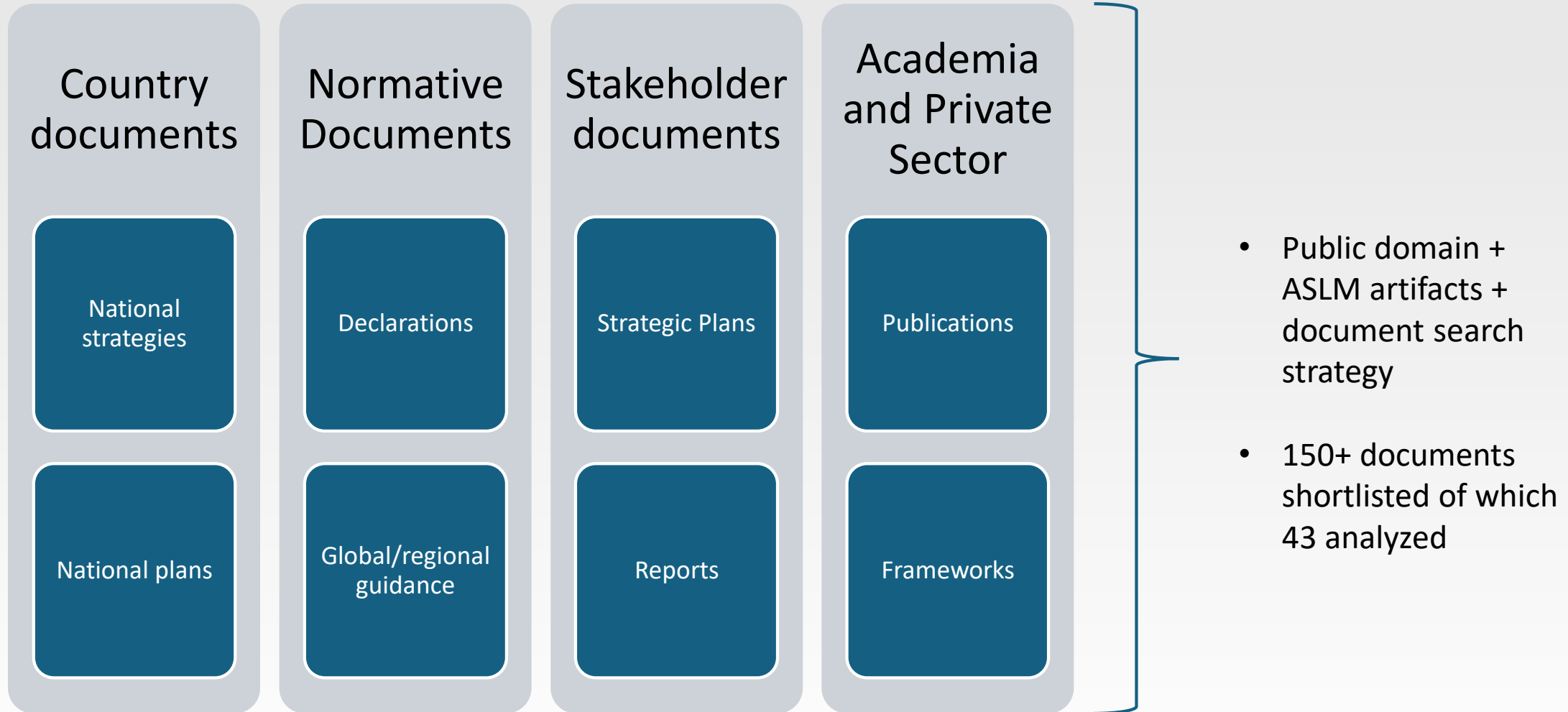
Methodology



- Mixed methods research and information gathering
- Diversity of scope:
 - Global, regional and country level
 - 43 documents analyzed
 - 28 survey respondents
 - 14 in-depth interviews
- Iterative process:
 - Desk review helped establish themes and topics
 - Survey helped consolidate consensus on themes and topics
 - Interviews helped refine ideas and identify nuance
- Focus:
 - Desk review and surveys emphasized current status/problems, while interviews emphasized potential solutions



Desk Review

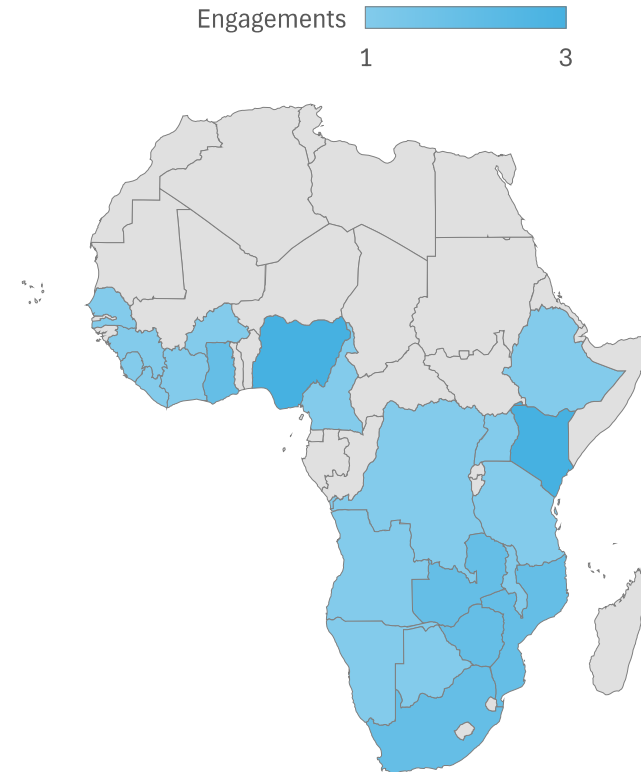


Scope and coverage

Subset of Global Stakeholders



Country-Level Engagements



Engagement counts include surveys, interviews or document reviews

Top-line insights and primary outputs

Desk review top-line insights:

- There is a scarcity of data, research, and documentation on the subject matter.
- Leadership (and—by extension or association—governance, management, administration) is often overlooked, assumed, or given only tacit mention in key strategy documents.
- There are important initiatives underway (in part in recognition of points 1 and 2 above) to help address capacity building for these core competencies. There are also best practices and lessons learned available from other non-laboratory initiatives, such as historical success in HIV control programs, other health sector strengthening initiatives, and public administration in general in LMICs.
- There is a unique opportunity therefore to shape the conversation around the subject matter, through the deliverables of this consultancy.

Desk review primary outputs achieved:

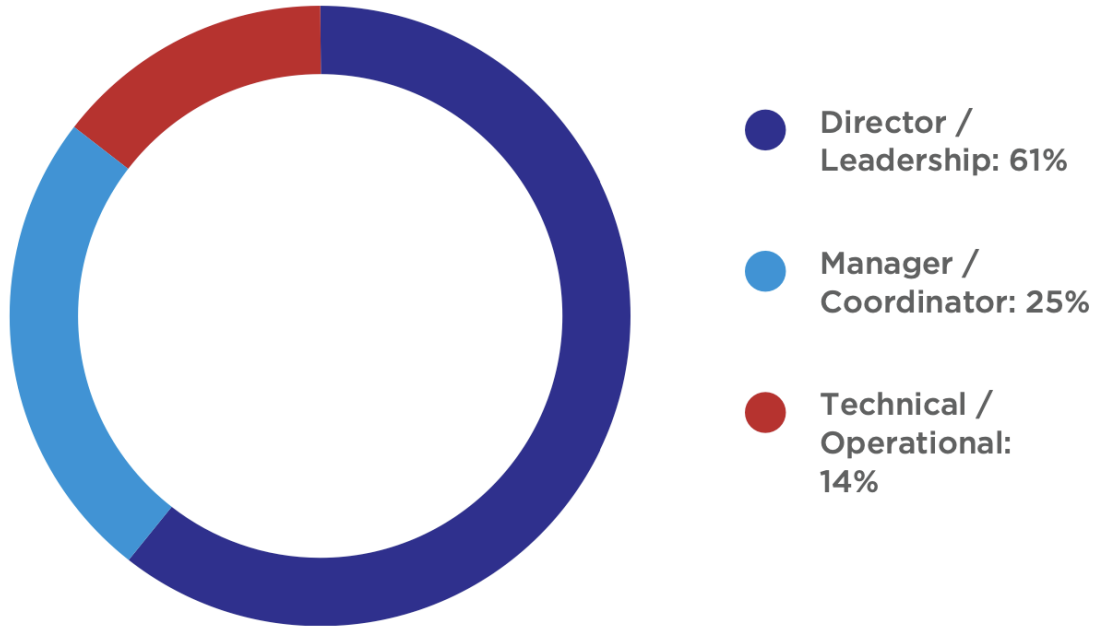
- ✓ Confirmation of the assumptions related to the consultancy
- ✓ Distillation of key themes and topics for use in the survey regarding the domains of leadership, governance, management and administration (next slide)

Categorization of themes and topics



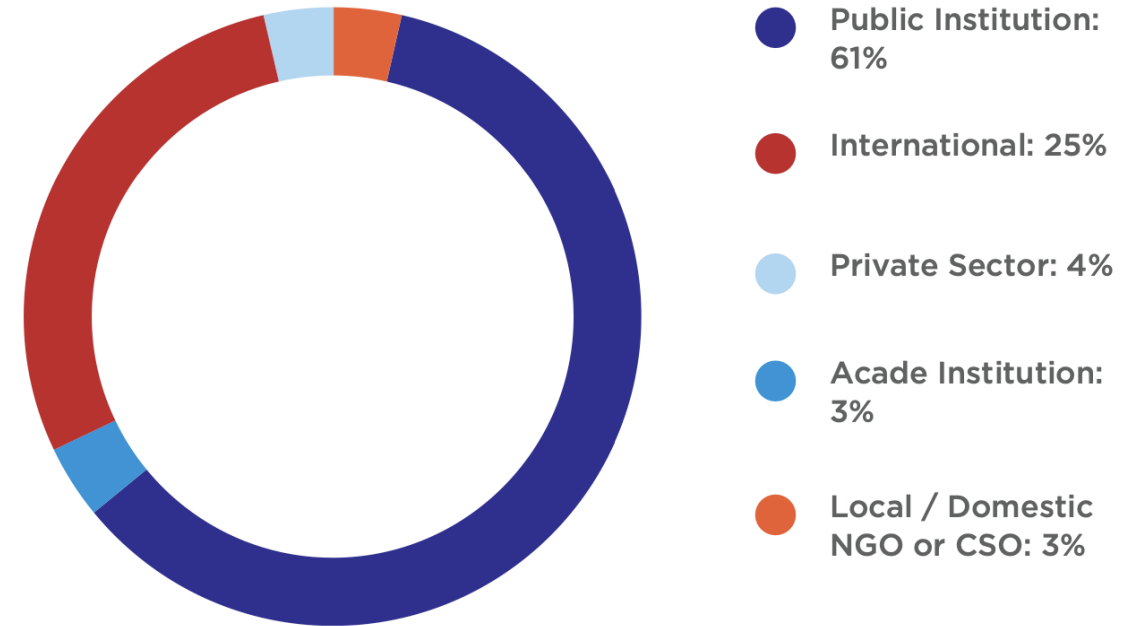
Characterization of survey respondents

CADRE



Average experience in laboratory/diagnostics: 21 years

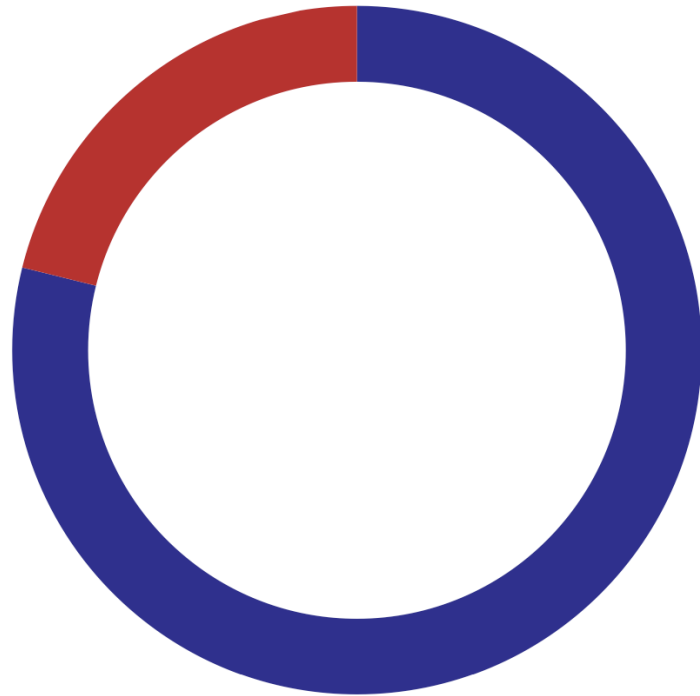
Institution Type



Percentage of country respondents that were/are laboratory leaders: 84% (94% of which are currently)

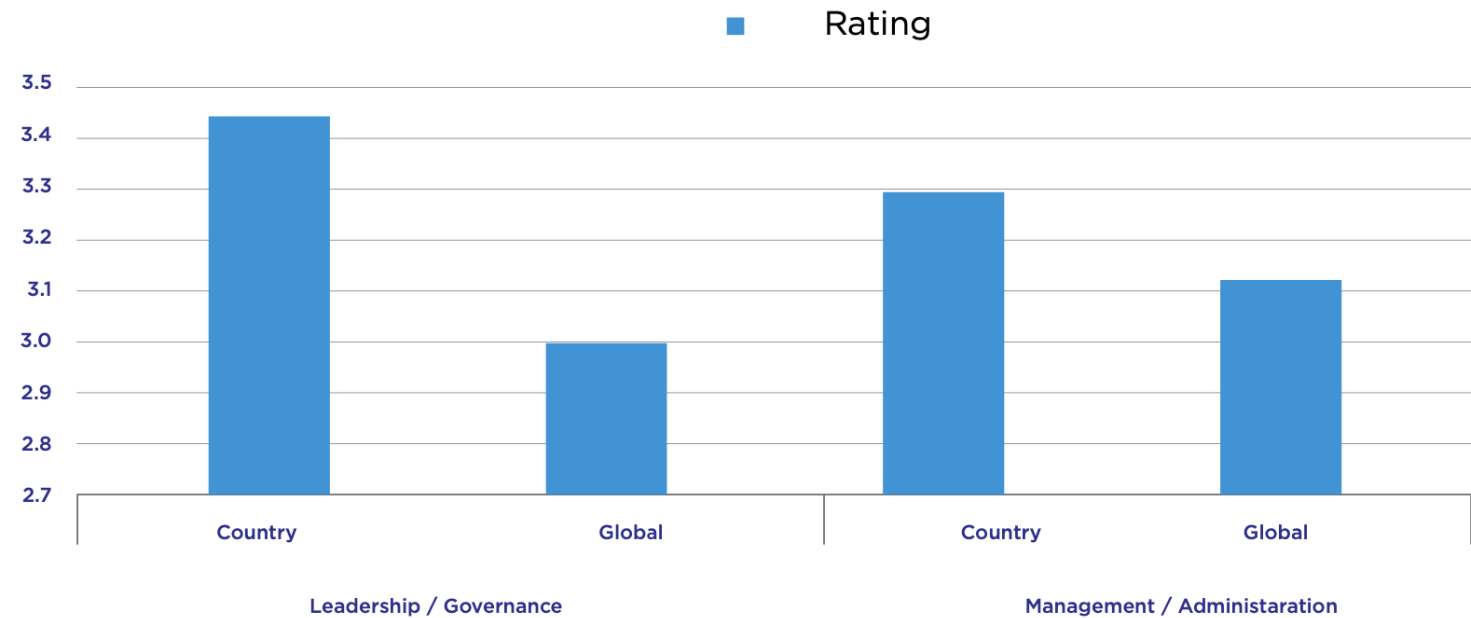
Survey results: mandate and competencies

Does your country have a formal NLD in Place with a clear mandate?



- Yes: 79%
- No: 21%

Rating of Current NLD Abilities



Survey results: priority vs strength

Top two elements considered most important are also those considered to be currently the weakest core skills of NLDs.



Top three Management/Admin elements that make an effective NLD	
Overall	
Laboratory and Resource Management Coordination and Oversight	
Operational and Technical Management	
Country only	
Laboratory and Resource Management Coordination and Oversight Operational and Technical Management	
Global only	
Laboratory and Resource Management Operational and Technical Management Communication and Team Management	

Top two Management/Admin elements that NLDs are currently weak	
Overall	
Laboratory and Resource Management Coordination and Oversight	
Country only	
Laboratory and Resource Management Policy and Compliance Management	
Global only	
Laboratory and Resource Management Coordination and Oversight	

Top two Management/Admin elements that NLDs are currently strong	
Overall	
Operational and Technical Management Coordination and Oversight	
Country only	
Operational and Technical Management Coordination and Oversight	
Global only	
Communication and Team Management Coordination and Oversight	

Top three Leadership/Governance elements that make an effective NLD	
Overall	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership	
Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement	
Country only	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement	
Global only	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership Ethics and Integrity	

Top two Leadership/Governance elements that NLDs are currently weak	
Overall	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership	
Country only	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership	
Global only	
Strategic Vision and Planning Organizational Leadership	

Top two Leadership/Governance elements that NLDs are currently strong	
Overall	
Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement Organizational Leadership	
Country only	
Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement Ethics and Integrity	
Global only	
Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement Critical Thinking and Decision Making	

Four key pillars

GOALS

STRUCTURE AND MANDATE

Fundamental, Foundational Elements for NLDs.

ENABLERS

GUIDANCE AND AGENDAS

Enablers external to NLDs to empower maturation.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Skill sets (soft and hard) in leadership and management.

ADVOCACY AND VOICE

Enablers internal (and external) to NLDs to promote maturation.

Framework approach



Description of the current status

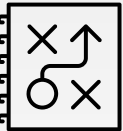
“What are the problems?”



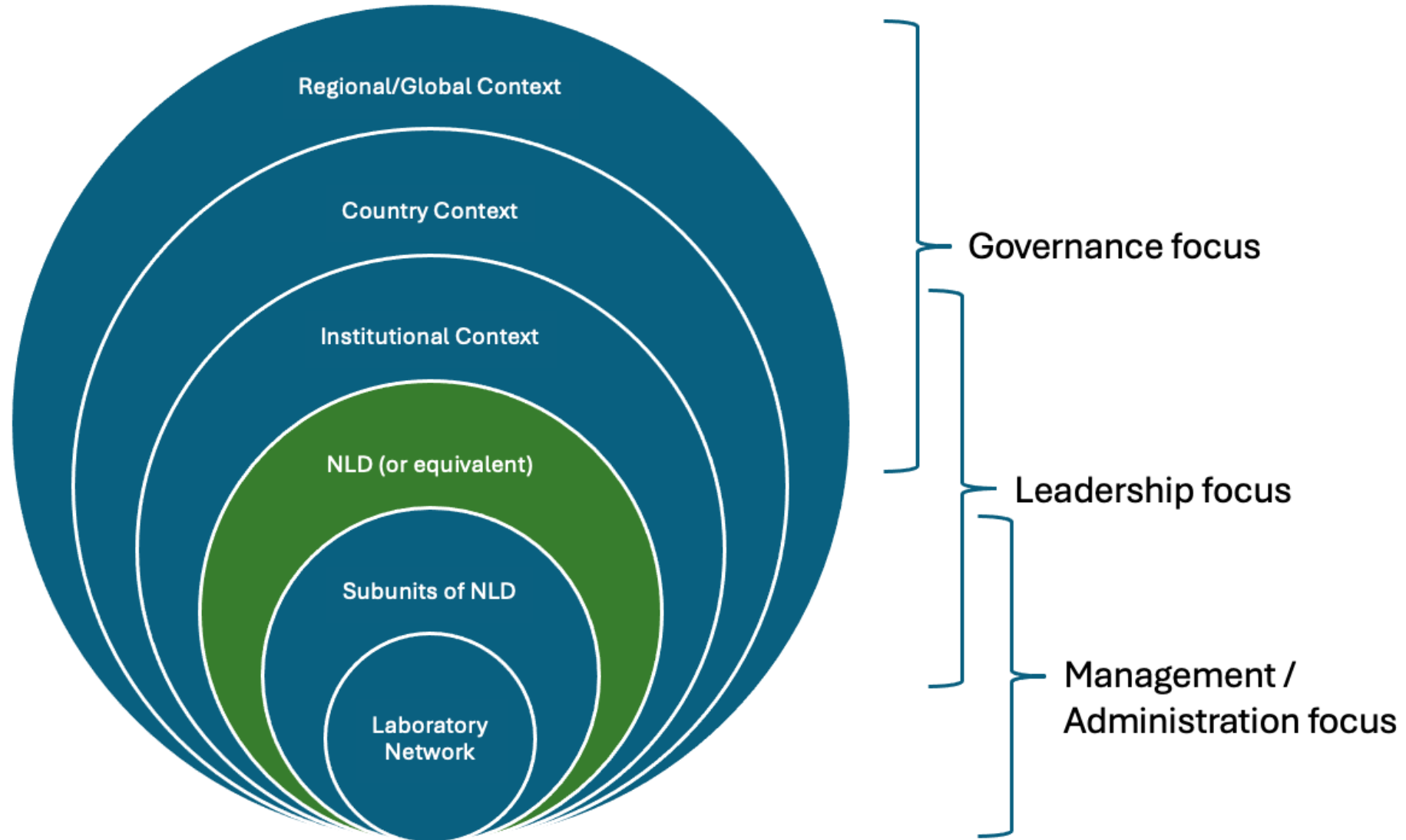
Proposal for the way forward

“What are the solutions?”

Blueprint



Framework concepts



Five key action-oriented domains



STRUCTURE



STRATEGY



CORE COMPETENCIES



PROFESSIONALIZATION



ADVOCACY

29 actions with proposed lead(s) have been suggested across these five domains

Structure (5 proposed actions)



Assessment tool (with TA for execution)

Develop set of ideal structures, mandates, roles, and responsibilities for NLDs (and endorse)

Provide documentation on examples of model NLDs (with costing); include south-to-south learning

Include subunit best practices, particularly on often neglected functions

Encourage NLDs to deepen leadership and management capacity building in team; include deputy director

Strategy (7 proposed actions)



NLDs establish or update national policies and strategies, with online repository; regional bodies to support with inclusion of often overlooked macro topics

Consolidate and develop lay summaries of historical and recent declarations

NLDs publish policy, strategy, planning documents (with costing), and online repository

Establish/strengthen TWGs that support NLDs in strategy development and planning

Support the reforms outlined in the Lusaka Agenda

Include donors and partners in TWGs; ensure NLD input in other (especially funding) discussions

Declarations, resolutions, and calls to action should be led and driven by country needs; and are enforced, funded, implemented, and operationalized

Core competencies (7 proposed actions)



01

Encourage capacity building programs that avoid dilution of leadership and management skills

02

Promote and endorse existing competency frameworks

03

Evaluate impact and content of existing competency frameworks in African pilot settings; adapt and endorse an African-focused competency framework

04

Encourage full cohort model; develop modular approach for alternative access

05

Develop incentives for completed competency trainings

06

Develop multi-year practical mentorship model

07

Engage resource mobilization expert(s) for fundraising and financial management themes



Professionalization (4 proposed actions)

Compile and share successful laboratory-related professional associations in Africa; provide guidance on structures and formation approaches for professional societies; encourage formation

Promote development of master's degrees, doctoral programs, and medical residencies for lab; promote positions for laboratory professors/faculty; develop a pitchbook for countries in need; reinforce and promote the role of research laboratories

Create set of generic career pathways; NLDs contextualize career pathways and develop talent plans

Create advocacy materials for donors of promoting sector-wide professionalization

Advocacy (6 proposed actions)



Hire expert in advocacy, communication, economics, and/or health informatics



Provide practical training to NLDs and support for adapting suite of tools



Avail delegations from respected regional entities



Promote development of high-level products; engage in regular discourse with key regional and global political bodies



Ensure advocacy efforts for laboratory priorities are given ample consideration in funding portfolios



Donor and partner community increase coordination to align funding opportunities with country priorities

Key considerations

Key factor: current strength of NLD mandate

NLDs in context

NLD structure

Target domains for different levels

Upstream and downstream considerations

Fine tuning needed for which interventions/actions to target at what time

Standardization that accommodates variation

Recognition of a variety of options available

Reflects consensus of Status Report ideas

Covers diverse domains

Provides flexibility for costing scenarios



Questions and Discussion

THANK YOU!!



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