



CountryOpinionSurveys

FY 2024 The United Arab Emirates Country Opinion Survey Report

Acknowledgements

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is part of the Country Opinion Survey Program series of the World Bank Group. This report was prepared by the Business Intelligence (BI) team, led by José De Buerba (Senior External Affairs Officer) and Svetlana Markova (Senior External Affairs Officer). Yulia Danilina, Jessica Cameron, Nan Lin, and Sofya Gubaydullina oversaw the design, reporting, and analysis of the survey results. Noreen Wambui and Irina Popova provided data support.

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Objectives

This survey was designed to assist the World Bank Group (WBG) better understand how stakeholders in the UAE perceive the WBG. The survey explored the following questions:

- 1. Overall Attitudes Toward the WBG:** How familiar are stakeholders with the WBG? What opinion do key stakeholders have of the WBG regarding its effectiveness, relevance, alignment with the UAE's development priorities, and other key indicators? Are opinions improving or declining?
- 2. Development Priorities:** What areas of development are perceived to be the most important? Have the priorities changed over the past six years? How effective is the WBG perceived to be in these areas?
- 3. Engagement on the Ground:** How is the WBG perceived as a development partner in the UAE? Are opinions improving or declining?
- 4. WBG Knowledge Work:** What do key stakeholders value the most regarding the WBG's work in the UAE? What opinion do key stakeholders have of WBG knowledge products? Are opinions improving or declining? What are stakeholders' suggestions for improving WBG's effectiveness?
- 5. Communication and Outreach:** What are the preferred communication channels? What key topics do stakeholders recall when the WBG communicates?



Methodology Overview

■ Fielded June – September 2024

- 153 potential participants were asked to complete a mostly quantitative survey
- Respondents filled out the questionnaire online.
- List of names provided by the WBG country team and supplemented by the field agency
- Process managed on the ground by the field agency

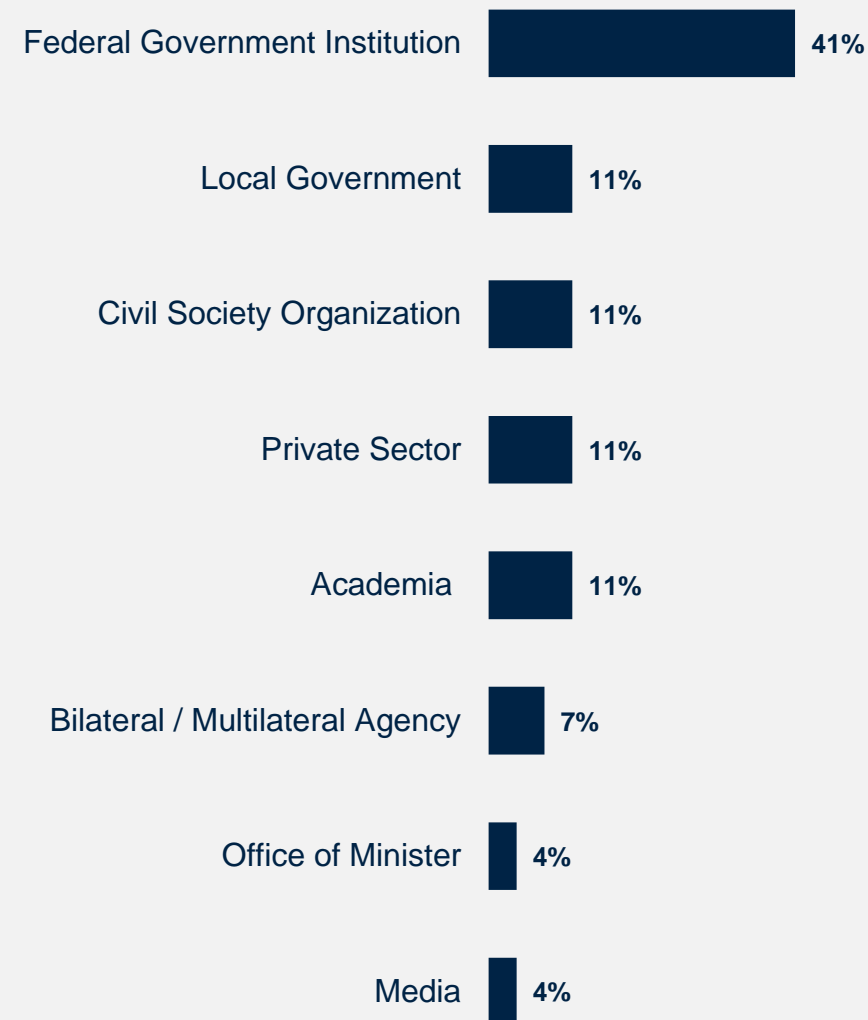
■ 27 participants (18% response rate)

- 52% currently collaborate with the WBG

■ Compared to FY18 Country Survey

- 58 participants (28% response rate)
- 40% collaborated with the WBG
- Note: Care should be taken when interpreting past year comparisons given the amount of time that has passed and the differences in stakeholder composition between survey samples.

Click [here](#) for details of the Respondent Sample and Methodology.



Which of the following best describes your current affiliation?
(Select only 1 response) (Percentage of Respondents, N=27)

Overall Attitudes toward the World Bank Group

“Adapt to the UAE's unique speed and vision; that means being flexible and agile and also, treat the experience as a two-way learning engagement because the UAE is quite an innovation hub and can, in fact, benefit the WBG see different models of development. Overall, WBG colleagues are exceptional, top professionals, and it is a great pleasure to work with them.”

(Federal Government Institution Respondent)



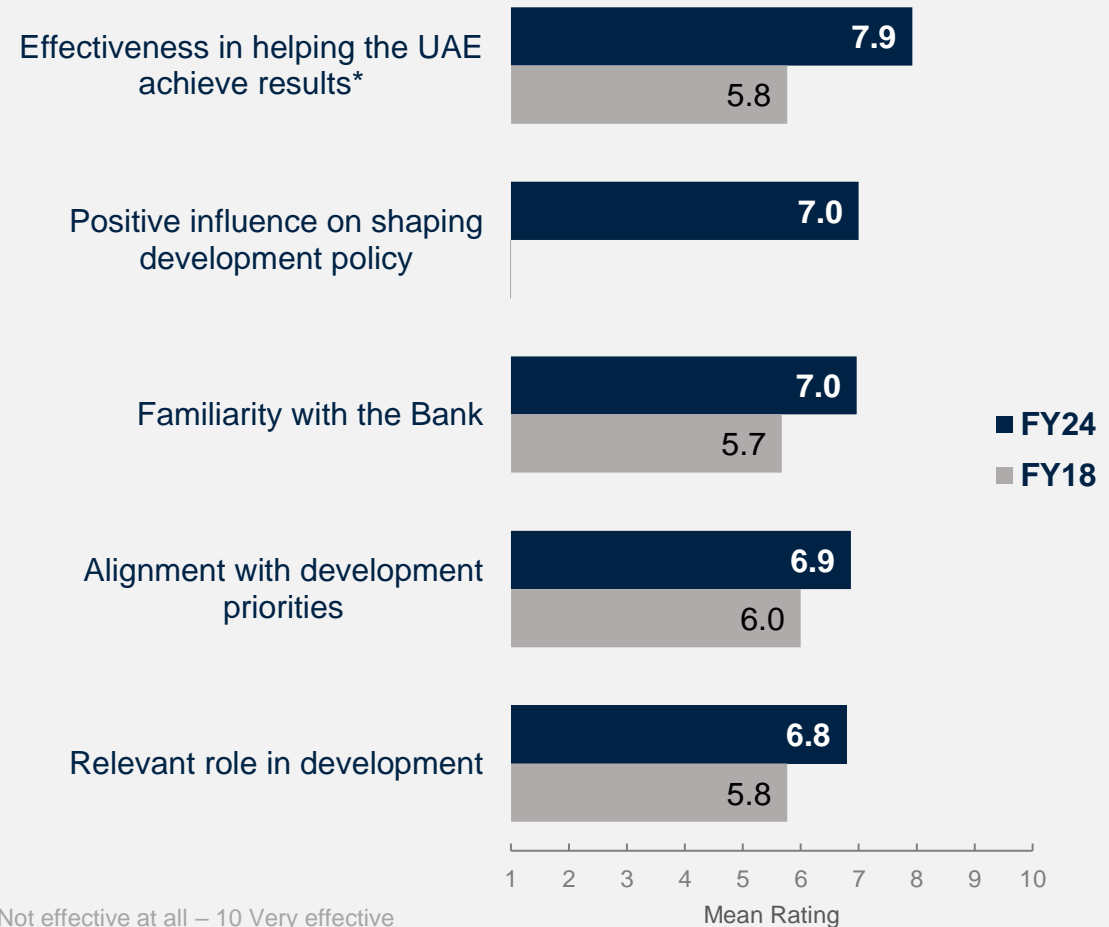
WORLD BANK GROUP



In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

Stakeholders in the UAE are Increasingly Positive about the WBG

In FY24, respondents gave the highest ratings for the WBG's **effectiveness** in helping the UAE achieve development results, which has significantly improved since the FY18 survey effort. They also gave relatively positive ratings for the WBG having a **positive influence** on shaping development policy, their **familiarity** with the Bank, the Bank's **alignment** with their development priorities, and the Bank's **relevance** – the latter three were all rated much higher this year than in FY18, however these improvements did not reach statistical significance.



How effective is the WBG in helping the UAE achieve development results? Scale: 1 Not effective at all – 10 Very effective

Compared to a mean score of the two questions asked in FY18: "Overall, please rate your impression of the WBG's effectiveness in Kuwait.

Scale: 1 Not effective at all – 10 Very effective; and

To what extent does the WBG's work help to achieve development results in Kuwait? Scale: 1 To no degree at all – 10 To a very significant degree

The WBG has a positive influence on shaping development policy in the UAE. Scale: 1 Strongly disagree – 10 Strongly agree

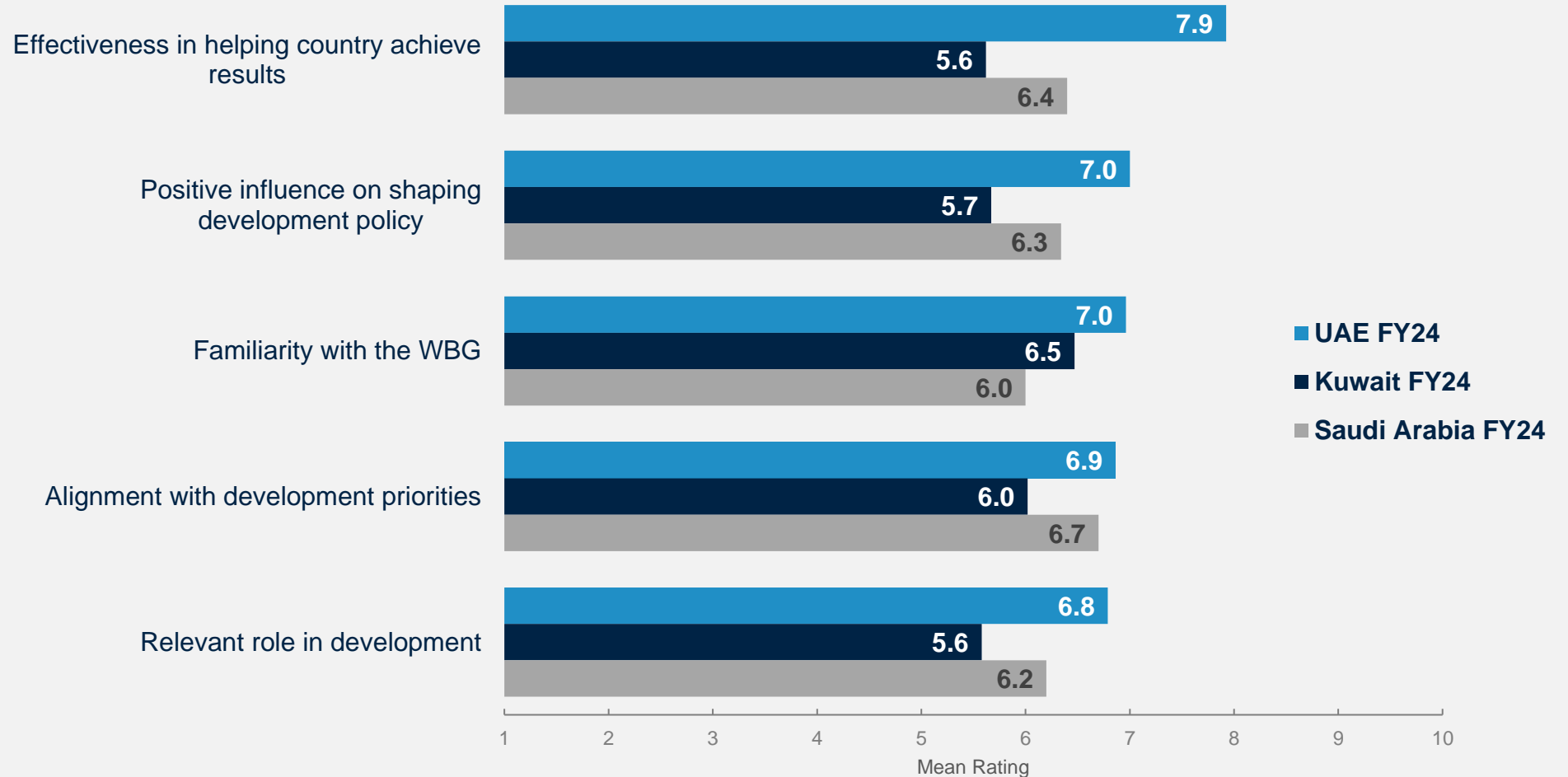
How familiar are you with the work of these organizations in the UAE? Scale: 1-"Not familiar at all," 10-"Extremely familiar"

The WBG's work is aligned with what I consider the development priorities for the UAE. Scale: 1 Strongly disagree – 10 Strongly agree

The WBG currently plays a relevant role in development in the UAE. Scale: 1 Strongly disagree – 10 Strongly agree



Stakeholders in the UAE Rated the WBG's Key Performance Indicators Higher Than Other GCC Countries Surveyed in FY24



World Bank Group's Support for Development Areas

“Building on the WBG’s innovative global research on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning can improve governance and development outcomes, there is not currently an underlying WBG AI programme in the UAE. The development of a horizontal ‘AI/Innovation Lab’ in the country would align the WBG’s groundbreaking AI research for the UAE market and also support the effectiveness of existing WBG initiatives (verticals) in the country, including supporting women’s entrepreneurship and access to finance, therefore empowering women in AI.”

(Civil Society Respondent)



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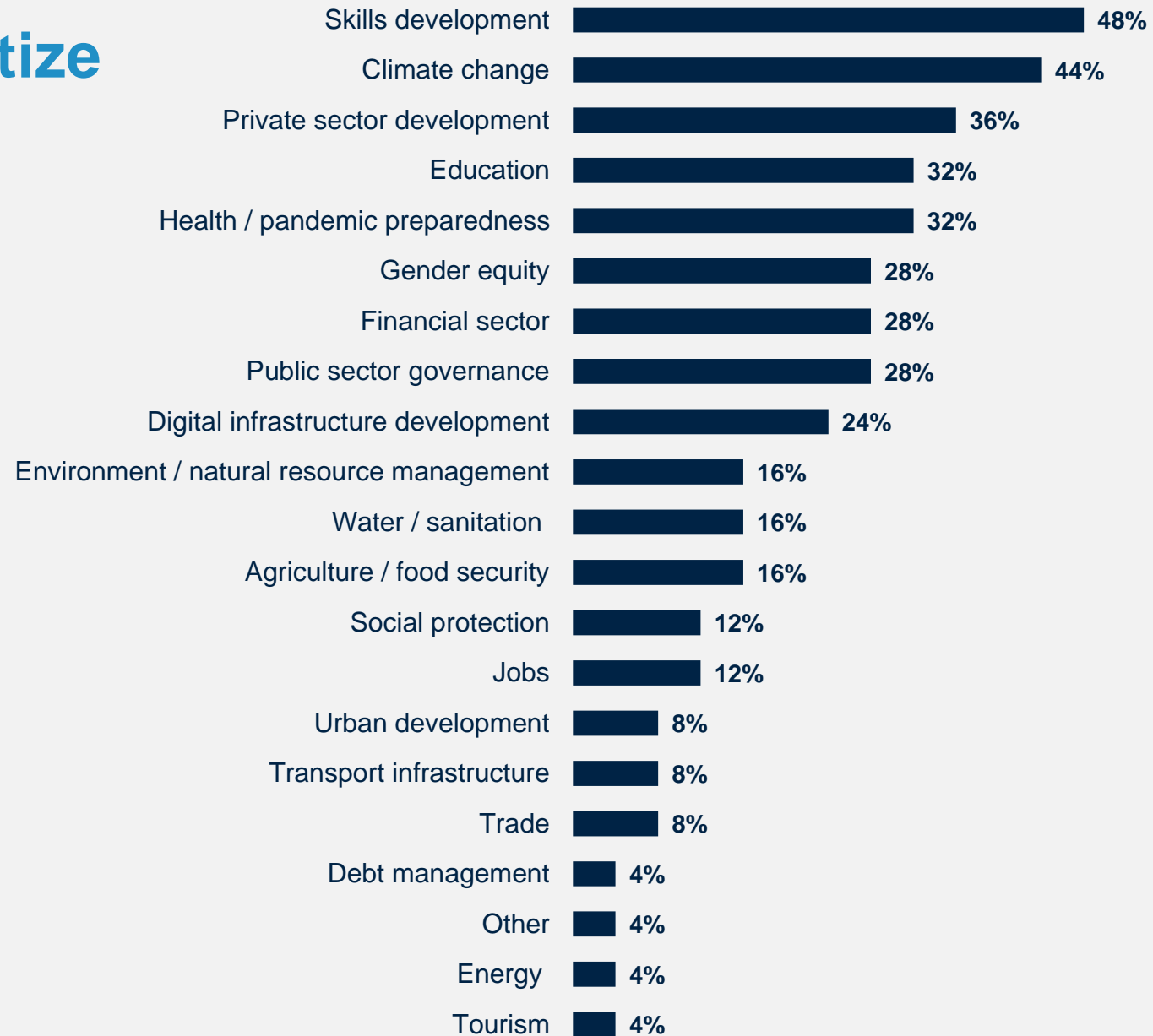


In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

Development Areas for the WBG to Prioritize

In FY24, about half of the respondents identified **skills development** as the top area where stakeholders would like the WBG to focus its resources. **Climate change** was also perceived as a top area where the WBG should prioritize to have the most impact, and it increased significantly by 13% in FY18.

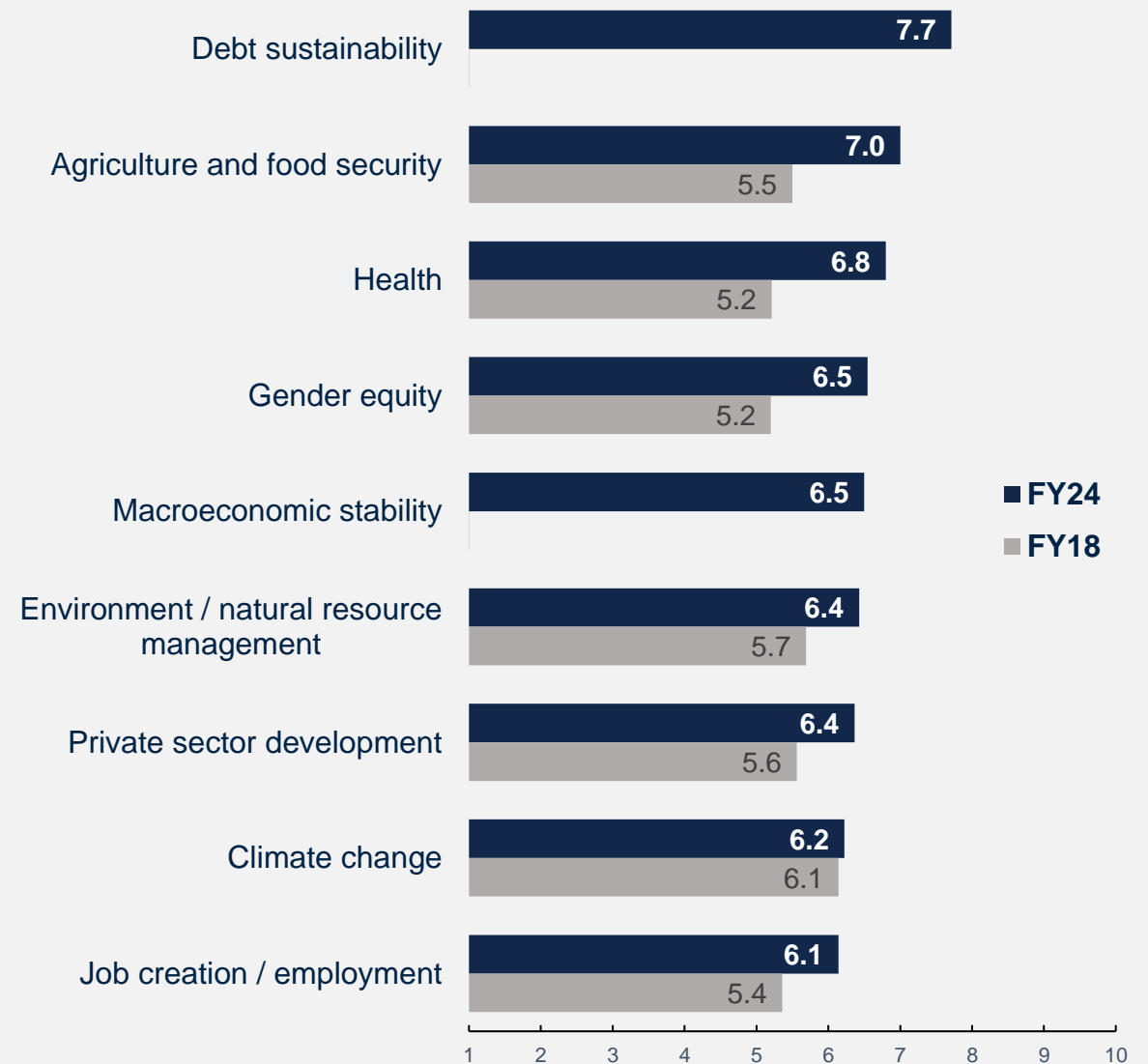
Health, gender equity, and digital infrastructure development were much higher priorities for respondents this year, with three to five times as many respondents selecting them compared to FY18.



Effectiveness of the WBG's Sectoral Support

The WBG's support for debt sustainability received the highest effectiveness ratings, followed by its support for **agriculture and food security**, and **health**.

Of note, perceptions of the effectiveness of WBG's support increase in all areas that could be compared to the previous COS in FY18; however, these differences did not reach statistical significance.



World Bank Group's Engagement on the Ground in the UAE

“More collaboration with Emirate level governments and hosting events to bring stakeholders together.”
(Civil Society Respondent)

“...the WBG should become a trusted adviser and partner instead of the great reliance the UAE has on private sector consultants. You bring a wealth of cross-country, international experience and practice.”
(Private Sector Respondent)



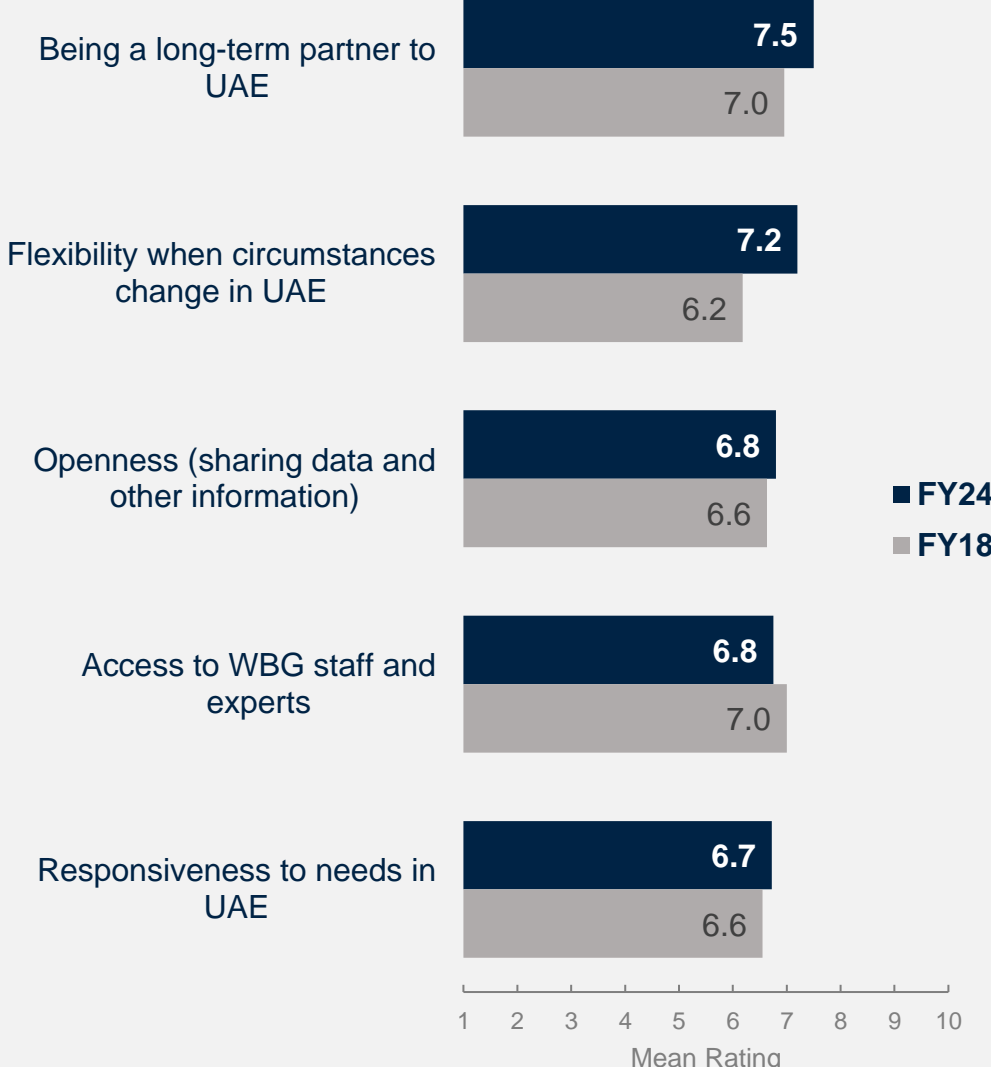
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In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

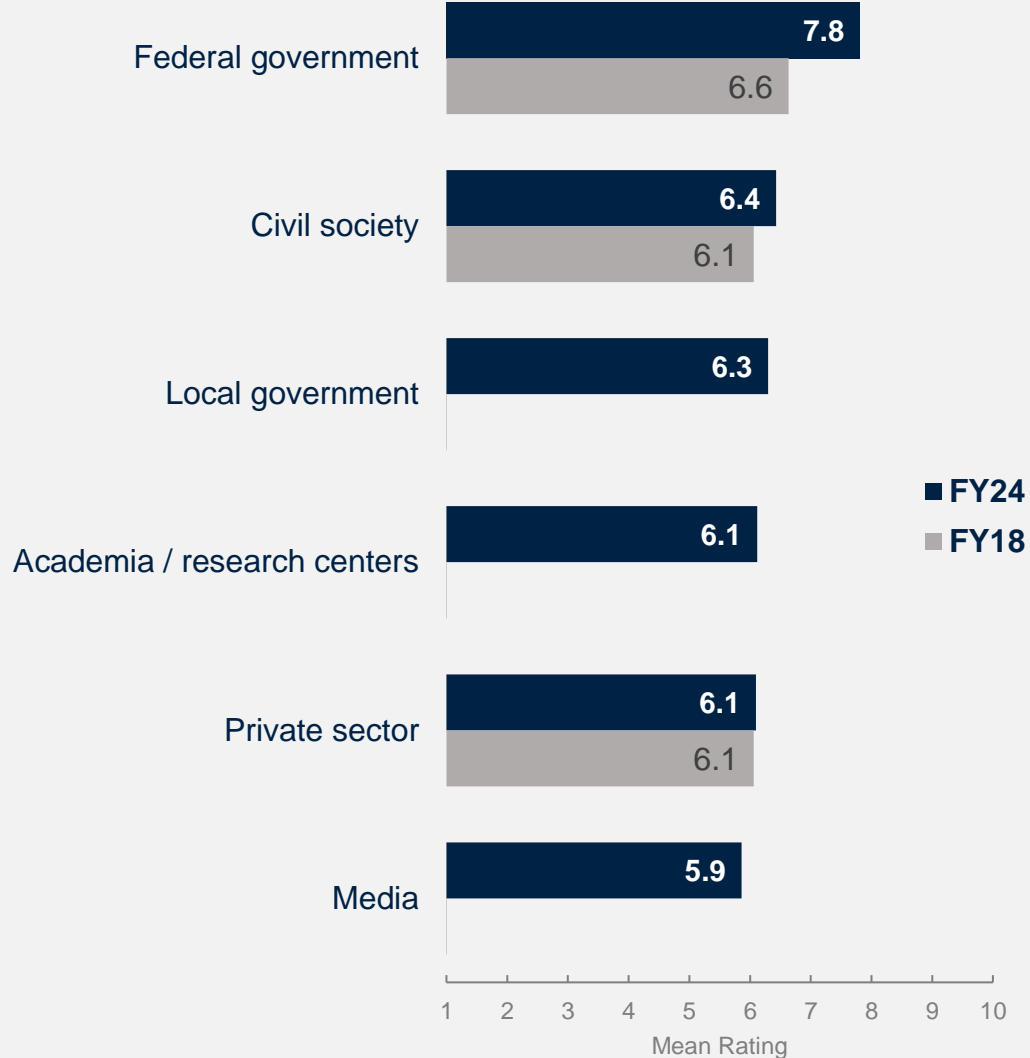
The WBG Increasingly Seen as a Flexible, Long-Term Partner to the UAE

In FY24, respondents gave the highest ratings for the WBG being a **long-term partner to the UAE** and being **flexible** when circumstances change – both were improved compared to the FY18 survey, but did not reach statistical significance. Respondents perceived the WBG's openness, accessibility, and responsiveness similar to those in FY18.



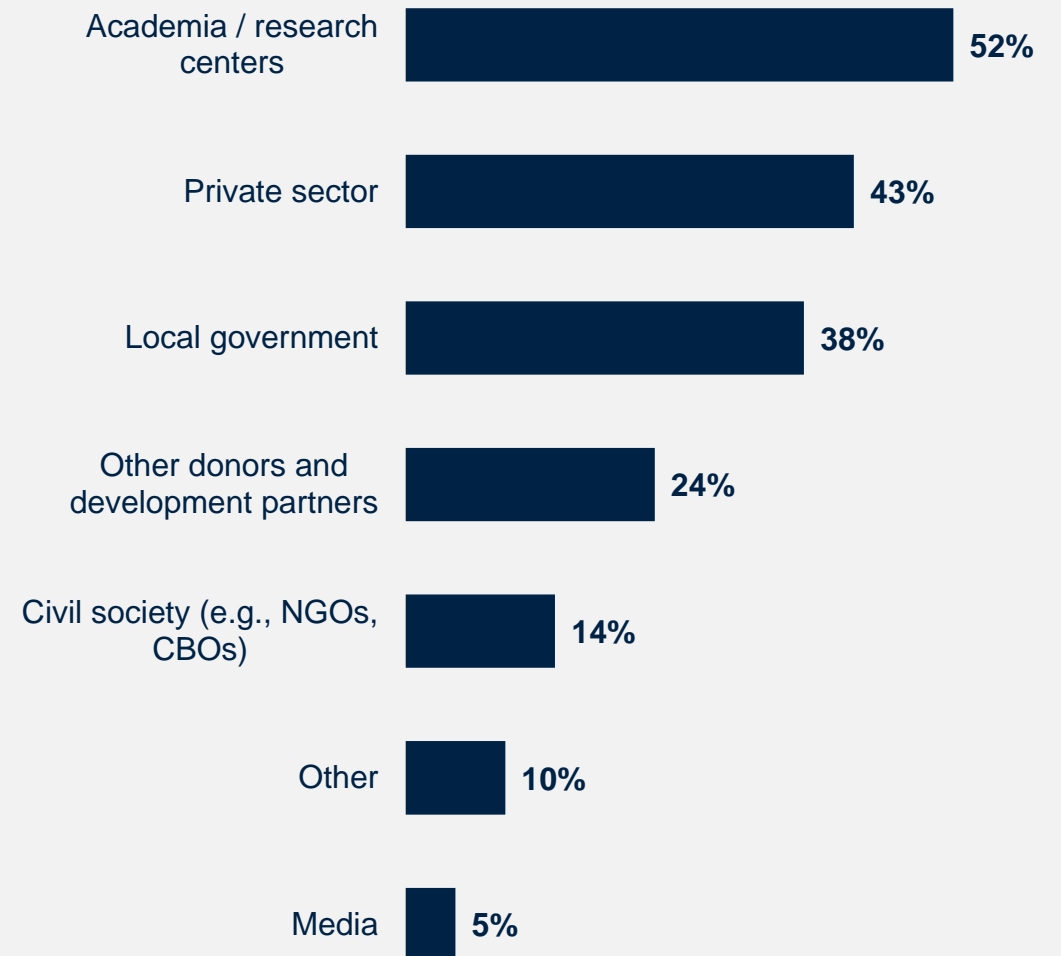
The WBG's Collaboration with the Federal Government Considered the Most Effective

In FY24, respondents gave the highest ratings of effectiveness for the WBG's collaboration with the **federal government** in the UAE. Although ratings were more positive for the WBG's collaboration with the federal government and civil society, these differences did not reach statistical significance.



Stakeholders Want the WBG to Collaborate More with Academia, Private Sector, and Local Government

A majority of respondents indicated that the WBG should collaborate more with **academia** and research centers, in addition to its partnership with the national government in the UAE. Respondents also indicated that more WBG collaboration with the **private sector** and **local government** would increase its impact in the UAE.



World Bank Group's Knowledge Work

“Conducting studies and research at the national level.”

(Federal Government Institution Respondent)

“Collect and publish data in its database of economic indicators.” (Academia Respondent)



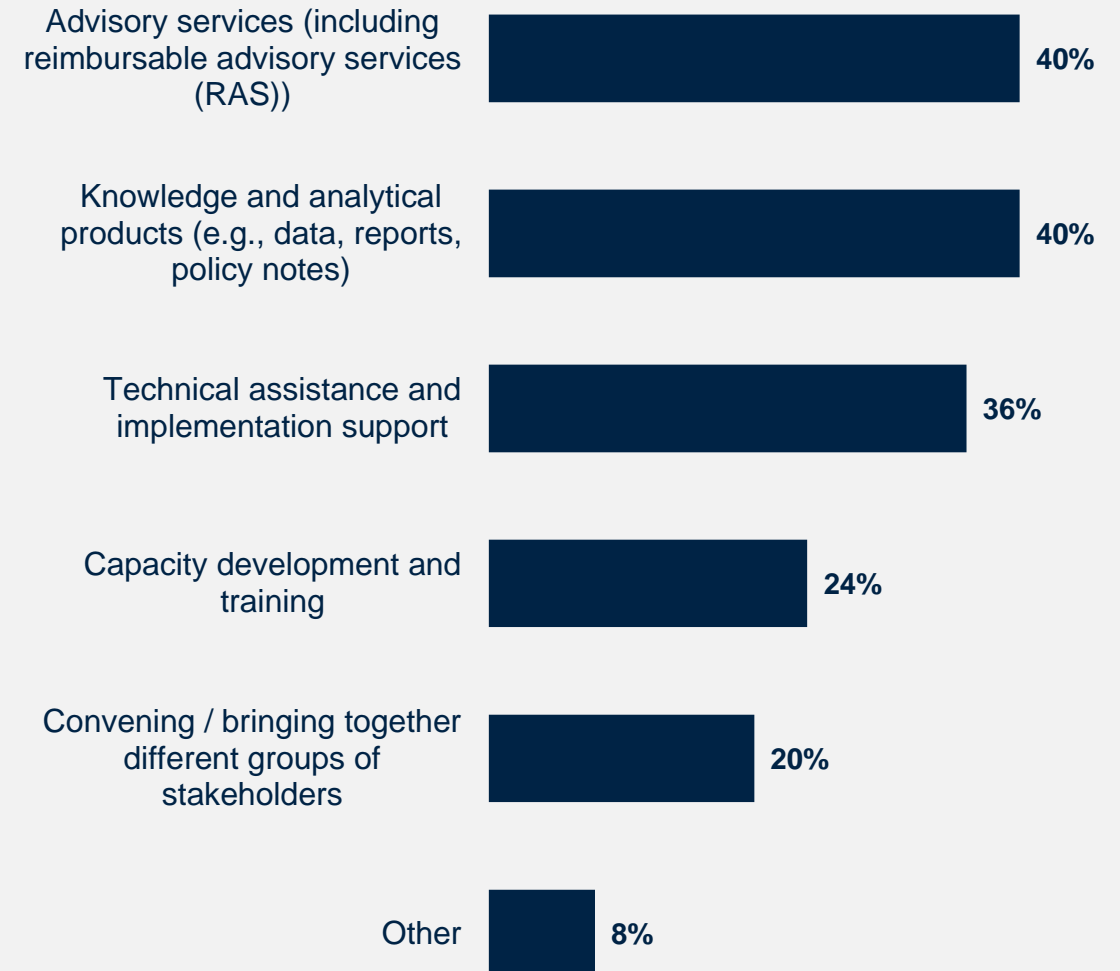
WORLD BANK GROUP



In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

The WBG's Advisory Services and Knowledge Products Were Considered its Greatest Values to UAE

Respondents indicated that they most valued the WBG's **advisory services** and its **knowledge and analytical products**, closely followed by its **technical assistance and implementation support**. The WBG's **capacity development and training** and **convening** were also considered valuable.



The WBG's Knowledge Work Was Perceived as Increasingly Positive

More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had used the WBG's knowledge work (67%).

Respondents had the highest levels of agreement that they were **satisfied with the quality** of the WBG's advisory services (46% rated it a 10!). Compared to FY18, respondents this year had higher levels of agreement that the WBG's knowledge work **brings global expertise** to the UAE, that the WBG provides advisory services in a **timely** manner, that the WBG's knowledge work provides a **significant contribution to development results** (statistically significant improvement), that working with the WBG **increases UAE's institutional capacity**, and that the WBG's knowledge work is **tailored to the UAE's context**.



To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Scale: 1 Strongly disagree – 10 Strongly agree
 How significant a contribution do you believe the WBG's knowledge work makes to development results in the UAE? Scale: 1 Not significant at all – 10 Very significant
 Have you ever used the WBG's knowledge work, including participating in workshops or training programs?
 (Percentage of Respondents, N=21)

*Significant difference between years

The Future Role of the World Bank Group in the UAE

“Focus in the future on training the judicial and executive authorities so that the judicial authority can absorb all modern legislation related to modern financing and transactions that rely on technology and its spread in all fields. Without training these authorities and their full understanding of the modern philosophy and principles on which these laws that are being developed with the World Bank are based, all the work and effort expended will be ink on paper. This includes studying all the practical requirements for implementing modern laws.”
(Office of Minister Respondent)



WORLD BANK GROUP



In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

How Can the WBG Increase its Effectiveness in the UAE?

Open Ended Responses

When asked the most important thing the WBG could do to improve its effectiveness in the UAE, respondents discussed a number of areas:

Knowledge: Respondents expressed the need for more national-level studies and economic research, and that the WBG should do more to adapt to the UAE's context. They also discussed that, as a source of international best practices and global expertise, the WBG should increase its advisory services and knowledge support to the UAE.

Focus Areas: Respondents discussed specific areas on which the WBG should focus its future knowledge work. They included the need for more support for federal and local governments to adapt to/mitigate climate change, leveraging AI and machine learning techniques to improve governance, and more training for judicial and executive authorities to keep pace with new technologies and legal frameworks.

Engagement: Respondents felt the WBG should do more to unify efforts to address development challenges. In particular, respondents wanted to see the WBG increase collaboration with all level of governments and foster stronger ties with the private sector, academia, and the media in the UAE. They also suggested to hold more events to bring stakeholders together and engender stronger collaboration.

Communication: Respondents wanted the WBG to provide regular updates on its activities to enhance the WBG's visibility in the UAE.



Communication and Outreach

“Expand the relationship with research centers and media.”

(Media Respondent)

“Conduct awareness sessions about its services.”

(Federal Government Institution Respondent)



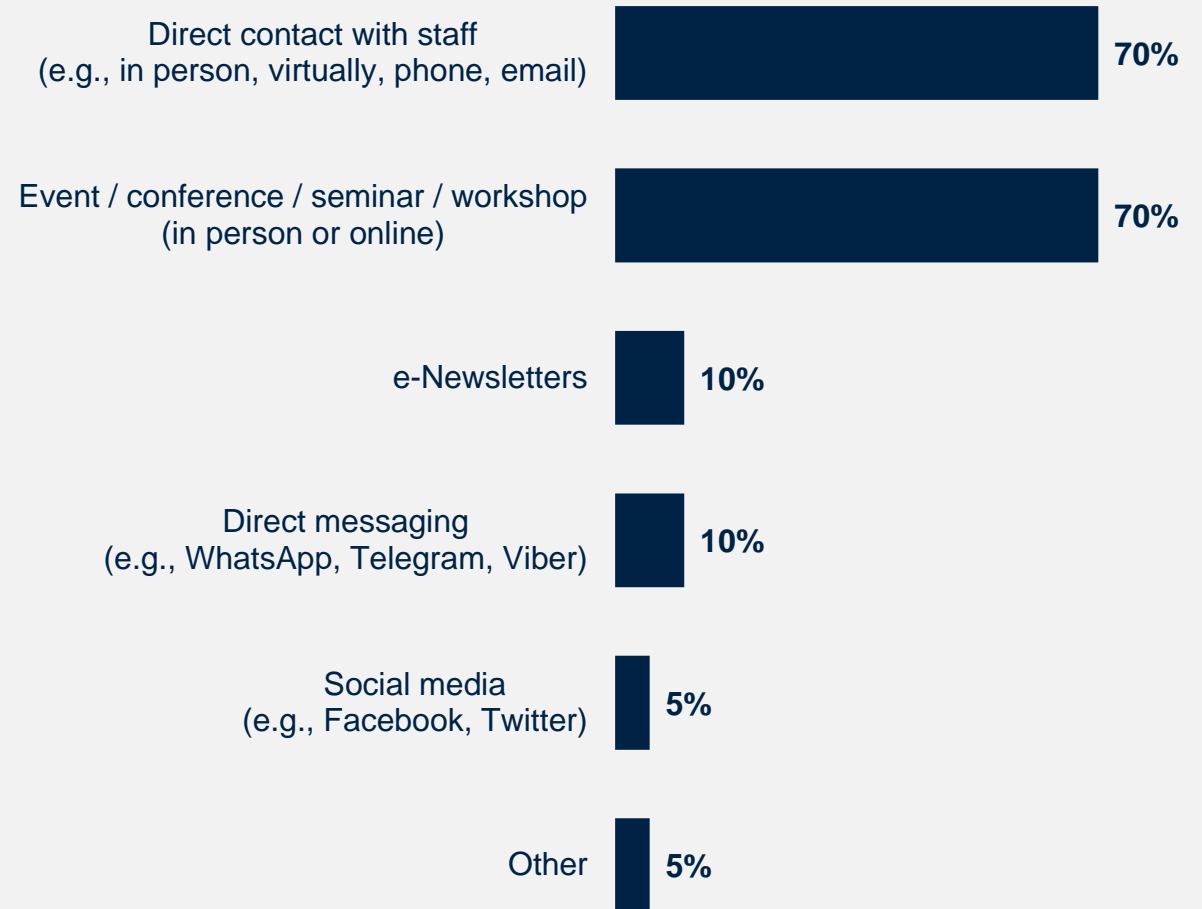
WORLD BANK GROUP



In your opinion, what is the most important thing the WBG could do to help increase its effectiveness in the UAE? (N=14)

Direct Contact and WBG Events Were the Most Preferred Channels for Receiving WBG Communication

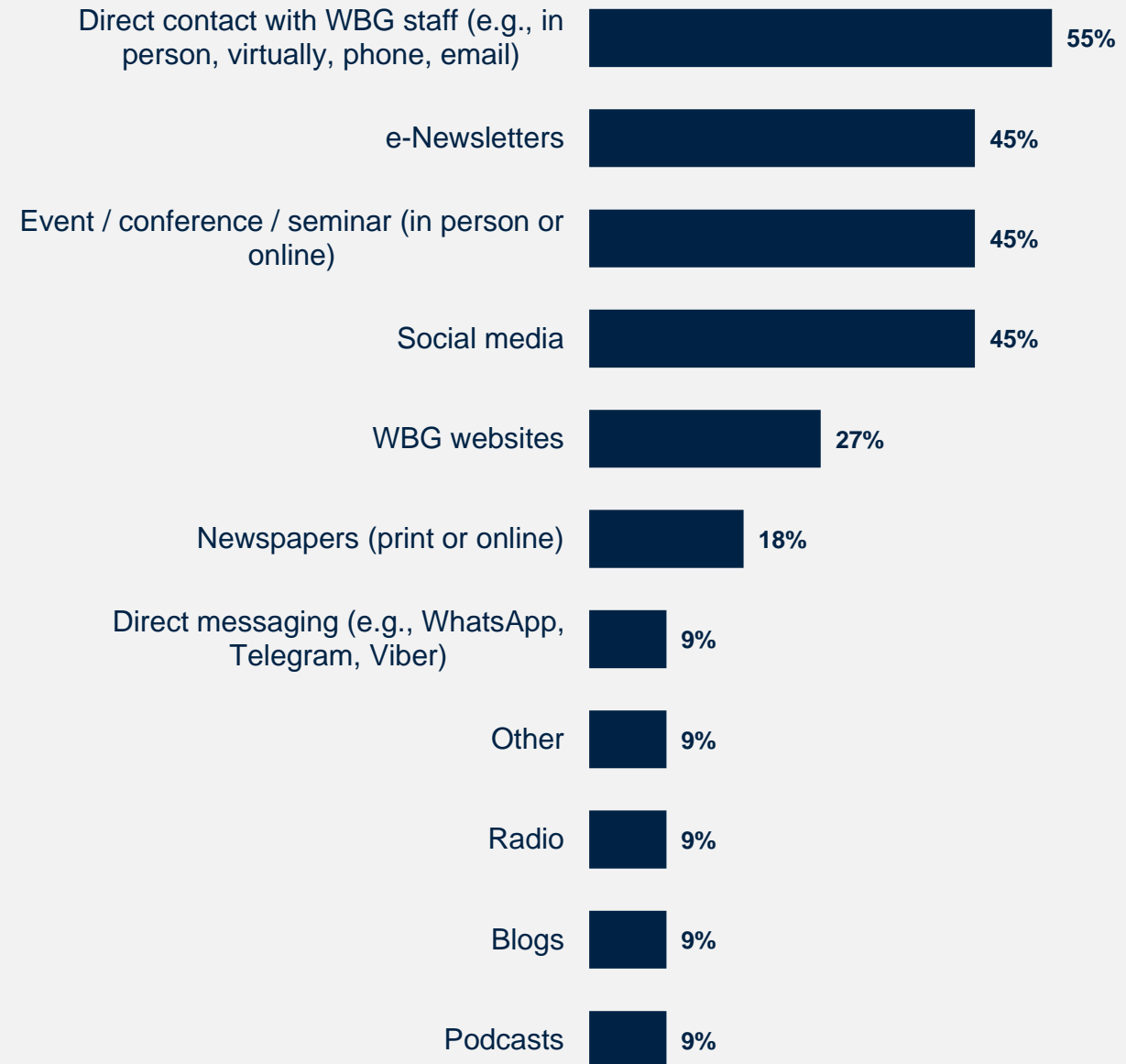
The vast majority of respondents preferred receiving the Bank's communications through **direct contact with staff** and **events / conferences / seminars / workshops** (in person or online).



52% of Respondents Recalled Seeing or Hearing About the WBG Recently

More than half of respondents recalled seeing or hearing something about the WBG recently (52%).

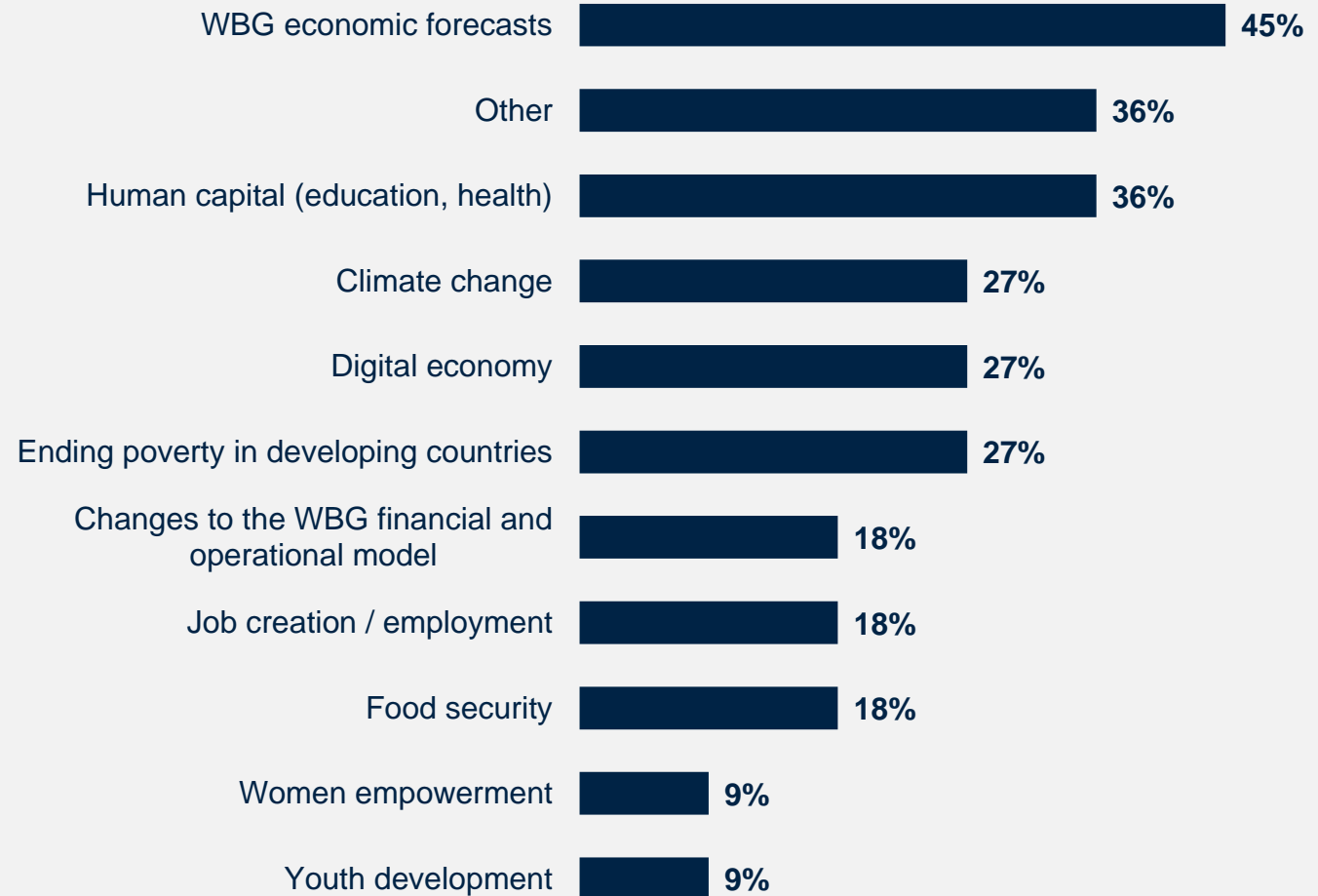
Respondents most often reported seeing or hearing about the WBG through **direct contact** with WBG staff, in **e-Newsletters**, at **events** / conferences / seminars / workshops, or on **social media**.



Respondents Most Frequently Recalled Seeing/Hearing About the WBG's Economic Forecasts

Almost half the respondents recalled WBG's **economic forecasts**. They also frequently recalled WBG's work or research on **human capital, climate change, the digital economy**, and **ending poverty** in developing countries, among other topics.

WBG's work or research on...



What topics were included in what you saw or heard about WBG's work or research? (Select ALL that apply)
(Percentage of Respondents, N=11)

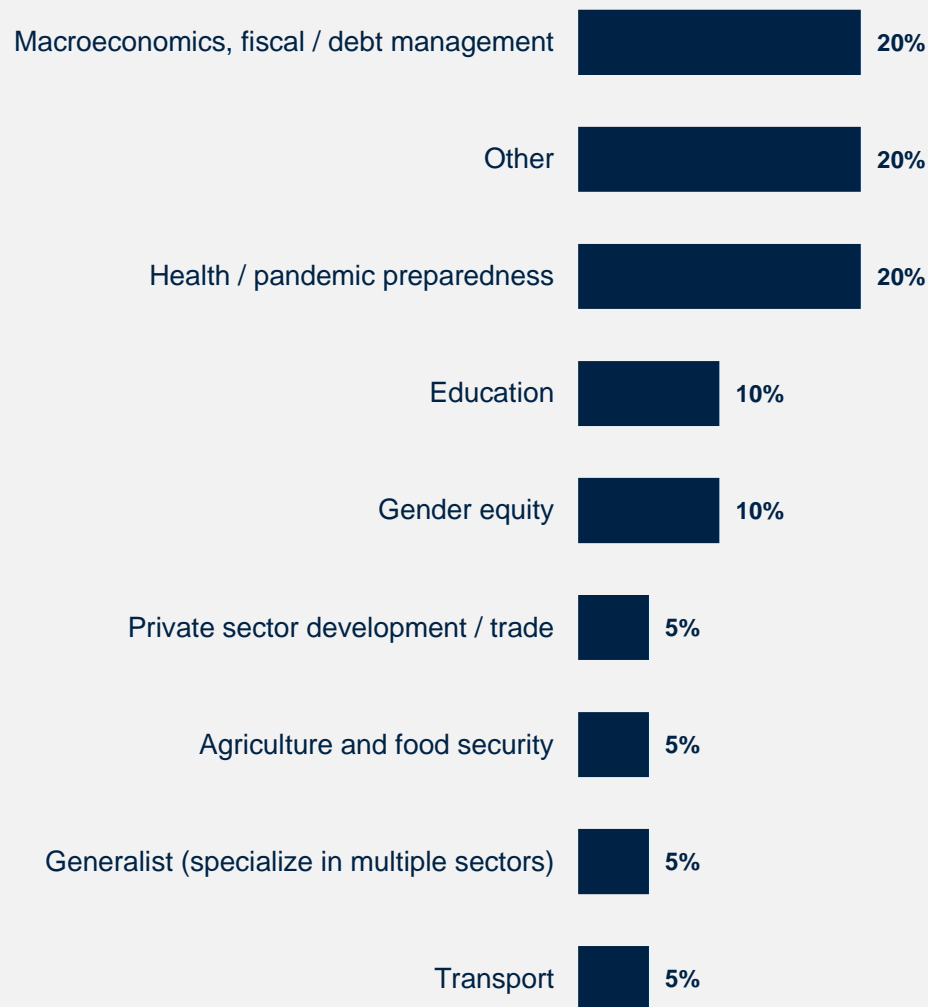


Sample Demographics and Detailed Methodology

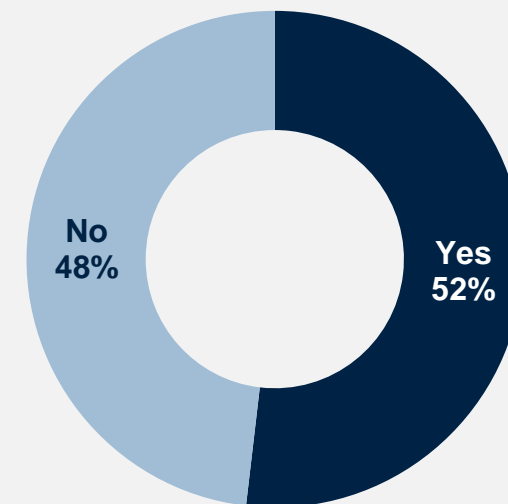


Sample Demographics

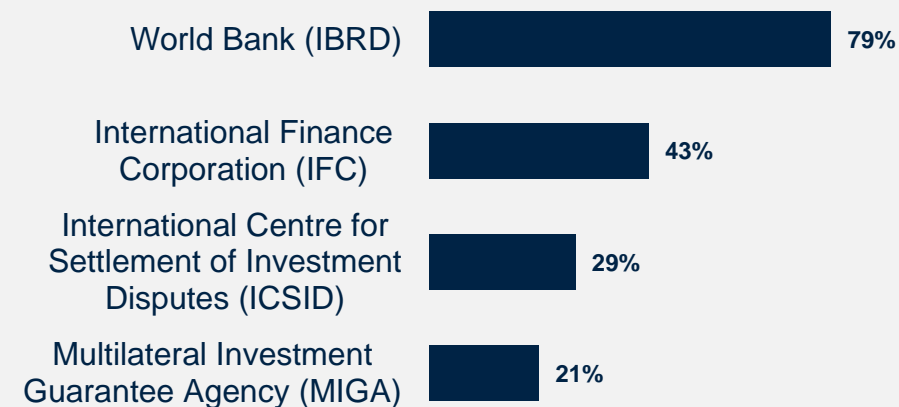
What is the primary specialization of your work? (N=20)



Do you collaborate/work with the World Bank Group (WBG) in the UAE? (N=27)

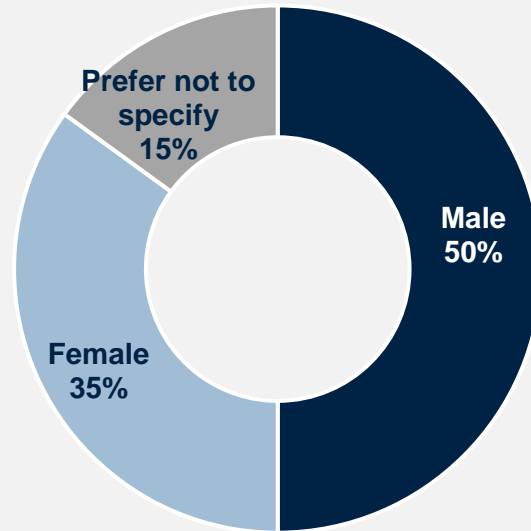


Which of the following WBG agencies do you collaborate/work with in the UAE? (N=14)

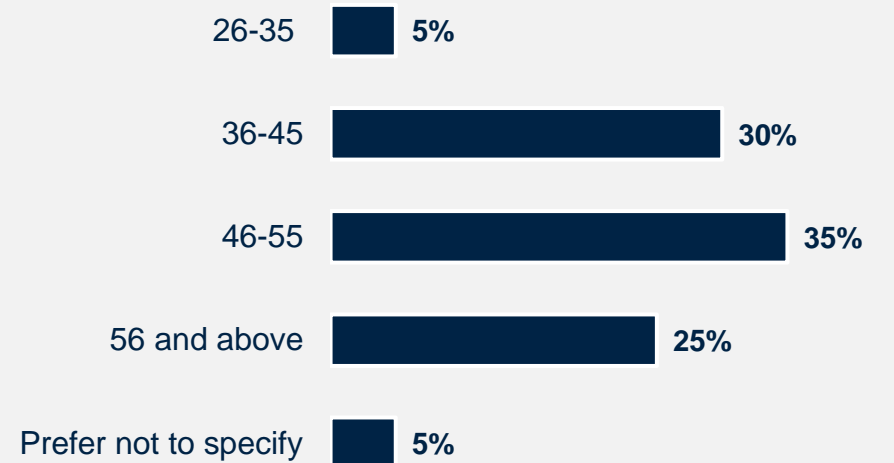


Sample Demographics (continued)

What is your gender?
(N=20)



What's your age?
(N=20)



Detailed Methodology

From **June 2024 to September 2024**, a total of 153 stakeholders in the UAE were invited to provide their opinions on the WBG’s work by participating in a Country Opinion Survey (COS). A list of potential participants was compiled by the WBG country team and the field agency. Participants were drawn from the Office of Minister and federal government institutions, local governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the media.

Of these stakeholders, 27 **participated in the survey (18% response rate)**. Respondents completed the questionnaire via an online platform.

This year’s survey results were compared to the FY18 Survey, which had a response rate of 28% (N=58).

Comparing responses across Country Surveys reflects changes in attitudes over time as changes in respondent samples, changes in methodology, and changes to the survey instrument itself. To reduce the influence of the latter factor, only those questions with similar response scales/options were analyzed. This year’s survey saw a greater outreach to and/or response from local government, academia, and civil society, but fewer responses from government principals and the private sector. These differences in stakeholder composition between the two years should be considered when interpreting the results of the past-year comparison analyses.

Key statistically significant findings (tested at the research standard of $p < .05$) are noted throughout the report.

Breakdowns for individual questions can be found in the “The UAE COS FY24 Appendices with data breakdowns.xlsx” file published in the WBG Microdata Library, along with the survey microdata and this report.

Percentage of Respondents	FY 2018	FY2024
Government Principals: Office of Minister	9%	4%
Federal Government Institution: Employee of a Ministry / Ministerial Department / Project Implementation Unit / Independent Government Institution (e.g., Central Bank, Regulatory or Oversight Agency) / State-Owned Enterprise	45%	41%
Local Government	0%	11%
Bilateral/Multilateral Agency: Embassy, Development Organization, Development Bank, UN Agency	5%	7%
Civil Society Organization: Local and regional NGOs, Community-Based Organization, Private Foundation, Professional/Trade Association, Faith-Based Group, Youth Group	2%	11%
Private Sector: Private Company, Financial Sector Organization, Private Bank	32%	11%
Academia/Research Center	5%	11%
Media	2%	4%
Total Number of Respondents	44	27



Which of the following best describes your current affiliation? (Select only 1 response)



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Thank you

*For more information about this report
or the Country Opinion Survey program,
please contact:*

countrysurveys@worldbankgroup.org

