

# Doing Research in **BENIN**

**COUNTRY REPORT**

*March 2026*



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## COUNTRY REPORT

March 2026

### DISCLAIMER:

This report is the result of a multi-country expansion of the Doing Research global initiative in Francophone Africa, generously funded by the Ministry of Finance of France, through the Agence Française de Développement, as part of the Pôle Clermontois de Développement Internationale. Doing Research is a flagship initiative of the Global Development Network, led and implemented independently. The Global Development Network is a public international organization that supports high-quality, policy-oriented social science research in low- and middle-income countries to promote better lives.

The African Center for Equitable Development (ACED) is a think-and-do tank addressing the persistent gap between the production of knowledge and its practical application to policy and practice.

**Title:** Doing Research in Benin - Country Report.

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**Published by:** The Global Development Network

**Designed by:** Suresh Kumar

**Edition:** 1

**Copyright:** GDN and ACED

**Suggested Citation:** ACED, Doing Research in Benin - Country Report. Global Development Network, 2026.

**ISBN:** 978-81-956855-0-9

**DOI:** 10.69814/DRBN/202603

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# THE DOING RESEARCH PROGRAM

## Bridging the research gap and improving development policies.

Today, governments and donors alike have little systematic information about the state of social science research, except for in a few developed countries. Yet, the implementation of the global agenda for sustainable development requires local research capacities to ensure that the scientific community is equipped to critically analyze development and policy challenges, and to accompany actions and reforms with contextualized knowledge of the local environment.

An in-depth analysis of research systems is key to understanding how to bridge this gap and raise the profile of research generated in developing countries. Research systems analysis can help policymakers, donors, and academics answer the question: what can be done to further generate and mainstream local research as a key input to public debate and sustainable human development policies?

## Assessing and benchmarking social science research systems

Doing Research (launched in 2014) is an initiative of the Global Development Network (GDN) that aims to systematically assess how the features of a national research system impact the capacity to produce, diffuse, and use quality social science research to the benefit of social and economic development. A pilot phase (2014–2017) in 13 countries was supported by the Agence Française de Développement, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In 2017, GDN conducted a synthesis of the pilot studies and developed a standard methodology for studying social science research systems in developing countries, the 'Doing Research Assessment'. Since 2018, GDN has been implementing Doing Research Assessments in partnership with competitively selected national research institutions, with the aim of generating evidence on research systems. The program also aims to support the emergence of a network of research institutions in the Global South dedicated to informing national research policies, using new research-based, comparative evidence.

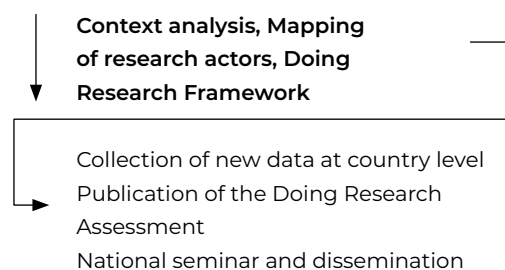
## Doing Research National Focal Points – A Southern network of local 'research on research' expertise

Through the collaboration between GDN and these local institutions, the program aims to inspire research policies, map research strengths, support research capacity-building efforts and enhance the quality of research that can be used for policy decisions and local democratic debate in developing countries. Social science research provides a critical analysis of societies and human behavior and contributes to a better understanding of development challenges, which is fundamental to realizing national and global development agendas. Country reports, comparative global reports and data will inform actors from research, development and policy communities about their policy-oriented research environment and how it can be improved.

## Doing Research Assessment: understanding, mapping and assessing research systems

A unique feature of the Doing Research Assessment is the equal importance the methodology gives to production, diffusion and uptake factors and actors in the analysis of systemic barriers and opportunities for social science development. It involves three steps for analyzing the factors that impact the social science research system in a given country or region, which will lead to several knowledge outputs and awareness-raising efforts.

Context analysis, Mapping of research actors, Doing Research Framework



## Doing Research Framework: the core of the assessment

The Doing Research Framework is a mixed-method research module that allows a contextualized comparative enquiry into a national research system, looking at key factors that determine the production, diffusion and uptake of social science. It would typically serve as a magnifying glass to identify aspects that need the attention of the regulator, or to provide a baseline for strategizing investments in capacity-building for research production, its diffusion or its use.

The Framework acts as the basis for comparing and benchmarking research systems in different countries and includes 54 indicators. These indicators are populated according to the national context framed by the National Focal Points (NFP); these follow the project guidelines while adapting them to their national environment. Therefore, each country follows the same framework and general guidelines, allowing for comparisons between different reports of the indicators that define the Doing Research Assessments (DRA). The same is true for the Country Reports, which follow a similar structure.

	1. Production	2. Diffusion	3. Policy uptake
Inputs	1.1 Research inputs	2.1 Actors & networks	3.1 Policy-friendly research
Activities	1.2 Research culture and support services	2.2 Research communication practices	3.2 Research-based policy making
Outputs	1.3 Research output & training	2.3 Research communication products	3.3 Research-based policy tools
Outcomes	1.4 Opportunities & sustainability	2.4 Popularization of science	3.4 Research for better policies

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This research endeavor was rendered feasible through the invaluable support of the **Global Development Network (GDN)**. We wish to articulate our profound appreciation to the **GDN's Doing Research (DR) Program team**, with particular acknowledgment to **Dr. Kadijatou Marou Sama, Prof. Michaël Goujon, and Francesco Obino**. Their intellectual engagement, dialogical exchange, and incisive critical insights significantly enriched the epistemological and methodological architecture of this study. Their scholarly interventions and guidance proved indispensable throughout the research trajectory. We extend our deepest gratitude to our mentor, **Prof. Marc Poncelet**, whose rigorous critique and sustained intellectual accompaniment were pivotal in consolidating the scientific robustness and analytical coherence of the chapters presented in this report.

We are equally indebted to the institutions and individuals who participated in the survey and generously contributed empirical evidence, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Our sincere appreciation is also directed to the committed interviewers, whose perseverance and methodological rigor ensured the integrity of the data collection process.

Finally, to all those who, in diverse capacities, facilitated the successful realization of this scholarly undertaking, we extend our most heartfelt acknowledgment.

## SUMMARY

Scientific inquiry, as a pivotal catalyst of global economic, social, and political transformations, constitutes a foundational epistemic resource for contextualizing and recalibrating development paradigms in relation to localized socio-historical realities. Yet, across the African continent, and most notably within Benin, social science scholarship remains conspicuously marginalized, representing less than 3% of global academic publications. Furthermore, systematic data on the institutional configuration and operational dynamics of the social science research system remain scarce, despite their critical salience for consolidating national research capacities. The present investigation endeavors to assess the state of the social science research system in Benin with regard to the production, circulation, and utilization of scholarly outputs, with the overarching aim of delineating strategic domains for intervention to strengthen its structural performance. The methodological design integrates extensive literature reviews, bibliometric examinations of international indexing repositories, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and differentiated quantitative surveys administered to researchers, research managers, policymakers, and media practitioners, employing rigorously structured questionnaires and interview protocols.

According to the empirical evidence, Benin continues to demonstrate a pronounced dependence on exogenous resources and lacks an autonomous national research infrastructure, both in financial and technical dimensions. The social science research ecosystem in Benin comprises approximately 500 operational entities, encompassing higher education institutions, civil society organizations, media outlets, governmental agencies, research centers, consulting firms, and funding bodies. Within this constellation, higher education institutions—particularly the national universities—persist as the central stakeholders in the generation and dissemination of scholarly knowledge. The country has approximately 1,034 social science researchers per year, with total annual public expenditure of around €626,727.45<sup>1</sup>,<sup>2</sup> or approximately €606.12 per researcher. Consequently, the research system is characterized by insufficient endogenous financing. In parallel, the absence of robust coordination mechanisms has engendered a pronounced fragmentation of social science research activities, thereby constraining the system's capacity to advance initiatives explicitly oriented toward local developmental priorities. Only a limited

cohort of scholars engage in projects directly relevant to public policy, and those who do so operate in the absence of national-level coordination or institutionalized incentives. Furthermore, the interface between the research community and policymakers remains tenuous, with minimal institutionalized opportunities for social science researchers to contribute substantively to formal decision-making arenas.

In addition, the research system is marked by under-resourced infrastructure, a fragile mentorship architecture, insufficient administrative scaffolding, and inadequate training in advanced research methodologies. Similarly, career pathways and incentives for pursuing sustained trajectories in social science scholarship within Benin remain scarce, thereby undermining the systemic performance of the field. A considerable proportion of scientific output is predominantly oriented toward fulfilling publication requirements for academic promotion and the completion of internationally driven collaborative projects. The incorporation of local communities into the research process, as well as the dissemination of research findings at the grassroots level, occurs only intermittently.

Collaboration between researchers and traditional media in the dissemination of scholarly outputs remains conspicuously weak, with virtually no institutionalized incentives for communicating findings through non-academic platforms. Consequently, scientific production in Benin rarely prioritizes the transmission of social science knowledge to non-specialist constituencies or broader public audiences. To consolidate a resilient social science research system capable of contributing substantively to local developmental trajectories, it is imperative to: (i) establish a national institution to ensure system-wide governance and coordination, (ii) create a dedicated national fund to strengthen research infrastructure, (iii) design comprehensive training and capacity-building schemes for researchers, (iv) introduce incentive frameworks to foster localized scientific outreach, and (v) institutionalize structured mentorship mechanisms for early-career scholars.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated annual public expenditures on social science research includes salaries, operating and program costs, and capital assets (Domgbo et al., 2018).  
<sup>2</sup> We consider 1 XOF = 0.0015 EURO (€)

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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## Key Messages

- Overall, Africa contributes less than 1% of global inventions and approximately 3.3% of worldwide scientific publications across all disciplines.
- Within the domain of social sciences, the continent is particularly underrepresented, accounting for fewer than 3% of global publications.
- Apart from a limited number of more developed countries, systematic data on the status of social science research remain scarce, despite their critical importance for the development and reinforcement of local research capacities.
- The Doing Research Assessment (DRA) program seeks to enhance the visibility and profile of social science research in developing contexts through comprehensive evaluations of research systems, focusing on the production, dissemination, and valorization of scientific knowledge.
- In Benin, the DRA assessment was implemented by the African Centre for Equitable Development (ACED), employing a systemic methodological approach that integrated literature reviews, bibliometric analyses, and both quantitative and qualitative surveys of key research stakeholders.

# CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

This study constitutes a component of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) initiative, which aims to fortify the social science research system so that it may more effectively inform ongoing socio-economic transformations and generate substantive contributions to sustainable development processes—both at the levels of policy formulation and strategic planning as well as in project implementation and field-based interventions. The significance of this initiative resides in the recognition that scientific inquiry represents a cornerstone of economic, social, and political transformation globally, wherein the accumulation of evidence-based knowledge across diverse sectors enables the contextualized adaptation of development paradigms tailored to local exigencies. Yet, Africa contributes less than 1% of global inventions in the domains of science, technology, and innovation, with only 0.7% of worldwide patent applications, in stark contrast to 67.9% in Asia and 18.3% in North America in 2022 (WIPO, 2023).

In 2021, the African continent accounted for merely 3.3% of global scientific publications across all disciplines (El-Aroui, 2024), with public health research representing the largest share (6.5%), followed by agricultural and biological sciences (5.2%). According to the Nature Index, Benin declined in rank from 13th to 24th place among African countries between 2019 and 2023 in terms of scientific output (Nature Index, 2020; 2024). Within this already constrained research landscape, the social sciences remain particularly marginalized. Publications in the social sciences originating from Africa constitute only between 2.6% and 2.9% of global output in the field, as reported by Scopus and Web of Science.

Nevertheless, social science research provides indispensable analytical perspectives on societal dynamics and human behavior, thereby contributing to a deeper comprehension of development challenges. It constitutes a foundational pillar for the design and implementation of contextually relevant development programs at both national and global scales. Policies directed toward strengthening scientific inquiry across disciplines must be accompanied by substantial investments in the social sciences to ensure that scholarly knowledge effectively informs and advances sustainable human development.

Moreover, with the exception of a limited cohort of affluent nations, governments and donor agencies retain little systematic knowledge concerning the prevailing condition of social science research. Yet such knowledge is indispensable for the consolidation and enhancement of endogenous research capacities within the framework

of the global sustainable development agenda. Effective development necessitates that the scientific community be adequately equipped to critically interrogate policy and developmental challenges and to anchor actions and reforms in context-specific understandings of the local environment. Consequently, a systematic appraisal of research systems is essential for identifying structural gaps and for reinforcing the visibility and epistemic profile of social science scholarship in developing countries, with particular pertinence to Benin. This study thereby offers valuable insights for policymakers, funding institutions, and academics seeking to more effectively integrate local research as a substantive contribution to sustainable development strategies.

## The “Doing Research Assessment” Program

The Global Development Network (GDN) collaborates with national research institutions in the implementation of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) initiative, which seeks to generate systematic and context-sensitive evidence on national scientific research systems. The program is conceived to foster the establishment of an interconnected network of research institutions committed to informing and shaping national research policies across the Global South. Its overarching objective is to consolidate social science research by mapping research systems, strengthening research capacities, and advancing the role of scholarly inquiry in public deliberation and democratic decision-making—processes that, in turn, underpin the formulation of sustainable development policies at the local level.

During its pilot phase (2014–2016), the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) program supported seven research teams across eleven developing countries in Africa (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, South Africa), Asia (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia), and Latin America (Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru). These teams interrogated their respective research environments through diverse scientific approaches, ranging from historical analysis and political economy to econometric methodologies. A subsequent DRA cycle in Francophone Africa was launched in November 2022, encompassing Benin alongside four other countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, and Chad. In Benin, the DRA evaluation was conducted by the African Centre for Equitable Development (ACED), commissioned by the Global Development Network (GDN) for this purpose. The present research report seeks to present the findings of this evaluation. The central research question guiding

the DRA assessment is: **What is the current state of the social science research system in Benin with respect to the production, dissemination, and utilization of scientific knowledge for sustainable development?**

Numerous scholars and development practitioners have emphasized the necessity of appropriate methodologies to assess the performance of scientific research (GDN, 2023). Within the academic literature, bibliometric analysis continues to be the most widely employed approach (Diem & Wolter, 2013; Mègnigbêto, 2014; Confraria & Godinho, 2015; Salisu & Salami, 2020; Okolo et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, there exists broad scholarly consensus regarding the limitations of this approach, particularly in assessing research performance within the social sciences and in developing contexts, as it relies exclusively on data extracted from international indexing repositories of scholarly publications.

The Doing Research Assessment (DRA) methodology explicitly acknowledges these constraints and advances a more holistic perspective on social science research, situating it within its interconnections with civil society, the private sector, policymakers, and international stakeholders' development. Building on insights derived from studies undertaken during the pilot phase (2014–2016), the DRA framework underscores that the production of high-quality research necessitates a diverse repertoire of competencies beyond disciplinary specialization and is conditioned by multiple determinants, including socio-economic, political, and historical contexts, international dynamics, the configuration of the research market, and the availability of enabling policies and institutional services (GDN, 2023). In response, the DRA methodology seeks to apprehend the multifaceted character of research systems by integrating systematic literature reviews, bibliometric analyses, and empirical data generated through quantitative and qualitative surveys of research stakeholders. The DRA methodology unfolds through three distinct stages:

- I. **Contextual analysis of the research system:** a comprehensive examination of the economic, political, historical, and international conditions shaping the research environment.
- II. **Systematic stakeholder mapping:** identification and classification of national research stakeholders to distinguish the principal producers and users of social science knowledge.
- III. **Assessment of system performance through the DRA framework:** the DRA framework offers

a structured analytical lens for evaluating the functions and processes of the research system, particularly with respect to knowledge production, dissemination, and utilization. This involves the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data to generate specific performance indicators related to the production, diffusion, and application of research outputs.

## Overall Research Methodology

To interrogate the national research context in Benin, a comprehensive review of extant literature was undertaken, focusing on (i) Benin's positioning within the sub-region in relation to governance and social science scholarship, (ii) the institutional governance structures regulating social science research within Benin, and (iii) the political, historical, economic, and international determinants shaping the configuration of the social science research system. The documentary corpus consulted encompassed peer-reviewed journals, scholarly monographs, research reports, dissertations, working papers, project evaluations, and other pertinent materials. The evaluative criteria applied to assess the quality of these sources included thematic relevance, authorial affiliation, methodological rigor, publication date, source reliability, and clarity of exposition. Materials characterized by unclear attribution, weak methodological foundations, or unreliable information were systematically excluded. The literature review further facilitated the incorporation of secondary data sources, including global governance indicators (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2022), bibliometric measures from Scimago, macroeconomic indicators, and related datasets. Following the documentary analysis, informal interviews with key informants were conducted to validate and/or reinforce selected findings. This contextual inquiry enabled the construction of a historical profile of social science research in Benin, providing an initial overview of institutions that have entered or exited the broader research system—and the social science domain in particular—over time. This historical profile constituted the foundation for the second phase of the DRA, namely stakeholder mapping.

The stakeholder mapping exercise was implemented through a multi-stakeholder workshop designed to interrogate the research system. The significance of this workshop derived from the recognition that the social science research system encompasses heterogeneous categories of institutions and stakeholders, and that any meaningful analysis of this system necessitates the active consideration and engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

The workshop was convened on May 25, 2023, at the University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin), assembling approximately 21 participants drawn from a broad spectrum of stakeholder institutions, including universities, research institutes and centers, governmental agencies, international organizations, civil society stakeholders, and representatives of the private sector. The objectives of the workshop were to: (i) enable social science research stakeholders to engage substantively with the central research question, (ii) enrich the contextual analysis, (iii) undertake stakeholder mapping, and (iv) inform participants about subsequent phases of the study, particularly the stage devoted to individual interviews. The workshop was structured around presentations on the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) program and a synthesis of the historical profile of the research system in Benin, followed by group work sessions organized around two pre-formulated Terms of Reference (TORs). Plenary discussions on the outputs of each group were subsequently convened to harmonize perspectives and consolidate participant positions on the results.

The multi-stakeholder workshop produced an initial inventory of institutions engaged in the research system in Benin. This inventory was subsequently expanded through complementary inquiry, culminating in a comprehensive compilation of stakeholder institutions, classified by category, geographic location (south, central, north), and organizational size (small, medium, large), as measured by the number of researchers employed. This supplementary research was conducted through consultation of national databases on civil society organizations and engagement with selected resource persons. At this stage of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA), an analysis was also undertaken of the relationships and interactions among the identified institutions with respect to funding, knowledge production, dissemination, and utilization of social science research outputs. This analysis drew upon statements provided by participants in the multi-stakeholder workshop as well as the perspectives of consulted experts. The graphic representation of the mapping was created using the Kumu platform<sup>3</sup>, which is specifically designed for this purpose.

The consolidated list of institutions constituted the sampling frame for the third stage of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA), which entailed conducting individual interviews with research stakeholders. A stratified sampling strategy was applied to this frame in order to generate a representative selection of institutions for inclusion in the survey. Subsequently, on the basis of the size and relative significance of the sampled institutions,

sub-samples of researchers, research administrators, and policymakers were identified. The outcomes of the sampling process, together with the methodological procedures employed in the individual interviews, are presented in detail in Chapter 2 of the report.

It is important to emphasize that the methodology employed for the individual surveys in this study was submitted in advance to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD) of Benin for formal statistical approval. This procedure was undertaken in compliance with Article 65 of Law No. 2022-07 of June 27, 2022, which regulates the organization and governance of statistical activities within the Republic of Benin. The statistical approval, granted following the validation of the methodology by NISD, is included in Annex 6 of this report.

## Definition of Concepts

The concepts employed in this study are defined and operationalized in accordance with the methodological guidelines established by the Global Development Network (GDN, 2023).

**Social Sciences.** The social sciences framework encompasses a wide range of disciplinary fields, including economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, management, international relations, organizational theory, ethnology, ethnography, science and technology studies, epistemology, demography, development studies, geography, education, gender studies, history, law, philosophy, psychology, social work, public administration, sustainable development, public health, social medicine, sexology, criminology, and linguistics. In essence, it constitutes the systematic study of society in all its dimensions.

**Social Science Research.** Social science research refers to the professional activity of mobilizing, interpreting, and applying creative and systematic inquiry to generate and defend scientific knowledge concerning societies and human behavior. The conduct of social science research is inherently a political and social process of critical evaluation, closely linked to the challenges of development and the production of contextually relevant knowledge.

**Social Science Research System.** The constellation of institutions, practices, structures, and regulatory frameworks that facilitate the production, dissemination, and utilization of social science knowledge. Within this

3 <https://kumu.io/>

document, the terms research system and social science research system are employed interchangeably.

**Performance of the Social Science Research System.** The system's capacity to provide an enabling environment for the conduct of high-quality research, its effective communication, and its subsequent appropriation by a diverse range of stakeholders, including academic communities, policymakers, civil society stakeholders, and donor organizations.

**Quality Research.** Research that systematically addresses clearly defined and socially pertinent questions, is methodologically rigorous, contributes substantively to the existing body of knowledge, and demonstrates relevance to local contexts and/or broader global development challenges.

**Research Production.** The process through which research is generated by individual scholars and research organizations, encompassing the requisite inputs and activities that directly contribute to the research production function.

**Inputs.** The human capital and material resources necessary for the creation of research outputs.

**Dissemination of Research.** Refers to the outputs of research and the channels through which they are communicated to diverse audiences—including academic communities, policymakers, civil society organizations, and the private sector—and subsequently debated within these spheres.

**Research Application.** Denotes the process of utilizing and adopting research outputs for practical or policy-oriented purposes, or of applying research findings and methodologies in a specific and direct manner. Within this document, the terms research use, research valorization, and research application are employed interchangeably.

**Social Science Researcher.** Social science researchers comprise all individuals engaged in the design and production of knowledge through research, as well as in the refinement and advancement of concepts, theories, models, techniques, instruments, software, or operational methods. This definition is grounded not in formal qualifications, academic rank, or institutional status, but in the actual practice of research and knowledge generation. It encompasses lecturers, senior lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, full/principal professors, researchers, research associates, and research assistants.

**Research Administrator.** Research administrators are individuals engaged in the governance and management of social science research processes. Their responsibilities encompass approving funding criteria, determining project eligibility, and overseeing the allocation of material, financial, and human resources. This category includes those occupying positions of authority within scientific councils, leadership roles in national and private universities, as well as administrative appointments in research institutes, public agencies, government ministries, and funding organizations.

**Policy Decision-Maker.** Policy decision-makers are stakeholders who play pivotal roles in the formulation and implementation of public policies. They comprise rectors and vice-rectors of national universities, directors general of public agencies, ministers, members of parliament, directors general of national funding bodies, resident representatives of international funding organizations, and presidents or vice-presidents of umbrella civil society organizations.

**Mentoring.** Mentoring refers to the academic and professional relationship established between a more experienced faculty member (the mentor) and a less experienced colleague (the mentee). It constitutes a critical mechanism for supporting the mentee's academic and research career development until sufficient expertise is acquired. In this capacity, the mentor provides guidance, coaching, advice, and support across domains such as teaching, research, scholarly writing, career advancement, professional growth, and personal development.

## Outline of Report

This research report is organized into three substantive chapters of findings, complemented by a general introduction and a general conclusion. The general introduction outlines the study's contextual background, provides an overview of the methodological approach, and explicates the key conceptual categories employed.

**Chapter 1** is dedicated to an examination of the contextual environment of the social science research system in Benin. **Chapter 2** focuses on the stakeholder mapping process within the system and offers a detailed account of the survey methodology. **Chapter 3** presents and critically discusses the results of individual surveys conducted with research stakeholders. The report concludes with a general conclusion that synthesizes the principal findings and highlights their practical and policy-oriented implications.

# CHAPTER 1

## NATIONAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN BENIN

### Key Messages

- Beninese intellectuals demonstrated an early engagement with diverse fields of knowledge concerning humanity and Beninese society, as evidenced by numerous scholarly publications produced prior to the 1960s. However, the transformation of this intellectual activity into a coherent research system from independence to the present has been constrained by political and institutional conditions that were not conducive to substantive progress.
- Benin continues to exhibit a high degree of dependence on external resources and has yet to establish an autonomous national research system, either financially or technically, as France—the former colonial power—remains dominant in shaping its scientific output through publications.
- The country possesses a regulatory framework favorable to research activities within national universities, which are acknowledged as the primary institutions of scientific production. Nevertheless, limited information exists regarding the extent to which this research contributes to local development.
- Although Benin has achieved notable economic growth over the past five years, this progress has not translated into significant advancements in the higher education and scientific research sectors.
- Insufficient access to reliable energy and internet infrastructure constitutes a major structural challenge for the functioning and sustainability of the research system.

### 1.1 A Brief Overview of Benin

The Republic of Benin is located in West Africa in the tropical zone between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer (between 6°30' and 12°30' north latitude and 1° and 30°40' east longitude) (Benin Presidency, 2023). With an area of 114,763 km<sup>2</sup>, Benin shares borders with Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and has 121 kilometers of coastline along the Gulf of Guinea (Benin Presidency, 2023). The country had approximately 13.7 million inhabitants in 2023, according to World Bank projections (2024). Approximately 51.2% of this population was female, and the majority (65.5%) were under 25 years of age (NISEA, 2016a). The average annual population growth rate for the period 1992–2013 was estimated at 3.37% (NISEA, 2015). Apart from foreign ethnic groups, the country has eight distinct ethnic groups (NISEA, 2016a). It is subdivided into 12 departments, 77 communes, and approximately 545 districts, which are further subdivided into local administrative units called villages or city districts (NISEA, 2016b).

With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimated at €12.08 billion <sup>4</sup> in 2018 and €13.45 billion in 2019, Benin has become a lower-middle-income country with a GDP per capita of USD 1,250 (NISEA, 2021; French Treasury, 2021). The country's economic growth has remained stable and robust for over two decades, but poverty is still widespread and is explained by a low per capita growth rate (averaging only 1.5% over the period 2008–2018) (World Bank, 2022).

The national economy of Benin is characterized by a strong dependence on regional re-export and transit trade with Nigeria and Togo (NISD, 2022), alongside agriculture, which contributes approximately 27% of GDP (DSA, 2022). Trade and transport constitute the largest share of GDP, accounting for nearly 53% in 2020 (UNCTADSTAT, 2022), while the industrial sector remains comparatively underdeveloped. Over the past five years, Benin has recorded robust economic growth, with the growth rate rising from 3.3% in 2016 to 7.2% in 2021 (MEF, 2020; FDAB, 2022). Nevertheless, despite this expansion, poverty and inequality persist at relatively high

<sup>4</sup> We consider 1 XOF = 0.0015 EURO (€)

levels, partly due to public expenditure on education, health, and social protection failing to keep pace with demographic growth (Bennouna et al., 2022). In 2021, inflation was estimated at 1.7%, the government budget deficit at 5.7% of GDP, and the debt ratio at 49.5% of GDP (IMF, 2022).

In the subsequent analysis, attention is directed first to the relationship between global governance and the evolution of the social sciences, and second to the trajectory of governance within the social sciences as a domain of human activity in Benin.

## 1.2 Benin's Position in the Sub-Region in Terms of Governance and Social Science Research

**Governance** denotes the ensemble of decisions, rules, and practices devised to ensure the effective functioning of an organization or sector, together with the institutional architectures responsible for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of these decisions, rules, and practices. It encompasses both internal dimensions—such as the relational dynamics among sectoral stakeholders, the mechanisms of resource allocation and decision-making, and organizational configurations—and external dimensions, including interactions with external stakeholders, input providers, and the modalities of output utilization. At the national level, governance is conceptualized as the set of traditions and institutions through which authority is exercised within a polity (Kaufmann et al., 2011). This definition highlights three core domains of governance: (i) the processes by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; (ii) the state's institutional capacity to design and effectively implement sound public policies; and (iii) the respect accorded by both citizens and the state to the institutions regulating their economic and social relations. These domains of governance are expected to exert significant influence on the social science research system. As emphasized by Egbetokun et al. (2020), this influence derives from the fact that a substantial proportion of social science research is conducted within state public institutions, particularly universities.

Governance in Benin was examined in this study through the utilization of data from the 2022 Global Governance Indicators (GGI) project. These data provide both aggregate and disaggregated governance indicators for 214 countries covering the period 1996–2021. They synthesize the perceptions of a broad range of businesses, citizens, and experts surveyed regarding the quality of governance in both industrialized and developing contexts. The dataset was compiled from 31 distinct sources, including polling institutes, think

tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector entities (Kaufmann et al., 2011). Two governance measures, corresponding to each of the three governance domains previously defined, were constructed for analytical purposes (Kaufmann et al., 2011) as follows:

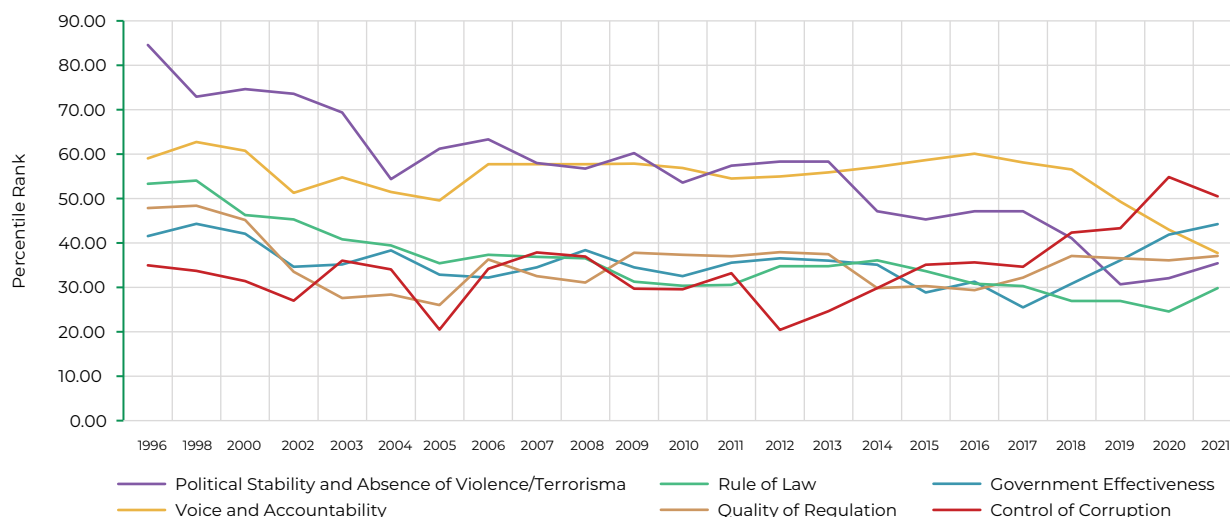
1. The process by which governments are selected, controlled, and replaced:
  - Voice and responsibility: perception of the extent to which citizens of a country are able to participate in the selection of their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.
  - Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism: perception of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically motivated violence and terrorism.
2. The government's ability to formulate and effectively implement sound policies:
  - Government effectiveness: perception of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and its degree of independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to these policies.
  - The quality of regulation: perception of the government's ability to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that enable and promote private sector development.
3. Respect from citizens and the State for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions between them:
  - Rule of law: perception of the extent to which individuals trust and respect the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, policing and the courts, and the likelihood of crime and violence.
  - Control of corruption: perception of the extent to which public power is exercised for private purposes, including petty and major forms of corruption, as well as the "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

The database employed provides percentile rankings for each country and each governance indicator. The percentile ranking constitutes a relative measure of

a country's governance performance compared to other countries included in the dataset. It reflects the proportion of countries whose governance quality is equal to or lower than that of the country under consideration. For instance, a percentile ranking of 63 signifies that 63%

of all ranked countries exhibit governance performance equal to or below that of the country in question, while the remaining 37% demonstrate comparatively stronger governance outcomes.

**Chart 1.1. Governance indicators in Benin, over the period 1996–2021**



Source: Global Governance Indicators (GGI) database <sup>5</sup>, updated on September 23, 2022.

**Chart 1.1** shows the evolution of Benin's percentile rank from 1996 to 2021 for the six governance indicators. Overall, this Chart shows that the quality of governance in Benin deteriorated from 1996 to 2021. The “voice and accountability” indicator declined from 1998 to 2005, improved slightly from 2005 to 2016, and then deteriorated sharply from 2016 to 2021. “Political stability and the absence of violence/terrorism,” which was a strong point in 1992 (72.87%), decreased drastically to 37% in 2021. “Regulatory quality” and “the rule of law” also declined significantly between 1996 and 2021. “Government effectiveness” and “control of corruption” are the only indicators that showed some improvement over the period. “Government effectiveness” declined from 1996 to 2017, but then improved from 2017 to 2021. “Corruption control” meanwhile, has improved significantly with a rebound and gradual increase since 2012.

**Chart 1.2** The analysis highlights Benin's position in social science research within Africa and at the global level. It demonstrates an overall improvement in Benin's standing in terms of social science knowledge production between 1996 and 2021, both regionally and internationally. The first notable advancement occurred between 1996 and 2004, followed by a pronounced decline in 2005. This downturn can be attributed to reduced public investment

in research, itself linked to the contraction in economic activity (with the growth rate falling below 3%, compared to 6.2% in 2001) and the sharp increase in crude oil prices during that period (Gaillard, 2010). Since 2005, Benin's position in the production of social science knowledge has steadily improved. From a global percentile rank of 21.2 in 2005, Benin advanced to a percentile rank of 45.39 in 2021.

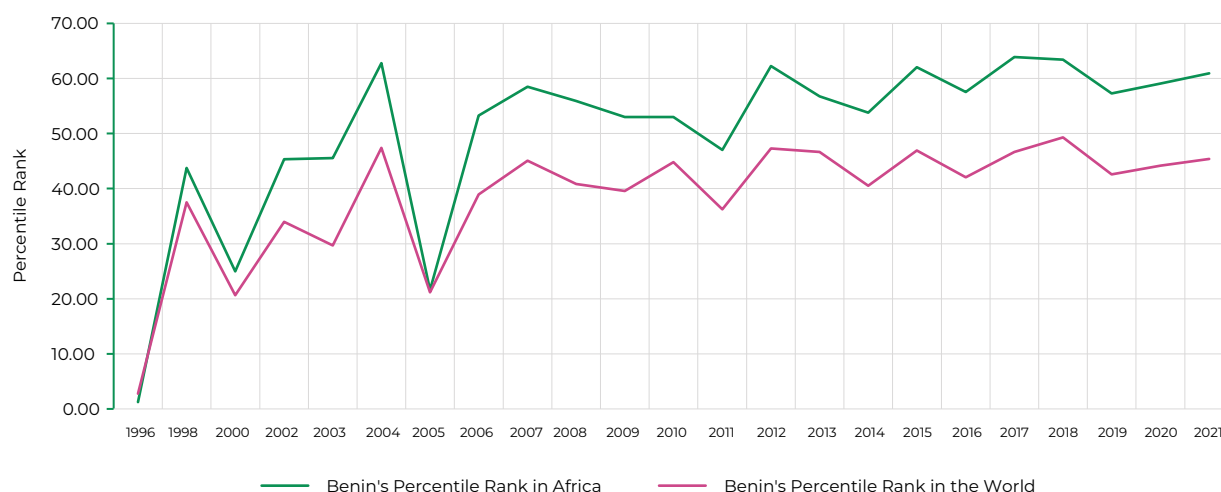
Pearson correlation analyses between bibliometric indicators and governance measures suggest an association between Benin's performance in social science research and national policy dynamics. However, this association is both weak and negative. Of the six governance indicators examined, only two demonstrated statistically significant correlations with Benin's global ranking in scientific knowledge production: political stability and the absence of violence/terrorism ( $r = -0.71$ ;  $p = 0.0002$ ) and rule of law ( $r = -0.65$ ;  $p = 0.0008$ ). The negative coefficients indicate that social science research did not contribute to strengthening political stability or the rule of law during the period under review. Conversely, it may also be inferred that political stability and the rule of law have not provided substantive support for the advancement of social science research in Benin.

5 Kaufmann D., Kraay A. 2022. World Governance Indicators (WGI). <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>

Two explanatory factors may account for this observation. First, policymakers make limited use of research findings to enhance governance quality. Second, social science research outputs often fail to align with policymakers' evidentiary needs, thereby reducing their relevance to policy formulation. These claims are corroborated by Sambieni (2018), who demonstrated the absence of meaningful linkages between social science researchers

and policymakers in Benin. According to this author, political stakeholders and development practitioners are generally reluctant to integrate research findings into interventions, while research institutions (universities, laboratories, etc.) lack the technical and institutional capacity necessary to ensure the uptake of their outputs in policy processes.

**Chart 1.2. Benin's position in social science research from 1996 to 2021, in Africa and worldwide**



Source: Parameters calculated using Scimago data <sup>6</sup>, updated in April 2022.

### 1.3 Governance of Social Sciences in Benin

The Beninese state does not possess a dedicated research policy explicitly regulating and coordinating the social sciences. Nevertheless, the social science research system remains shaped by broader governmental reforms impacting the higher education and research sectors. Research governance is exercised through the National Directorate of Scientific Research and Innovation (NDSRI), operating under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). The NDSRI holds responsibility for coordinating research activities and formulating strategic guidelines for mobilizing the resources required for their implementation, in collaboration with public higher education and research institutions. In addition to the NDSRI, research activities are also dispersed across multiple structures situated within the jurisdiction of other ministerial bodies.

For instance, we have the Directorate of Training and Research in Health at the Ministry of Health, which

is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating health training and research <sup>7</sup>, encompassing certain social science domains such as psychology. In addition, the General Directorate for Evaluation and the Observatory of Social Change (GDEOSC) play a significant role in advancing social science research. Pursuant to Decree 2020-075 of February 12, 2020, the GDEOSC is entrusted with multiple responsibilities, including: (i) coordinating the national network for impact analysis on poverty and social issues, as well as the network of observatories of economic and social life in Benin; (ii) contributing to the evaluation of social impacts in the implementation of strategic policy documents; (iii) fostering research on poverty and social development through the preparation and regular dissemination of the national social profile report and national human development reports; (iv) promoting scientific reflection on social issues to inform evidence-based decision-making; and (v) coordinating national actions aimed at combating human trafficking in Benin.

The main national stakeholders in the social sciences in Benin are:

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?area=3300&year=2021>

<sup>7</sup> <https://sante.gouv.bj/1-Directions-centrales-et-techniques>

1. Public universities, notably the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), the University of Parakou (UP), and the National University of Agriculture (NUA), house social science departments active in student training and scientific production. These universities have their own research governance bodies, which are nevertheless influenced or controlled by the government in power.
2. Public research and observation structures, in particular
  - The General Directorate for Evaluation and Observatory of Social Change of the Ministry of Development and Coordination of Government Action (GDEOSC/MDCGA), which ensures monitoring and alerting public authorities on social issues, the development and implementation of the national evaluation policy, as well as the establishment of a system for evaluating public policies, projects and programs in connection with development objectives,
  - The Agricultural Policy Analysis Program of the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (APAP/NIARB) which deals with socio-economic research related to the agricultural and even rural sector;
  - The National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISTaD) whose mission is to coordinate all activities related to the development, production, use and archiving of official statistics in Benin.
3. Non-Governmental Research Organizations (NGOs) such as SADN (Sustainable Agriculture Development Network), RASEL (Regional Analysis and Social Expertise Laboratory), Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development Laboratory (SRSDLDL Parakou), etc. Some of these NGOs conduct research with the support of development aid programs coordinated by international organizations.
4. Consulting firms or research offices are often called upon by government agencies, producer organizations, NGOs involved in development, and technical and financial partners not only to assess the effects and impacts of their interventions but also for the development of intervention projects/programs;
5. Other stakeholders in the social sciences in Benin include the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE) and the African School of Economics (ASE), private institutions for economic training and research.

There exist limited and scarcely discernible initiatives in research and innovation undertaken by certain private sector enterprises in Benin. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, a more detailed examination will be provided of the political, economic, international, historical, and cultural contexts that have influenced and structured the development of the social science research system in Benin.

#### 1.4 The Political Context of Benin and its Influence on the Social Science Research System

Since independence (August 1, 1960) to the present, Benin has experienced a volatile political trajectory that has profoundly influenced the evolution of its social science research system (Bierschenk & Mongbo, 1995; Gaillard, 2010). The first twelve years following independence were characterized by chronic instability, during which former colonial elites—predominantly originating from southern Benin—contested political authority and state control (Gaillard, 2010).

During this formative period, the social science research system, alongside other scientific domains, remained organized through specialized colonial institutions such as the Institute for Research on Cotton and Exotic Textiles (IRCET), the Institute for Tropical Agronomic Research (ITAR) for food crops, and the Institute for Research on Oils and Oilseeds (IROO) for oil palm. In addition, non-specialized institutions such as the Office of Overseas Scientific and Technical Research (OOSTR)—later reconstituted as the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) in 1998—and the French Institute of Black Africa (FIBA)—which became the Cheikh Anta Diop Fundamental Institute of Black Africa in 1986—played pivotal roles. These institutions were directed by French scientists, and the development of endogenous scientific capacity remained virtually absent.

The establishment of the University of Dahomey in 1970 (renamed the National University of Benin (NUB) in 1975 and subsequently the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) in 2001, following the creation of the University of Parakou) can be interpreted as a deliberate policy intervention aimed at addressing the acute shortage of nationally trained researchers, particularly within the social sciences. This initiative marked the inception of the nationalization of scientific research in Benin. The University of Dahomey encompassed multiple training and research units, including social science faculties such as the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Human Sciences (FLAHS) (comprising departments of Letters, History, Geography, and Sociology & Philosophy), the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences (FAS) (with its Department of

Rural Economics and Sociology), and the Faculty of Law, Economics and Political Science (FLEPS).

In 1975, the Rural Economics and Sociology Laboratory (RESL) was established within the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, comprising five specialized sections: (i) farm management, (ii) marketing and price structures, (iii) rural development planning, (iv) agricultural accounting, and (v) rural sociology. In 1976, a national seminar was convened on the reform of technical and higher education structures. This seminar stimulated renewed reflection on the organization of the national system of scientific and technical research and contributed to the formulation of proposals for its restructuring (Gaillard, 2010). As a direct outcome, the National Center for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) was created to promote the advancement of science in Benin. Furthermore, based on the seminar's recommendations, the Ministry of Rural Development and Cooperative Action established the Directorate of Agronomic Research (DRA) in 1984, which absorbed the Laboratory of Rural Economics and Sociology—later transformed into the Agricultural Policy Analysis Program (APAP) in 1996. The period spanning 1970 to 1986 was thus characterized by the nationalization of scientific research, which entailed: (i) persistent problems of research funding; (ii) the fragmented dispersal of research activities across ministries; (iii) weak organizational structures and bureaucratic constraints that hindered research initiatives; (iv) the orientation of research agendas toward the priorities of foreign organizations; (v) limited political commitment to research; and (vi) the absence of effective linkages between basic and applied research (Dahoun, 1998).

The national research system entered a new phase with the establishment of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) through Decree No. 86-23 of January 29, 1986. This council was designated as the principal body responsible for formulating national scientific research policy. Its mandate encompassed: (i) defining the overall orientation of scientific and technical research in Benin, (ii) establishing modalities of cooperation with foreign and international scientific organizations, and (iii) determining, in accordance with national priorities, the programs and budgets necessary to advance science and technology and to promote their application within the socio-economic development process. Among its initial recommendations, the NCSTR proposed the creation of a National Research Support Fund equivalent to 1% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The permanent secretariat of the NCSTR was provided by the Director General of the Beninese Center for Scientific and Technical Research (BCSTR). However, the objectives of both the NCSTR and the BCSTR were not realized. On the one hand, the proposals

submitted to the government were not translated into concrete measures, and on the other hand, the country was undergoing a severe economic crisis and intense socio-political unrest between 1985 and 1989, marked by widespread strikes by students and civil servants (DHR, 2007; Hounzandji, 2017). The state was unable to pay civil servants' salaries, including those of researchers and academic staff, as well as student scholarships. The challenges facing the research system were further aggravated by the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program, which imposed additional 10% salary deductions, a freeze on civil service recruitment, and compulsory retirements as measures to address the economic crisis (Gaillard, 2010).

The national research system entered a further phase of reorganization with the democratic transition that occurred in 1990. This transformation in governance facilitated greater openness of the country to international research collaboration (Pirrotte & Poncelet, 2022). The transition stimulated not only the establishment of several collaborative research programs but also the engagement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in social science research. A notable example of collaborative research is the Convergence of Sciences (CoS) program, initiated by Wageningen University in 2002. The CoS initiative sought to strengthen innovation systems in order to enhance the impact of agricultural research on farmers' livelihoods. Its objective was to promote research projects that integrated the perspectives of both the social and natural sciences to generate solutions to the challenges confronting farmers. The program contributed significantly to the development of national Research and Development (R&D) capacity at the university level (Hounkonou et al., 2012). R&D activities expanded in scope in Benin with the proliferation of NGOs, a process that unfolded in parallel with the democratic transition (Pirrotte & Poncelet, 2002), particularly through the National Conference of the Living Forces of the Nation.

In 2003, the National Center for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) was reconstituted with expanded responsibilities through Law No. 2003-17 of November 11, 2003. This legislation stipulated that scientific, technical, and technological research would henceforth be conducted within national research centers under the coordination of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). The renewed NCSTR was entrusted with defining national research policy, elaborating the strategic plan for research development, and coordinating the national system of scientific research and innovation. To provide the permanent secretariat for the NCSTR, the Scientific Directorate of Technical Research (SDTR) was established, with the mandate of ensuring the implementation and

monitoring of national research policy. In 2007, this body was transformed into the National Directorate of Scientific and Technical Research (NDSTR), assuming administrative responsibility for coordinating the national research and innovation system. Law No. 2003-17 also required that each ministry incorporate a research unit within its organizational structure. For instance, the Directorate of Health Research (DHR) was created within the Ministry of Health, while the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (NIARB) was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (MALF). Membership of the NCSTR included ministries, national research centers, and national universities. The activities of the NCSTR, supported by the NDSTR, culminated in the drafting of a national policy document for research and innovation, which was subsequently revised and adopted as the Research Policy Act (RPA, 2013). This policy framework was reinforced in 2008 by: (i) a draft decree establishing the Beninese Agency for the Promotion of Scientific and Technical Research (BAPSTR), (ii) a draft law instituting a code of ethics for scientific and technical research, and (iii) a draft decree creating the National Fund for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (NFSRTI). In 2011, the NCSTR advanced a proposal to separate research from the education sector; however, this initiative was unsuccessful, and the research system continues to function as a sub-sector of education.

All of these measures have contributed somewhat to the increase in the number of Beninese social science experts and research grants in Benin. The number of Beninese agricultural researchers rose from 121 in 2000 to 156 in 2011 (Allagbe & Stads, 2014). Over the same period, spending on agricultural R&D doubled, increasing from €4.31 million <sup>8</sup> in 2000 to €8.78 million in 2011. The proportion of agricultural GDP allocated to this expenditure increased from 0.43% to 0.62%. Research funding was further reinforced by the establishment of the National Fund for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (NFSRTI) in 2012. This fund was created by the government to provide financial support for the national research system. Placed under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation (MHESRI), its primary function was to mobilize the resources required to sustain the research system and to allocate funding for projects undertaken by national researchers. The NFSRTI introduced selection criteria designed to promote multidisciplinary research initiatives, with particular emphasis on projects incorporating social science disciplines such as innovation economics, behavioral economics, energy economics, and natural resource economics. Moreover, within public

universities, the social sciences have emerged as the most predominant specialized fields in which students enroll. Indeed, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCE) of UNESCO <sup>9</sup> (ISCE-2013) includes 29 specialized fields of study into which the various university training programs are classified. Among these, the three most dominant specialized fields of study in terms of student enrollment are: social and behavioral sciences (31.3% of enrollments), languages (14.7% of enrollments) and law (9% of enrollments) (DPP, 2016).

A sustained increase in student enrollment has been observed in national universities, accompanied by a persistent insufficiency in teaching and research staff. Student numbers rose from 16,000 in 1999 (Poncelet, 2003) to 98,539 in 2010 and further to 126,011 in 2020 (MHESR, 2024), reflecting an average annual growth rate of 34.4% over the past two decades. The student-faculty ratio deteriorated from one instructor per 56 students in 2007 (NISEA, 2012) to one instructor per 111 students in 2022 (Economie & Tech, 2022). This shortage of academic personnel, in the context of expanding student populations, has negatively impacted research activities within universities. As noted by Siyanbola et al. (2014), professors have increasingly reduced the time devoted to supervising research projects in favor of teaching responsibilities. In Benin, university-based research is frequently undertaken within the framework of Master's theses or doctoral dissertations. Additionally, a portion of academic research is driven by consultancy engagements with international development institutions. According to Olivier de Sardan (2011), social science research is particularly constrained by the predominance of consultancy work, which monopolizes the time and energy of academic staff.

Beginning in 2016, the newly elected government initiated a new phase of political reforms under the program "Revealing Benin", which encompassed nearly all sectors, including education and scientific research. Through its Government Action Plan (GAP 2016–2021), the administration restructured the national research system with the objective of enhancing its coordination. Among the major initiatives were the establishment of the International City of Innovation and Knowledge (ICIK), the Benin Agency for Research and Innovation (BARI), the Benin Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (BAQAHE), and the implementation of a comprehensive program to promote and strengthen higher education, scientific research, and innovation. The ICIK was designed to stimulate scientific inquiry addressing underserved or insufficiently explored needs, particularly by fostering collaborations between academic institutions and

8 We consider 1 XOF = 0.0015 EURO (€)

9 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

the private sector. BARI's mandate is to design, plan, develop, promote, and evaluate scientific research and innovation in priority sectors identified by the state. BAQAHE, in turn, is tasked with ensuring the quality of higher education across public and private institutions, in accordance with the guidelines, norms, and standards established by the National Education Council (NEC), created in 2018 by Decree No. 2018-395 of August 29, 2018, and subsequently revised by Decree No. 2023-411 of July 26, 2023. The cumulative investment in these initiatives exceeded €645.3 million, according to the December 2020 report on the implementation of the GAP 2016–2021. These measures are expected to yield improvements in the quality of research across both the social sciences and other disciplines, while fostering stronger linkages among researchers, developers, and policymakers in Benin. For the period 2021–2026, the government has planned an allocation of €527.81 million to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) within the framework of the GAP. However, according to the National Research and Innovation Policy (NRIP) 2022–2032, the MHESR typically dedicates less than 5% of its budget to research and innovation, amounting to €26.5 million of the GAP allocation.

In summary, Benin continues to lack a stable institutional framework for the coordination of social science research, as well as an effective mechanism for engagement with policymakers and the private sector. The entity initially mandated with overseeing the national research system was the National Directorate of Scientific and Technical Research (NDSTR), which was transformed into the General Directorate for Research and Innovation (GDRI) in 2020 (Sewanoude & Hinsou, 2021), under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). Nevertheless, the activities of the GDRI remain largely invisible within the sector. Since 2016, the government has undertaken reforms aimed at establishing a more coherent regulatory and institutional framework for research coordination. In this context, institutions such as the International City of Innovation and Knowledge (ICIK) and the Benin Agency for Research and Innovation (BARI) were created (Benin Presidency, 2020). These initiatives are motivated by the ambition to foster a conducive environment for strengthening linkages among researchers, policymakers, and private sector stakeholders.

The reforms introduced from 2016 onward also reshaped the governance structures of national universities. Notably, the election of rectors, vice-rectors, members of university governing boards, deans, directors, vice-deans, and deputy directors of teaching and research units

was abolished. This measure was formalized through Decree No. 2018-441 of September 20, 2018, which outlined transitional provisions for the implementation of governance reforms in public universities in Benin. The reform pursued two principal objectives: first, to reinforce political oversight of the administrative and financial organs of universities; and second, to mitigate corruption while fostering enhanced performance among academic and research staff. Although the reform contributed to improved coordination of teaching activities within universities, it simultaneously intensified the administrative burden associated with national research funding mechanisms, thereby increasing dependence on external sources of research financing.

Among the prevailing constraints confronting the higher education and scientific research sector in Benin are student strikes, union mobilizations, and terrorism. Student strikes and union actions have historically disrupted academic activities across all national universities, notably during 2014–2015, when prolonged mobilizations paralyzed institutional functioning (Tessy & Nouhouayi, 2020). These collective movements resulted in delays in the implementation of research projects and, consequently, diminished scientific output at the national level. With respect to terrorism, Benin shares borders with countries that have experienced recurrent jihadist attacks for several years, including Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria. This regional security context has heightened risks of instability and vulnerability in certain northern areas of Benin. The first terrorist incidents were recorded in May 2019, with subsequent attacks occurring in 2021 and 2022 (Madore, 2022). As a result, socio-economic survey activities in the affected regions have significantly declined.

In 2010, national universities accounted for more than half of Benin's scientific output published in international journals (Gaillard, 2010). This outcome was primarily driven by a single incentive mechanism: the promotion requirements for faculty members, which are regulated by the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (AMCHE). These regulations emphasize, in particular, the number of Master's and doctoral students supervised, publications in indexed journals, the number of co-authors, and the relative position of scholars within author lists. To this day, AMCHE continues to serve as the principal incentive structure for research productivity in national universities and research centers. In 2017, Benin recorded approximately 1,451 researchers and faculty members across all disciplines who were registered within the various AMCHE ranks. Table 1 presents the distribution of these academic staff members by rank.

**Table 1.1. Number of researchers and teacher-researchers in national universities and national research centers in Benin in 2017**

Agents	AMCHE grades								Total	
	A/AR		MA/CR		MC/MR		PT/DR			
	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%
Researchers	27	19.70	49	35.76	53	38.68	8	5.84	137	100
Teacher-researchers	409	31.12	348	26.48	412	31.35	145	11.03	1314	100
Total	436	29.28	397	26.66	465	31.23	153	10.27	1451	100

Eff.: Number of employees; %: Share of total staff; A=Assistant; MA=Assistant Professor; MC=Senior Lecturer; PT=Full Professor; AR=Research Associate; CR=Research Fellow; MR=Senior Research Fellow; DR=Research Director

Source: National Research and Innovation Policy Document (NRIP, 2022–2032).

Beyond the framework of AMCHE (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education), faculty members are granted a research bonus equivalent to 8% of their salary upon the publication of articles derived from their research in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Another significant incentive mechanism is the Interdisciplinary and Interfaculty Research Competitive Fund Program (RCFP), administered by the Scientific Council of the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) between 2007 and 2021.

This program entailed the competitive and multidisciplinary selection and funding of research projects submitted by TEAMS (Together Each Achieves More). A research TEAM is constituted by faculty members drawn from multiple faculties or schools at the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), who in turn recruit Master’s and doctoral students. The program provided three-year funding designed to cover expenditures related to equipment, fieldwork, doctoral stipends, and research grants for Master’s theses. It also encouraged the pursuit of complementary funding from national and international organizations. During the first funding cycle (2007–2010), five teams were selected and received a total of €416,721.53. The second cycle (2012–2014) supported 16 teams with €1,372,644.78, while the third cycle (2019–2021) allocated approximately €1,380,500.91 to 16 teams. The disciplinary domains targeted in this latter phase included: natural and agricultural sciences; economics and management; humanities; law, political science, and administration; mathematics, physics, and chemistry; human medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, and veterinary medicine; engineering sciences and technologies; and sports and physical activity sciences and technologies. The University of Parakou has implemented a similar, though smaller-scale initiative, entitled the University of Parakou Competitive Research and Innovation Fund Program (CRIFP-UP). This program is designed to support research projects undertaken by the university’s faculty members. The 2019–2021 cycle funded eight projects, while the 2022–2025 cycle is set to fund four projects,

organized around three thematic areas: “value chains and endogenous knowledge,” “forestry and climate change,” and “land, transhumance, and digital technology.”

National universities benefit from multiple sources of technical and financial assistance, notably the Belgian Academy for Research and Higher Education (BARHE), which in 2020 marked 25 years of academic and scientific collaboration with the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC). BARHE’s support is directed toward adapting university programs to the Beninese context, enhancing pedagogical effectiveness, and strengthening institutional infrastructure and community services. Since 2003, BARHE has financed more than 16 research projects across diverse domains, including fisheries, medicine, agriculture, and road safety. These initiatives have been jointly led by Beninese and Belgian faculty researchers. According to Nicaise (2020), BARHE has significantly contributed to the expansion of scientific output at UAC. The number of doctoral students trained increased from an average of 50 per year in 2005 to 150 per year in 2020, while the average number of published articles rose from 150 annually in 2005 to 750 annually in 2020. Beyond BARHE, additional interventions have been provided by the World Bank, the French Development Agency, and other international partners in support of national universities (CurieXplore, 2022).

It is essential to conclude this section on the influence of the political context on Benin’s research system by highlighting the BMD (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctorate) framework, a major reform in higher education. Adopted in 2010 through Decree No. 2010-272, this system of Anglo-Saxon origin seeks to harmonize university degrees at the international level and to facilitate the mobility of both students and faculty. It places emphasis on student support, access to multidisciplinary pathways, and the personalization of academic training according to individual projects.

The BMD framework has influenced research by enabling greater mobility, fostering international collaborations, and expanding opportunities for access to external funding. Nonetheless, it continues to encounter significant challenges, particularly with regard to adapting pedagogical and academic requirements to the specificities of the local context (Assogbadjo et al., 2016).

## 1.5 Historical and Cultural Context of Benin and its Impact on Social Science Research

As highlighted in the subsection analyzing the political context, the education and research system in Benin has undergone multiple reorganizations since independence, evolving in response to successive political transformations (Lauwerier et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the trajectory of education and research development continues to exhibit enduring imprints of the colonial legacy. This assertion can be substantiated by three key factors. First, Benin possesses more than forty local languages, none of which policymakers have succeeded in institutionalizing as an official language (Lauwerier et al., 2013). Moreover, languages with broad geographical reach—such as Fon, Yoruba, Bariba, Goun, Adja, and Ayizo—have not been elevated to the status of national languages of instruction. French, the language of the colonial administration, has remained the official medium in governance, education, and research. Second, research in Benin continues to be heavily influenced by development aid, which shapes budgetary allocations and directs research agendas, often without sufficient consideration for the priority concerns of local communities and scholars (Gaillard & Waast, 1988; Bierschenk & Mongbo, 1995; Ondo, 2004). Third, social science research in Benin largely depends on theories and paradigms formulated within Western contexts, which diverge significantly from African realities. According to Ondo (2004), this reliance contributes to the limited applicability of scientific knowledge to local development.

One of the significant historical factors that contributed to the expansion of social science research in Benin is the period of democratic renewal (Bierschenk & Mongbo, 1995). Benin represents a notable case of transition from a socialist to a democratic regime, achieved through extensive urban popular mobilization during 1989–1990 (Allen, 1992). Following the economic and political collapse of the socialist regime in 1989—marked by a year-long strike across the civil service—the Beninese government was compelled to seek a resolution to the crisis. The urgent need for financial resources led the

state to approach the World Bank; however, access to Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) funds required compliance with conditions of democracy and good governance (Lavigne, 2005). Consequently, President Mathieu Kérékou agreed to abandon the socialist regime. At the same time, the population mobilized vigorously to articulate its demand for radical political change. Under these combined internal and external pressures, the National Conference of Active Forces was convened (Mongbo, 1995; Lavigne, 2005). A democratic system was subsequently adopted, and a Prime Minister was elected to oversee the transition. It was during this transitional period, beginning in 1990, that liberalism was introduced. This political transformation provided renewed impetus to social science research in Benin, as evidenced by the steady increase in publications on Benin in the social sciences since 1990 (Bierschenk & Mongbo, 1995).

The non-governmental organization (NGO) sector began to expand in tandem with the democratization of the political system. During the early 1990s, the number of NGOs grew substantially. By 1997, Benin already counted 966 active NGOs (Pirotte & Poncelet, 2002). Of these, more than two-thirds (657) were concentrated in the Atlantique and Littoral departments in southern Benin. The principal domains of intervention, ranked by importance, included: formal education (230 NGOs), agriculture and livestock production (217), farmer training and support for village associations (189), health and nutrition (184), and environmental protection (163) (Pirotte & Poncelet, 2022). Today, Benin has more than 1000 NGOs, of which 749 are formally registered<sup>10</sup>.

Among the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in research and development activities in Benin, notable examples include the International Circle for the Promotion of Creation (ICPC), the Beninese Center for the Environment and Economic and Social Development (BCEESD), the Research and Support Group for Local Development (RSGLD), the Center for Study and Action Research for Integrated Sustainable Development (CSARISD), the Center for Research and Expertise for Local Development (CRELD), and the Regional Center for Research and Education for Integrated Development (RCREID-NGO), among others.

In contrast to certain African countries such as Nigeria, where the higher education system does not formally designate research as a principal mission of universities (Egbetokun et al., 2020), national universities in Benin explicitly perform a dual function: the advancement of scientific knowledge through research and its transmission to students through teaching. According to Decree No. 2021-379 of July 14, 2021, public universities in

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.oscbenin.org/>

Benin are defined as institutions of a scientific, technical, and cultural character. Their missions encompass the training of professionals, the promotion of scientific research, and contributions to the development of the national economy. Each university is organized into faculties, schools, institutes, research centers, laboratories, and libraries. Furthermore, every national university in Benin is equipped with a University Scientific Council (USC), which functions as an advisory body on issues related to academic programs, research, innovation, and the professional development of faculty members. In accordance with Decree No. 2016-208 of April 4, 2016, the Rector presides over the USC, while the Vice-Rector for University Research serves as its secretary. The USC is responsible for:

1. to formulate and submit for adoption the university's policy on research and innovation;
2. to evaluate the scholarly records of faculty members with a view to recommending academic promotion, reclassification, or the conferment of honorary distinctions;
3. to examine all matters pertaining to the academic equivalence and recognition of higher education qualifications;
4. to contribute to the design and advancement of national research programs, taking into account the socio-economic and cultural development imperatives of Benin.
5. to endorse the approvals issued by the expert committee concerning research and innovation projects and programs;
6. to validate the university's research budget proposal within the broader framework of institutional budget preparation;
7. to evaluate the activity reports submitted by the sectoral scientific committees; (iv) to foster the production and dissemination of scholarly publications;
8. to review accreditation dossiers of central research laboratories or equivalent structures;
9. to examine and authorize requests for training leave within the framework of capacity-building for trainers;
10. to identify, assess, and submit the staffing needs for teacher-researchers and researchers in training and research institutions;

11. to scrutinize and validate, prior to their transmission to the national advisory council for higher education, proposals for university training programs and the corresponding nomenclature of diplomas awarded.

National universities in Benin are accessible to all individuals, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or social origin, provided they meet the requisite qualifications. This inclusivity has facilitated international collaborations in both teaching and research with partner institutions abroad. Moreover, the State guarantees to faculty, research, and administrative staff, as well as to national and international students within university premises, the enjoyment of traditional academic freedoms and privileges (Decree No. 2021-379 of July 14, 2021). It may thus be inferred that universities in Benin provide a favorable environment for research, not only within the social sciences but also across other disciplinary domains. Nevertheless, there remains limited information and insufficient empirical evidence concerning the effectiveness and actual contribution of university-based research to national development.

Benin comprises approximately 46 ethnic groups, each distinguished by specific cultural and religious values (NISEA, 2016a). This ethnic heterogeneity constitutes an undeniable source of cultural wealth for the nation, yet it presents both advantages and constraints for social science research (Egbetokun et al., 2020). The country is unified through the use of French as its official language. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of the population remains functionally illiterate in French. Approximately 46% of individuals aged 15 and above are illiterate (World Bank, 2023) or unable to communicate effectively in French, with this proportion rising to 62.7% in rural areas (NISEA & AFRISTAT, 2019). At the national level, there are no significant linguistic barriers to collaboration among researchers from different ethnic groups or within research teams, and only minimal barriers exist at the regional level. However, language-related challenges emerge during data collection from local populations and in the dissemination of research findings to them, often necessitating the recruitment of local interpreters.

Furthermore, according to the regulatory framework governing higher education and scientific research in Benin, interprofessional collaboration among researchers in universities and research centers is free from religious influence. Consequently, the conduct of social science research in Benin is not impeded by religious diversity.

## 1.6 Economic Context of Benin and its Impact on Social Science Research

Benin, designated as a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank in 2020, has registered substantial progress in economic growth over the past five years (IMF, 2022). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GDP growth rate accelerated from 1.8% in 2015 to 6.9% in 2019 (World Bank, 2023). With the onset of the pandemic, growth declined to 3.8% in 2020 but subsequently rebounded impressively to 7.2% in 2021 (World Bank, 2023). This trajectory can be attributed to reforms implemented under the 2016–2021 Government Action Program (GAP), the expansion of agricultural production—particularly cotton, the country’s principal export—and improvements in electricity generation capacity. Despite these gains, public expenditure on education, with a significant focus on higher education and scientific research, experienced a slight decline during the same period, falling from 3.5% of GDP in 2017 to 3% in 2020 (World Bank, 2023). This reduction may have constrained scientific productivity in Benin. For instance, Scimago data (Chart 1.2) indicate that Benin’s position in terms of scientific output declined modestly over this period, dropping from a percentile rank of 46.65 in 2017 to 44.16 in 2020.

Poverty remained relatively pervasive despite sustained economic growth. In 2019, 38.5% of the Beninese population lived below the poverty threshold (estimated at €376.1) (NISEA, 2020). Nonetheless, this reflects a modest improvement compared to 2015, when the poverty rate stood at 39.3%, representing a decline of 0.8% between 2015 and 2019 (NISEA, 2020). Poverty was more pronounced in rural areas, with 44.2% of the rural population affected in 2019, compared to 31.4% in urban areas. According to Baye (2018), the persistence of high poverty levels in Benin can be attributed to structural constraints such as limited economic diversification, the predominance of the informal sector, low agricultural productivity, and elevated unemployment and underemployment, estimated at over 50% of the working-age population. Moreover, the country is characterized by a markedly young demographic profile with a high dependency ratio. In 2015, 42.2% of the population was under the age of 15, while the dependency ratio reached 81.2%, signifying considerable pressure on the economically active population.

Benin is categorized as a country with low human development. Its Human Development Index (HDI) in 2019 was 0.545, positioning it 158th among 189 countries and territories (UNDP, 2020). This level reflects an improvement compared to 2014, when the HDI was 0.364, corresponding to an average annual increase of 1.66% between 2014 and 2019. The progress was driven primarily

by advances in the health sector and, to a lesser extent, by gains in economic growth (UNDP, 2015). When inequality is factored in, the HDI stood at 0.343 in 2019 (UNDP, 2020), indicating that 37.1% of Benin’s potential human development is eroded by inequality. Nonetheless, Benin’s HDI remains above the average for countries classified as having low human development (0.513), while still below the sub-Saharan African regional average of 0.547 in 2019 (UNDP, 2020).

This relatively low level of human development underscores the limited participation in scientific research. In 2014, Benin recorded between 80 and 90 researchers per million inhabitants across all disciplines (Allagbe & Stads, 2014), whereas Nigeria, Senegal, and Cameroon reported 119, 661, and 244 researchers per million inhabitants, respectively, as early as 2008 (UA-NEPAD, 2010; Egbetokun et al., 2020). Furthermore, this Chart declined in Benin to approximately 64 researchers per million inhabitants in 2022 (Macrotrends, 2023), a trend attributable to demographic pressures combined with the relatively stagnant number of researchers over the past decade.

The private sector in Benin continues to be characterized by the predominance of informal enterprises and is largely composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Baye, 2018). SMEs occupy a central position in the Beninese economy, accounting for approximately 98% of businesses and contributing nearly half of the national GDP (ITC, 2020). In addition, they provide employment opportunities for vulnerable social groups, including women, youth, and rural populations (ITC, 2020). In 2019, Benin’s Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) score was 45.82, placing the country 125th among 141 economies (Schwab, 2019). Between 2017 and 2019, the GCI score rose significantly from 43.56 to 45.82 (Knoema, 2019). The business environment has also shown improvement, as reflected in the “Doing Business” ranking, where Benin advanced from 155th position in 2017 to 149th in 2020 out of 190 economies (World Bank Group, 2020). Nevertheless, despite these positive developments, the private sector remains almost entirely absent from research and innovation financing mechanisms in Benin (CurieXplore, 2022).

Benin has registered notable progress in the development of its electricity infrastructure. According to World Bank data (2023), the national rate of access to electricity increased from 29.6% in 2015 to 41.4% in 2020. Nevertheless, the country continues to lag behind the sub-Saharan African average of 48.2% in 2020. Statistical evidence further highlights pronounced disparities in the spatial distribution of electricity infrastructure. In 2020, access to electricity reached 66.1% in urban areas, compared to only 18.2% in rural areas. Consequently,

electricity remains inaccessible to more than half of the Beninese population, particularly in peri-urban and rural zones. This challenge is compounded by the poor quality of electricity services (Schwab, 2019). Such infrastructural limitations constitute a significant constraint on Benin's national research system, particularly by restricting internet connectivity and limiting the adoption of modern data collection technologies in the social sciences. A similar situation is observed with respect to water supply infrastructure. Although average service coverage increased from 48.5% in 2016 to 71.5% in 2020 (MEM, 2021), 67% of the population continues to rely on unsafe drinking water (Schwab, 2019).

With respect to the telecommunications sector, mobile phone subscriptions have expanded markedly over the past two decades, largely supplanting fixed-line connections. According to World Bank data (2013), mobile penetration rose from 1% of the population in 2000 to 85% in 2015, and subsequently reached 98% in 2021, slightly surpassing the sub-Saharan African average of 93% in the same year.

Conversely, fixed-line subscriptions, which accounted for 1% of the population in 2000, increased marginally to 2% in 2015 before declining to 0% in 2021. Over the past two decades, however, Benin has experienced substantial growth in internet usage. The proportion of internet users rose from virtually 0% in 2000 to 11% in 2015, and subsequently to 26% in 2021. Fixed-line internet subscriptions remain far less prevalent, representing less than 1% of the population. These subscriptions even declined further, from 0.67% in 2015 to 0.16% in 2021. Overall, internet connectivity in Benin remains limited and constitutes a significant impediment to social science research. In 2022, the country ranked 118th out of 131 economies with respect to access to and adoption of modern information and communication technologies (Portulans Institute, 2022).

Despite the reforms and initiatives undertaken by the State to strengthen the Beninese education system, the deteriorated condition of certain infrastructure and teaching resources in national universities remains a persistent concern. Surveys conducted at the University of Abomey-Calavi and the University of Parakou revealed, among other issues, the defective state of numerous seats and sound systems in lecture halls (Educ'Action, 2022). This situation compels some students to attend lectures from outside the halls, through doors or windows. Compounding this problem are the dilapidated state of laboratories, the obsolescence of existing research equipment, and the scarcity of modern instruments, laboratory supplies, and scientific literature. Offices of academic staff, laboratories, and libraries are inadequately furnished with reference works and specialized scholarly

journals, thereby constraining the capacity for scientific production within national universities.

Social science research has demonstrated its relevance in addressing crises that have affected Benin. For instance, the years 2007 and 2008 were marked by a food crisis characterized by the depletion of stocks of essential commodities in the markets of major urban centers, resulting in significant price increases for these products (Adanguidi, 2010). The year 2008 was particularly critical, as maize prices reached unprecedented record levels (Houngbo, 2013). In response, the Beninese government decided in July 2008 to establish outlets for staple foods such as maize, rice, and sorghum across all 77 communes of the country, through the National Pilot Store Program of the National Office for Food Security Support (NOFSS). These outlets, referred to as "model shops," were designed to sell food products at benchmark prices. Subsequently, social science researchers conducted studies to assess the impacts of the model shop strategy and to propose measures for its improvement (Adanguidi, 2010; Houngbo, 2013). In addition, NOFSS created a specialized social science research unit tasked with evaluating agricultural campaigns and monitoring food prices in major urban markets, with the objective of forecasting future price trends and informing market stakeholders as well as policy decisions in the agricultural sector.

Another illustration of the relevance of social science research is its contribution to understanding the COVID-19 pandemic in Benin. The emergence of the pandemic in December 2019 generated significant interest among social science scholars, who undertook studies with direct implications for public policy. For instance, Houessou et al. (2021) examined the effects of the government-imposed COVID-19 cordon sanitaire, designed to isolate high-risk areas from the rest of the country. Their findings revealed that the four pillars of food security—availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability—were disrupted both within and beyond the cordon sanitaire. Houessou et al. (2021) also investigated public compliance with preventive measures, including mask-wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and avoidance of face-touching, as promoted by the government to mitigate viral transmission. They concluded that broad dissemination of accurate information on COVID-19 would enhance compliance, while targeted interventions were particularly necessary to improve adherence among younger cohorts. In addition, Maccaro et al. (2022) presented findings on vaccine acceptance among the local population. Their study indicated that widespread reluctance toward vaccination was rooted in the persistence of traditional medical practices, which were perceived as more credible than vaccines. Moreover, rumors of neocolonial agendas

underlying the pandemic threat further exacerbated this reluctance.

## 1.7 International Collaboration and its Impact on Social Science Research

Benin maintains relations with approximately 161 international organizations represented within its territory (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018), thereby enhancing its regional and international visibility. Among these organizations, several exert a direct influence on the national social science research system, particularly through the development projects and programs they initiate and finance. Indeed, a substantial share of social science research in Benin is conducted in the context of, or subsequent to, such development initiatives (Bierschenk & Mongbo, 1995). International R&D organizations with which Benin collaborates include the French Development Agency (FDA), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Development Bank (ADB), United Nations agencies, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WCACARD), the French Research Institute for Development (FRID), among others. Benin is thus highly dependent on international funding for its R&D activities, with more than 50% of such funding originating from international organizations (NPCA, 2014). It is also noteworthy that, despite its visibility and potential to supply highly qualified human resources to international organizations more broadly, the country encounters persistent challenges in advancing its professionals within the international civil service. Benin's representation in both regional and international organizations remains limited, particularly in positions of authority and responsibility (NISEA, 2013; Gakpetor, 2016).

Benin sustains international partnerships that trace back to the colonial era. For instance, the French Research Institute for Development (FRID), formerly known as OOSTR during the colonial period, has become a significant R&D partner for Benin. An FRID office operated in Benin between 1983 and 1991, conducting research in hydrology, health, and anthropology (FRID, 2023). The institute's presence was reinforced from 1995 onward, culminating in the signing of the first Headquarters Agreement with Benin on September 17, 2003, for a six-year term. Building on the positive outcomes of this cooperation—reflected in scientific output, co-publications with Beninese researchers, the training of Master's students, and the joint supervision of doctoral theses under international co-supervision

frameworks—the two parties renewed their collaboration with a Headquarters Agreement on April 6, 2017, for a five-year period. Another example is the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (FARCID), established in 1984 through the merger of nine colonial research institutes organized around tropical agricultural sectors (FARCID, 2023). These institutes included IRCT, ITAR, and IROO. Benin has since become an important hub for FARCID, which collaborates with key stakeholders in the national research system, including the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences (FAS) of the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), the University of Parakou, NIARB, the Cotonou Entomological Research Center (CERC-Cotonou), and IITA. Partnerships with international R&D organizations have yielded several benefits for Benin. Numerous Beninese researchers have received training abroad in specialized fields, scholarships for Master's and Doctoral students have been awarded, national universities have benefited from staff development initiatives, and national laboratories and research centers have acquired technical and material support (Mêgnigbêto, 2014).

Benin is also a member of professional education and research networks in Africa that contribute to the advancement of its research system in the social sciences as well as other disciplines. These networks provide expanded opportunities for collaboration among African universities and research centers, facilitate greater mobility for academic staff and students within the continent, enhance the visibility of African scholars' research outputs, enable access to competitive research funding, and promote participation in training workshops and knowledge exchange among African researchers. Notable examples include the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Consortium for Economic Research in Africa (CERA), the West and Central African Research and Education Network (WCAREN), the Forum of African Women Educators (FAWE), the African Centre of Excellence (ACE), the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP), the African Network of Vocational Training Institutions and Funds (ANVTIF), the Africa-Germany Scientific Excellence Network (AGSEN), the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFCA), and the African Network for Science and Technology Policy Studies (ANSTPS). These networks play a critical role in building and reinforcing the institutional, human, and financial capacities of research systems in member states. Several of them provide targeted training and grant opportunities in the social sciences. For instance, CERA's training and grant programs are specifically designed to expand the pool of economics researchers in sub-Saharan Africa.

CERA supports postgraduate studies in economics departments and awards annual economics research

grants to African researchers. Benin is also a member of the Council of Social Science Development & Research in Africa (CSSDRA)<sup>11</sup>, a pan-African organization supporting social science research, founded in 1973 by African researchers and based in Dakar, Senegal. Its objectives are to:

1. develop social sciences in Africa by mobilizing the African social science community to undertake policy-oriented basic research from a perspective that meets the needs of African populations;
2. to promote an African network for the dissemination of information in the field of social sciences;
3. encourage cooperation and collaboration between African universities and social science research, training and publishing organizations;
4. to promote balanced representation and participation across genders, generations, sub-regions, languages and disciplines in its activities.

Collaborations between Beninese researchers and the Council of Social Science Development & Research in Africa (CSSDRA) take multiple forms. CSSDRA provides support for research projects that involve scholars from diverse African countries, including Benin. It also convenes regular workshops and seminars that enable Beninese researchers to present their work, engage in intellectual exchange, and establish collaborative ties with their continental counterparts. In addition, CSSDRA offers research grants that facilitate the implementation of scholarly projects, including funding opportunities specifically targeted at young Beninese researchers seeking to advance their studies and research activities. Moreover, CSSDRA disseminates the outcomes of research conducted by African scholars, including those from Benin, thereby enhancing the visibility of their work and ensuring its accessibility to a broader audience.

Benin hosts a range of regional and international private universities that contribute to the diversification and strengthening of its higher education and research landscape. The African School of Economics (ASE), a pan-African private institution established in collaboration with Princeton University (USA), is devoted to advancing economic research and training specialists in the social and economic sciences. Another example is the Interregional Institute of Industrial Engineering, Biotechnology and Applied Sciences (IIIEBAS-AFRICA), which maintains collaborative partnerships with several international universities, including the University of Strasbourg (France), the University of Leipzig (Germany),

and Saint Louis University of Brussels (Belgium). In addition, national universities have entered into partnership agreements with multiple foreign institutions to promote research and academic training. The University of Abomey-Calavi, for instance, has established agreements with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), the University of Regina (Spain), the Technical University of Munich (Germany), and the Gansu Institute of Political Science and Law in China, focusing on training, research, and academic mobility programs.

International collaborations have significantly contributed to enhancing the quality of scientific output in Benin. The number of articles authored by Beninese researchers in international journals increased markedly after 2000 as a result of such collaborations, and this upward trend persists (Monge-Nájera et al., 2020). Between 2000 and 2017, Beninese scholars published approximately 4,385 documents indexed in the Web of Science database, accounting for 0.58% of all African publications indexed therein. Of these, 3,565 documents were produced in collaboration with at least one foreign researcher, representing 81.3% of the total scholarly output of Beninese researchers (Cerdeira et al., 2023). Consequently, more than four out of five publications are co-authored with foreign researchers or scholars residing outside Benin. Beninese scientists have established collaborative ties with colleagues from 84 countries across all continents (Mêgnigbêto, 2014). France, the former colonial power, constitutes Benin's principal partner, accounting for 30.6% of publications, followed by Belgium (13.73%), the United States (9.32%), the United Kingdom (6.42%), and the Netherlands (6.3%) (Mêgnigbêto, 2014; Monge-Nájera et al., 2020). Within Africa, Nigeria and Burkina Faso are the leading partners, contributing 5.92% and 5.54% of joint publications, respectively. Beninese researchers are most frequently cited as first or corresponding authors. Articles produced independently by Beninese scholars, without foreign collaboration, average 6.7 citations, whereas internationally co-authored articles receive an average of 19 citations—2.8 times higher than independent publications (Monge-Nájera et al., 2020). This pattern underscores Benin's heavy reliance on external resources and highlights the absence of a self-sufficient national research system, both financially and technically. Moreover, the country's scientific output remains strongly dominated by its former colonizer.

Between 2005 and 2009, approximately 852 institutions contributed to the scientific output of Benin (Mêgnigbêto, 2014). The leading contributors during this period, in order of significance, were the University of Abomey-Calavi, FRID Cotonou, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), FRID Montpellier,

11 CSSDRA (CODESRIA): <https://codesria.org/about-us-codesria/>

the Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp (Belgium), the Ministry of Health, AfricaRice, FARCID Montpellier, NIARB, and the Catholic University of Louvain (Mègnigbêto, 2014). The Beninese scientific publishing sector encompasses at least 751 journals, with the most prominent focusing on health and agronomy (Mègnigbêto, 2012). These include, among others: Cahiers Santé, Malaria Journal, Médecine Tropicale, African Journal of Biotechnology, Biocontrol Science and Technology, Journal of Essential Oil Research, Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment, and Crop Protection, as well as the International Journal of Pest Management and Entomologia Experimentalis et Applicata. It is noteworthy that some of these journals (such as Crop Protection and the International Journal of Pest Management) explicitly welcome contributions addressing the socio-economic dimensions of their respective fields of inquiry.

Although Benin is a Francophone country, the majority of its scientific publications are produced in English (79.25%) (Mègnigbêto, 2012), while only one-fifth are

published in French. It is also noteworthy that none of the scientific journals based in Benin—such as *Annales des Sciences Agronomiques*, *Bulletin de la Recherche Agronomique du Bénin*, *Sciences and Technologies for Sustainable Development*, *Ben Géo: Revue Semestrielle de Géographie du Bénin*, *Les Cahiers du BCSTR*, and *Revue Spéciale des Journées Scientifiques de la FLAHS*—are indexed in international bibliometric databases such as Scopus or Web of Science.

Moreover, private universities in Benin are seldom represented in the affiliation lists of authors contributing to scientific publications. Benin's pronounced dependence on external stakeholders can be attributed to several structural constraints, including insufficient funding, limited motivation among researchers, weaknesses in the institutional and legislative framework, and inadequate coordination between national research priorities and actual research activities (Mègnigbêto, 2014).

## CHAPTER 2

# MAPPING OF INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN BENIN

### Key Messages

- The social science research system in Benin is sustained by just under five hundred (500) active organizations, comprising thirty-two (32) higher education institutions, approximately one hundred (100) civil society organizations, nearly two hundred (200) media structures, fourteen (14) national government agencies, twenty-two (22) research institutes, eighteen (18) consulting and expertise firms, and forty (40) research funding bodies.
- Higher education institutions and research institutes constitute the most influential stakeholders in terms of scientific production and knowledge development.
- Analysis of the interactions among categories of stakeholders indicates that higher education institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations maintain the most extensive relationships with other stakeholders within Benin's social science research system.
- Researchers emphasize the limited production and dissemination of policy briefs and fact sheets directed at policymakers. They contend that the majority of social science research in Benin is published as scholarly articles primarily targeting academic audiences rather than practitioners and non-academic stakeholders.
- The methodology employed in the implementation of the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) framework combines literature reviews with bibliometric analyses of indexing databases, semi-structured interviews with key informants guided by interview protocols, and distinct quantitative surveys administered to researchers, research administrators, policymakers, and media professionals through questionnaires. In addition to the 36 key informants interviewed, the final sample of the quantitative surveys included 320 researchers and research professors, 39 research administrators in research-producing institutions, 9 research administrators in oversight bodies, 8 policymakers, and 34 investigative journalists from the media sector.

### 2.1 Categories of Stakeholders in the Social Science Research System in Benin

The objective of this mapping exercise is to systematically identify the stakeholders engaged in social science research, with the purpose of constructing a representative sample of all stakeholders within the system for the Doing Research Assessment (DRA). These stakeholders are involved in the financing, production, dissemination, valorization, and utilization of social science research outputs.

In this chapter, we examine the structure of the social science research system, its modes of operation, and the perceptions of stakeholders regarding social science research in Benin, alongside the strengths and weaknesses of the system and the opportunities and

threats it encounters. We also outline the stakeholder sampling strategy and the detailed methodology employed in the implementation of the DRA phase. In Benin, seven categories of stakeholders in social science research can be distinguished, namely:

1. Higher education institutions, encompassing national universities, religious universities, and private universities accredited by the State and offering programs at least at the Master's level;
2. Civil society, comprising non-governmental development organizations (both national and international) as well as professional associations;
3. Media, including print and audiovisual press outlets;
4. Government, encompassing ministries and public agencies;

5. National and international research institutes;
6. Private sector, consisting primarily of research and consulting firms;
7. Organizations responsible for financing or managing research funding.

For certain categories, such as civil society and the private sector, the multiplicity of organizations renders it particularly challenging to compile an exhaustive inventory of all stakeholders with precise data on the

number of social science researchers they employ. Notwithstanding this difficulty, a representative list encompassing all categories of stakeholders in the social science research system in Benin was established through a multi-stakeholder dialogue convened on May 25, 2023, in which all categories were represented, complemented by consultation of available national organizational databases and contributions from several resource persons. In total, 424 organizations engaged in social science research in Benin were identified. Table 2.1 presents the distribution of stakeholders by category, together with a summary of their respective roles.

**Table 2.1. Approximate number of stakeholders in social science research in Benin**

Categories of stakeholders	Number of stakeholders	Proportion of stakeholders	Roles in research
Higher education institutions	32	7.55 a	
National Universities	3	9.38 b	Training, production, distribution, use and funding
Private universities	29	90.63 b	Training and production
Civil society	101	23.82 a	
Non-Governmental Organizations	60	59.41 b	Use, production and distribution
Professional organizations	41	40.59 b	Use
Media	197	46.46 a	
Print media outlets	92	46.70 b	Production and distribution
Broadcasting	90	45.69 b	Production and distribution
Television	15	7.61 b	Production and distribution
Government	14	3.30 a	
Ministries	8	57.14 b	Regulation, financing and use
Public agencies	6	42.86 b	Regulation, financing and use
Research Institutes	22	5.19 a	
National Research Institutes	13	59.09 b	Production, distribution, use, financing and training
International research institutes	9	40.91 b	Production, distribution, use, financing and training
Private sector (offices)	18	4.25 a	Production
Funding organization	40	9.43 a	
National funding organizations	1	2.50 b	Programming, mobilization, financing and use
International funding organizations	39	97.50 b	Programming, mobilization, financing and use
Total	424	100.00	

a Proportion calculated on the total number of organizations identified; b Proportion calculated on the number of organizations per corresponding category.

## Higher Education Institutions

Although higher education institutions account for only 7.55% of the stakeholders within the social science research system in Benin (Table 2.1), they constitute the most significant category in terms of the production of articles and other scientific outputs. Two types of higher education institutions can be distinguished: national or public universities and private universities. The national universities engaged in social science research in Benin are multidisciplinary in orientation. There are only three such institutions: the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), the University of Parakou (UP), and the National University of Agriculture (NUA). These universities provide both general and specialized programs across a wide range of fields. Collectively, they encompass 43 entities (schools and faculties) in diverse areas of specialization, 25 of which are directly engaged in or host social science laboratories. The primary functions of the national universities are the training of students, researchers, and academic staff, as well as the production of scientific knowledge. To this end, each institution is equipped with a scientific council responsible, among other tasks, for coordinating training programs and research activities within the national university system.

Furthermore, national universities in Benin provide research funding, albeit on a limited scale, through competitive grant schemes designed to foster scientific innovation and support faculty-led research. They also participate in the allocation of scholarships and research grants for Master's and doctoral studies. It should be emphasized that these competitive grant programs are financed exclusively by the rectorates of the national universities. Illustrative examples include the Interdisciplinary and Interfaculty Research Competitive Grant Program (RCGP) at the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) and the Research and Innovation Competitive Grant Program (RICGP-UP) at the University of Parakou (UP). In addition, certain university departments publish scientific journals that periodically disseminate research outputs. However, it is noteworthy that none of these journals are indexed in international bibliometric databases. National universities also convene regional and international scientific conferences, which contribute to the dissemination of research findings and innovations, particularly in the social sciences, both within Benin and across the sub-region.

In addition, private universities contribute to student training within Benin's higher education system. The country hosts more than 29 state-accredited private universities. Notably, 33% of these institutions are actively engaged in social science research through structured research programs, particularly by supervising Master's and doctoral students. In this way, private

universities contribute to the national scientific output, primarily through the training and development of research personnel.

Beyond their educational mandate, certain private universities in Benin are actively engaged in the design and implementation of research programs. For instance, the African School of Economics does not confine itself to offering Master's and doctoral programs but also develops and conducts research initiatives addressing issues of social and political awareness. Nevertheless, the literature indicates that the social science output of private universities remains markedly underrepresented in both national and international scientific journals. This underrepresentation raises critical questions regarding the quality and visibility of research produced within private universities in Benin. While these institutions typically offer programs across a broad spectrum of specializations, including the social sciences, the majority are owned by commercial entities, individual stakeholders, or religious organizations. A limited number of private universities, in collaboration with international organizations, contribute to the allocation of scholarships and research grants, thereby participating in the management of research funding. It is also noteworthy that most faculty members in private universities simultaneously hold teaching positions in public universities. As a result, private universities often benefit indirectly from research conducted within public institutions, particularly in relation to curriculum development, the training of Master's students, and the supervision of theses.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) serves as the central institution responsible for regulating both public and private universities in Benin. Its mandate encompasses the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of government policy on higher education, scientific research, and innovation, in alignment with international conventions, national legislation, and the directives of the National Education Council. The MHESR is structured into several directorates, two of which are directly linked to the social sciences: the General Directorate of Higher Education (GDHE) and the General Directorate of Scientific Research and Innovation (GDSRI). The GDHE oversees higher education provision and diploma equivalencies, while the GDSRI is charged with regulating and coordinating national policy on scientific research and innovation. Research funding mechanisms within the Ministry include the remuneration of teaching and research staff, contributions to competitive research funds allocated to public universities, the provision of scholarships to support doctoral candidates in public institutions, and resources mobilized for research and innovation activities under the GDSRI.

## Civil Society

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Civil society accounts for 23.82% of the stakeholders within Benin's social science research system. It is composed of two principal categories: non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional associations. In the Beninese context, an NGO is defined as a national or foreign non-profit association established through private initiative, bringing together individuals or legal entities to undertake activities of general interest, solidarity, or voluntary cooperation for development. These organizations contribute directly or indirectly to the sustainable, participatory, and conscious improvement of living conditions among grassroots communities. In accordance with prevailing laws and regulations, their activities must exclude any form of discrimination based on race, religion, sex, or ethnicity, and they are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity. The legal registration of an NGO in Benin requires the establishment of a constituent body (such as a General Assembly or Board of Directors), which is formally recognized as the organization's governing authority.

The activities of most NGOs in Benin are predominantly financed by foreign donors, often within the framework of national programs implemented by the government and supported by external funding, and to a lesser extent by their own resources and by contributions from the State through programs aimed at supporting local community development.

Thus, the majority of NGOs in Benin are constituted as social enterprises addressing issues related to public health, nutrition, food security, environmental protection, agriculture, and community development, in alignment with international development frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Government Action Program (GAP). Benin hosts more than 1,000 national NGOs. However, no comprehensive database exists to indicate which of these organizations are actively engaged in research and development. The stakeholder mapping conducted within the framework of this study identified more than 60 NGOs currently involved in research and development, each employing at least one researcher specializing in the social sciences.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within Benin's social science research system can be classified into two functional categories. The first category comprises NGOs that primarily utilize research findings to mobilize funding and implement targeted development initiatives for the benefit of local communities. This group encompasses the majority of NGOs formally registered in Benin. The second category includes NGOs that, in addition to functioning as users of research, actively engage in the production and dissemination of social

science knowledge through their websites, professional networks, and, in certain cases, presentations at scientific conferences. It is important to underscore that the scientific output of most NGOs remains predominantly consultancy-oriented and is characterized by limited peer review and minimal publication in recognized scientific journals.

Moreover, foreign and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in sustaining the dynamism of Benin's social science research system. Their contributions include mobilizing research funding, enhancing the capacities of local researchers, and fostering international collaborations between Beninese universities and foreign academic institutions. Among these organizations is Eclasio, an NGO affiliated with the University of Liège and the Louvain Cooperative, which engages in research and development activities in Benin in partnership with public universities and local stakeholders.

Professional organizations are present in significant numbers in Benin. In many instances, they function as focal institutions for the interventions of NGOs and other development stakeholders at the local level. They also constitute important sources of primary data for social science researchers. Moreover, beyond supplying information to researchers, professional organizations utilize research outputs to guide their activities, inform decision-making processes, and advance their respective fields of expertise. A professional organization may be defined as an association of individuals or legal entities belonging to the same profession who collectively decide to unite in order to defend their interests vis-à-vis public authorities and external stakeholders, while simultaneously providing goods and services to their members.

Accordingly, professional organizations decide to pool their knowledge and activities on a permanent basis for purposes other than profit-sharing. Under the regulatory framework in force in Benin, such organizations may be freely established without prior authorization or declaration. However, they acquire legal personality only when made public by their founders. To obtain legal capacity, they must be formally registered, maintain a registered office, disclose their objectives and statutes, and be published in the Official Gazette. Similar to NGOs, professional organizations are generally administered by a management committee charged with guiding the institution in the fulfillment of its mission and in making strategic decisions. Their activities are predominantly financed through membership contributions, government support, and external donor funding. In Benin, professional organizations encompass agricultural cooperatives, producers' associations,

and bodies specific to other professions (including artisans, physicians, lawyers, among others), as well as federations and trade unions. Within the higher education sector, a notable example is the National Union of Higher Education (NUHE), which unites teacher-researchers and advocates for their demands within the academic sphere. Established in 1970, the NUHE seeks to safeguard university autonomy and promote the participation of higher education institutions in political decision-making processes.

## Media

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The media constitute 46.46% of the stakeholders identified within Benin's social science research system. They function as key vectors for the dissemination of scientific knowledge across local communities. The media contribute to enhancing the accessibility of research findings by translating them into language that is more comprehensible to the general public. They provide channels for communication and awareness-raising regarding research outputs. In this capacity, they increase the visibility of researchers and their work, while simultaneously generating public interest in scientific knowledge. Moreover, the media facilitate dialogue and debate on scientific issues of relevance, offering platforms for evidence-based advocacy directed toward policymakers. The media also play a role in scientific production by drawing attention to societal problems, thereby encouraging researchers to address them. In addition, they disseminate and render research findings accessible to users through diverse outlets, including newspapers, radio, and television programs. They thus operate as mediators of scientific research.

The media sector in Benin is governed by the High Authority for Audiovisual and Communication (HAAC). Its principal mandate is to safeguard and guarantee freedom of the press and all forms of mass communication in accordance with national legislation. The institution also ensures adherence to ethical standards in the dissemination of information and equitable access to official media outlets for political parties, associations, and citizens. The HAAC is the sole authority in Benin empowered to define, while upholding the principles of equal treatment and access to public media, the conditions under which audiovisual services may be provided by political parties, associations, and citizens, and to oversee their implementation. Furthermore, the HAAC is the legally designated body responsible for issuing frequency licenses for radio broadcasting, terrestrial television, and satellite transmission to private entities.

Benin hosts eighty (80) daily newspapers, eight (8) weekly newspapers, and four (4) biweekly newspapers,

in addition to more than ninety (90) radio stations, approximately fifteen television channels (including web-based television), and a range of digital news platforms. More than six out of ten citizens (61%) report obtaining their news through radio on a daily basis (FES, 2021). While freedom of expression within the media is generally respected, it remains subject to certain risks. Journalists may experience intimidation and fear that authorities could fabricate accusations against them, which at times results in bias in the quality of information disseminated. Media financing is primarily derived from advertising contracts, newspaper subscription and publication fees, as well as government support, in accordance with the Information and Communication Code of Benin. This legal framework establishes the Media Development Support Fund (MDSF) to provide financial assistance to both private and public media outlets. The African Media Barometer further highlights that, overall, information processing in Benin frequently fails to comply with fundamental principles of accuracy and fairness, with recurrent violations of ethical standards being documented.

## Government

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This category encompasses ministries engaged in the social science research system as well as public agencies under the Presidency of the Republic with specific mandates. In total, fourteen (14) organizations were identified, including eight ministries and six public or national government agencies. Ministries occupy a central role in promoting and supporting research across diverse domains, including the social sciences. Beyond the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), which serves as the principal regulatory authority for the institutional research environment in Benin, the other ministries identified as stakeholders in social science research maintain departments tasked with collecting and managing information for the formulation of strategic documents, action plans, projects, and development programs. The scope of research undertaken by these departments varies according to funding opportunities provided by external partners, but it generally aims primarily to inform and guide the policy actions of the ministries themselves.

Ministries exercise oversight over national research institutes. For instance, the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (NIARB) operates under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (MALF). In addition, ministries play an active role in research financing. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), for example, allocates annual grants to support doctoral research for university students and authorizes competitive funding schemes for universities. Ministries further

contribute to the establishment of partnerships with research stakeholders, foster knowledge exchange, and stimulate innovation. The creation and governance of ministries are vested in the authority of the President of the Republic, in accordance with the provisions of the national Constitution.

Public agencies function as the principal implementing bodies of the Government Action Plan (GAP). They provide support for research activities that inform policy formulation and decision-making. These agencies are involved in the processing and translation of research findings into regulatory frameworks. Certain public agencies are specifically mandated to promote and operationalize research outputs; however, their contributions within the broader research system remain largely invisible.

Public agencies also play a significant role in mobilizing resources for research, integrating research findings into policymaking, managing knowledge, and strengthening research capacity. Some operate under the supervision of national ministries, while others report directly to the Presidency of the Republic of Benin. For instance, the Beninese Agency for the Promotion of Research Results and Technological Innovation (BAPRTI) functions under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). In accordance with Decree No. 2012-139 of June 7, 2012, BAPRTI's mandate is to implement, in collaboration with relevant public and private stakeholders, the national strategy for technological and industrial development, particularly through the valorization of research outputs. Its responsibilities encompass the promotion of local knowledge and expertise, the facilitation of technology transfer and innovation, as well as the mobilization of financial resources necessary to sustain innovation and enable the transfer of technologies from research centers to enterprises requiring them.

## Research Institutes

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The category of research institutes in Benin comprises approximately thirteen (13) national institutes and nine (9) international institutes. This category represents the second most significant stakeholder in scientific production and application, following higher education institutions, particularly national universities. Research institutes are primarily devoted to research and development activities. They specialize in the generation of scientific knowledge, the advancement and dissemination of innovations and technologies, and the provision of support to policymakers in their decision-making processes. In addition, they collaborate with the private sector to facilitate the transfer and practical application of innovations and technologies.

Furthermore, research institutes play a central role in the training of scientists and professionals. They provide structured training opportunities, including doctoral and master's programs, thereby contributing to the advancement of researchers and the development of a skilled workforce for the research system in general and for the social sciences in particular. Certain institutes, such as the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (NIARB), publish scientific journals that periodically disseminate the scholarly output of their researchers. Research institutes are also actively engaged in mobilizing research funding through international collaborations and ensure the participation of the state in financing research activities.

National research institutes operate under the supervision of the State. Most of these institutions emerged within the framework of the nationalization of Benin's research system and were established to develop and maintain national databases. International research institutes, by contrast, are affiliated with international organizations, foreign governments, or development partners. Their presence in the country derives from partnership agreements negotiated between the State and international organizations. These institutes strengthen Benin's technical and financial research capacities, foster international scientific collaboration, and contribute to the global advancement and professional development of national researchers.

## Private Sector

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The category of stakeholders operating within the private sector is primarily composed of research and consulting firms. These entities predominantly engage in for-profit social science research, largely within a consultancy framework, providing design, evaluation, and advisory services. They are frequently solicited by government agencies, producer organizations, development-oriented NGOs, and technical and financial partners not only to assess the outcomes and impacts of their interventions but also to design and elaborate development projects and programs.

In addition, they are occasionally contracted as implementation partners for development initiatives and tasked with delivering training and advisory support in specialized domains. Research and consulting firms constitute the stakeholders most often approached by stakeholders seeking studies and analyses to address social and developmental challenges. They are actively involved in producing reports intended for policymakers, projects, development programs, and other institutional stakeholders.

Several research and consulting firms operate in Benin. Their emergence has been facilitated by the expansion of development interventions across multiple sectors, including agriculture, health, energy, telecommunications, and finance. This growth has been further driven by (i) demand from businesses seeking to analyze market structures and trends in order to formulate marketing strategies and inform business decisions, and (ii) demand from government policies and institutions concerned with assessing the feasibility and impact of their interventions. Large multinational corporations aiming to expand their operations in Benin also engage research firms to conduct market studies and identify new opportunities for positioning within emerging markets.

Our mapping identified at least eighteen (18) active and prominent research and consulting firms integrated into the social science research system in Benin. These firms are distinctive in that they collaborate both with researchers formally employed by the State, namely academics, and with researchers engaged in an individual or private capacity.

Consulting and expert firms in Benin are regulated by the legal framework governing business enterprises and professional services, notably the Commercial Companies Code and the Economic Interest Grouping Code, which define the various forms of enterprises and their operational modalities. Accordingly, these firms are registered as businesses with the competent authorities under diverse legal structures. As a result, they are subject to the prevailing tax and accounting obligations in Benin. These obligations encompass the declaration and payment of taxes and duties, including corporate income tax, the Advance Payment of Tax Based on Profits (APTBP), and value-added tax (VAT).

## Funding Organizations

Benin hosts a multitude of international research funding organizations, primarily represented by foreign donors and governmental agencies that function largely as administrators of development assistance. Our mapping identified thirty-nine (39) international research funding organizations operating within the country. Nevertheless, apart from funding initiatives dispersed across national universities and research institutes, Benin possesses only one national organization exclusively mandated to finance scientific research and innovation.

The National Fund for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation, established by Decree No. 2012-140 of June 7, 2012, is institutionally attached to the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation (MHESR). This configuration underscores

the dependence of the national research system on international funding and reveals the limited institutional and political capacity to adequately sustain research financing.

The principal activities of funding organizations consist of mobilizing financial resources from donors and diverse partners, and administering these resources to support scientific research, research and development initiatives, and innovation projects or programs. In turn, funding organizations draw upon existing research outputs to identify concrete funding needs and to refine their mechanisms for resource allocation. They thus leverage the contributions of social science research both to inform their funding policies and to evaluate the impacts of their interventions.

## 2.2 Interactions Among the Categories of Identified Stakeholders

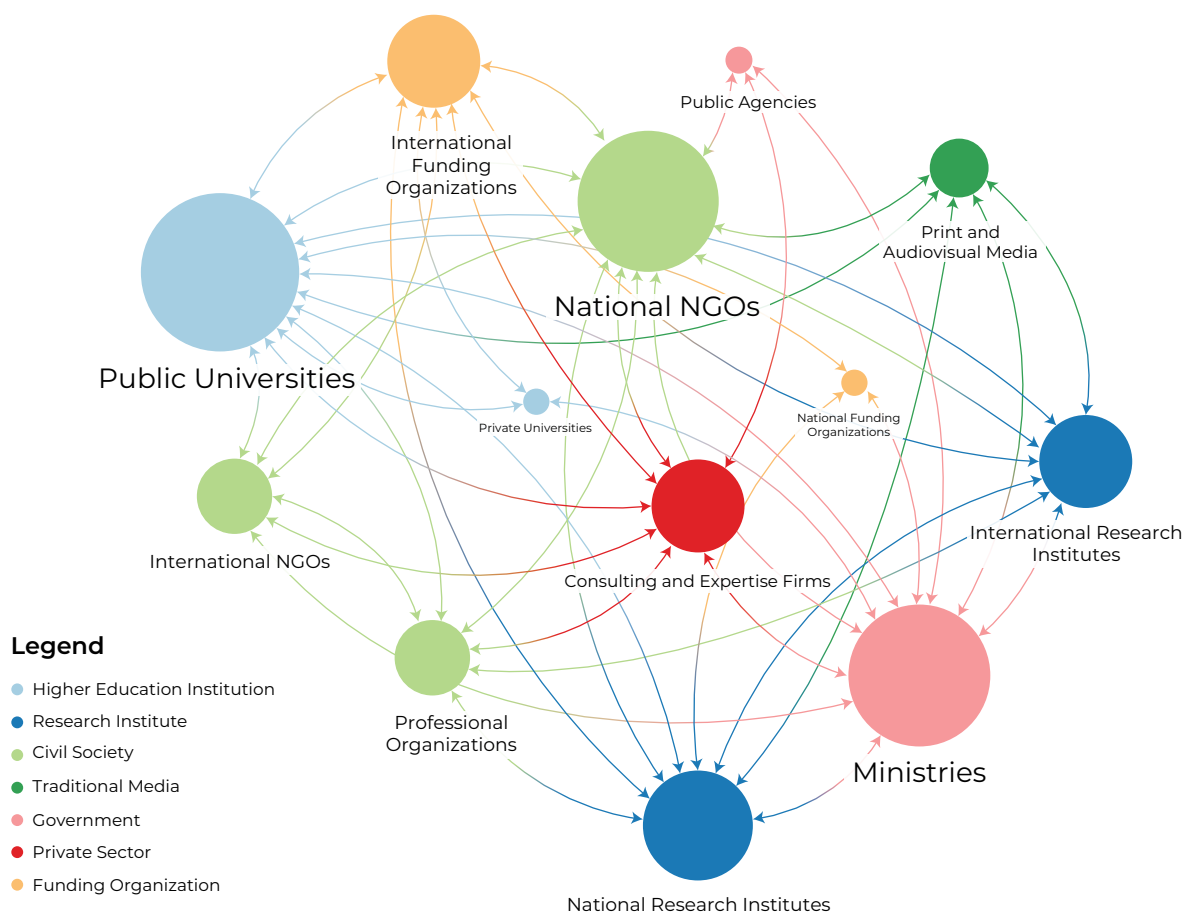
Chart 2.1 provides a graphical representation of the relational dynamics among the principal stakeholders within the social science research system in Benin. It demonstrates that higher education institutions, particularly public universities, the government through its ministries, and civil society, primarily embodied by national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), constitute the stakeholders with the highest density of connections to other stakeholders in the system.

Ranked subsequently, in order of significance, are research institutes, international funding organizations, the private sector, and traditional media. Multiple forms of relationships are observed among these stakeholders. For instance, formal relationships are established through codified protocols or documented agreements between institutions. Such relationships are most evident between the government, higher education institutions, research institutes, and funding organizations.

In addition, informal relationships exist that do not adhere to standardized protocols and instead evolve according to the nature of collaborative projects and the issues under consideration. This pattern is particularly characteristic of interactions between academics and consulting firms, as well as national NGOs. These exchanges frequently occur at the level of individuals operating within organizational structures.

The size of an element's circle is indicative of the number of connections that element has with other elements in the ecosystem.

Chart 2.1. Map of the relationships between the main stakeholders in the social science research system in Benin



Source: Elaboration carried out by the authors on the kumu.io platform using information collected during the multi-stakeholder workshop for the evaluation of the social science research system, organized in Benin in May 2023.

Table 2.2. Situation of collaborators among the identified categories of stakeholders

Categories of stakeholders	EES	SCE	MDA	GVT	IRS	SPR	OFN
EES							
SCE	++						
MDA	+	++					
GVT	+++	+++	+++				
IRS	++	++	+	+++			
SPR	++	++	-	+++	-		
OFN	+++	+++	-	+++	+++	+++	

EES: Higher education and scientific research institutions; SCE: Civil society; MDA: Media; GVT: Government; IRS: Research institutes; SPR: Private sector; OFN: Funding organizations.

Intensity of interactions: +++ strong; ++ medium; + weak; - no interaction.

Source: Elaboration carried out by the authors using information gathered during a multi-stakeholder workshop on evaluating the social science research system, organized in Benin in May 2023

Table 2.2 presents the intensity of interactions between the different categories of stakeholders. It refers to the frequency and quality of collaborations between the main stakeholders in the system. Strong interactions are observed between higher education institutions, the

government, funding organizations, and civil society. The government maintains close ties with all categories of stakeholders, given its regulatory role. However, despite the importance of the media in disseminating and presenting research results in languages more accessible

to local populations, there is weak interaction between the media and higher education institutions and research institutes. Consequently, there is limited communication of research results at the local level.

## 2.3 Stakeholders' Perceptions of Social Science Research in Benin

### Identification and Relevance of Research Topics Related to Social Dynamics

In general, the formulation of research agendas is contingent upon funding sources. Externally initiated topics include, among others, scholarship programs requiring multidisciplinary research teams, projects launched by international research institutes, and themes arising from collaborative arrangements between national and international universities.

Domestic funding is provided by individual researchers, laboratories, universities, or allocations from the state budget. Research supported through external funding is predominantly oriented toward development issues, with priority needs of local communities serving as the basis for topic selection. Frequently driven by external stakeholders, many research agendas remain outwardly focused. Nevertheless, most of these topics retain relevance in the context of current social dynamics, even when they were not initially prioritized. For instance, limited research has been conducted on conflicts associated with jihadism, terrorism, and related phenomena. Consequently, numerous topics of national interest are generally overlooked.

### Types of Methods Used for Data Collection and Analysis

Research methodologies are grounded in internationally recognized social science standards. These approaches encompass both quantitative and qualitative techniques, including the utilization or creation of databases through international instruments, as well as classical qualitative and ethnographic methods established by the founders of the disciplines and endorsed by development agencies and major NGOs.

In the case of externally funded research, heightened methodological rigor is observed, largely due to the oversight of scientific committees. Moreover, within the health sector, the requirement for favorable ethical approvals provides an additional mechanism for strengthening and refining social science research methodologies.

## Social Science Research Products Quality in Benin

Superior scientific committees provide oversight for research sponsored externally or supported through local competitive grants, ensuring outputs of exceptional quality that conform to international standards. Such research frequently involves collaborative teams composed of national scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds (in the case of competitive grants) and international researchers (in the case of externally funded projects). By contrast, research financed internally, whether conducted outside established programs or without formal funding, tends to be of comparatively lower quality. Overall, only a limited number of policy briefs or fact sheets are produced for policymakers, particularly in research undertaken outside formal institutes and specialized academic entities.

Researchers are generally encouraged to produce scientific articles and study reports. The applied and operational dimension of research is not a given, and the production of relevant evidence for policymaking remains problematic.

## Major Differences Between the Social Science Research System in Benin and Other Countries

Within the sub-region, social science research systems exhibit similar characteristics, notably insufficient or inadequate funding from national governments and generally low research quality. Research teams remain dependent on external funding, adhering to standardized procedures. Frequently, within the framework of international partnerships, research adopts a multidisciplinary and multi-country orientation, privileging comparative perspectives. Much of the social science research is embedded within technological development programs in the hard sciences, where social sciences contribute to a more holistic understanding of complex issues. Nevertheless, in many of these programs, social sciences receive only marginal portions of funding due to corporatist structures that disadvantage the discipline. Across numerous programs in health, nutrition, environment, agriculture, and forestry that incorporate social science components within a multidisciplinary approach, several persistent challenges are observed: (i) confusion among program promoters between social science and tools for mobilizing or engaging target populations and stakeholders, (ii) multidisciplinary collaboration that often remains superficial, (iii) scientific production logics largely oriented toward public decision-makers yet consistently directed toward specialized

publications, and (iv) in certain cases, a primarily strategic or rhetorical deployment of social science components in projects framed around development issues.

Owing to persistent funding constraints, researchers mobilize resources from external partners to sustain their work, primarily through competitive grants—small-scale research funding opportunities provided by scholars and institutions from the Global North. Within this framework, it becomes evident that the national research system lacks autonomy, with research agendas and decision-making processes being significantly shaped by the international scientific and development environment prevailing in Benin.

## 2.4 Methodology for Evaluating the Research System in Benin

### Literature Review

The literature review entailed the systematic utilization of information drawn from scientific publications, books, research reports, theses, working papers, project reports, strategic documents, and other relevant sources. It further enabled the collection and analysis of multiple secondary data sets, including global governance indicators (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2022), bibliometric indicators from Scimago, macroeconomic indicators, and additional datasets. The literature review was subsequently complemented by informal interviews with key informants, designed to validate and/or strengthen specific information obtained.

It should be noted that several important indicators and secondary data on the social science research system in Benin are not available in the literature. This is mostly true for information on the social science research population and data on public R&D expenditure in the social sciences in Benin. To address these gaps, we made estimations based on available secondary data and data collected from research stakeholders through individual surveys.

### Bibliometric Analysis

The bibliometric data employed in this study were derived from Scimago, an online bibliographic database that provides comprehensive information on scientific journals and indicators of national scientific output performance. In contrast to databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, Scimago is freely accessible. The data utilized for the bibliometric analysis specifically pertain to the volume of social science publications in Benin, the citation frequency of Beninese publications, open access outputs, international collaborations, and the number of social science journals across Africa. The analysis

considered available data for four disciplinary categories within the social sciences: (i) Business, Management, and Accounting; (ii) Economics, Econometrics, and Finance; (iii) Psychology; and (iv) Social Science. It is important to note that within the Scimago database, the “Social Science” category constitutes a composite of 24 distinct disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, and related fields.

It is important to emphasize that the Scimago database, similar to Scopus and Web of Science, does not provide comprehensive coverage of all scientific journals and publications, particularly those originating from African countries. As noted by Egbetokun et al. (2020), this underrepresentation is especially pronounced within the social sciences. Moreover, none of the existing scientific journals in Benin are indexed in these databases, implying that data derived from international indexing platforms systematically underestimate the scientific output of African countries, including Benin. To partially mitigate this limitation in our analysis, we also consulted the African Journals Online (AJOL) indexing database, which offers relevant information on regional journals not included in Scopus and Web of Science.

### Interviews with Key Informants

A series of in-person interviews with key informants were conducted to generate a deeper understanding of the social science research ecosystem in Benin. These interviews were guided by structured interview protocols, which facilitated the collection of participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the performance of the social science research system in the country. Key informants were purposively selected on the basis of their institutional affiliation, professional profile, position, career trajectory, research rank, and disciplinary background. They represent individuals with extensive expertise and in-depth knowledge of the Beninese research system. The list of interviewees was collaboratively developed and validated by all members of the research team. It encompassed researchers and research professors, research administrators, and policymakers. Distinct interview guides were employed for each category of stakeholders. In total, 36 key informants were interviewed: 19 researchers, 12 research administrators, and five policymakers. Table 2.3 presents the distribution of key informants across institutional categories.

To avoid any loss of collected information, interviews with key informants were recorded using smartphones, transcribed, cleaned, and summarized to enhance data analysis.

Table 2.3. Distribution of the number of key informants interviewed

Categories of institutions	Researchers	Administrators	Political decision-makers
National Universities	19	3	3
Public agencies	-	4	-
Ministries	-	-	2
Research Institutes	-	2	-
NGO	-	2	-
Cabinet	-	1	-
Total	19	12	5

## Sampling and Quantitative Surveys

Sampling was required to implement quantitative surveys among research stakeholders and was conducted in four distinct phases. First, a comprehensive inventory of institutions engaged in social science research in Benin was compiled through a multi-stakeholder workshop, consultation of available national databases on civil society organizations, and contributions from resource persons. The second phase entailed the revision and validation of this institutional list by all members of the research team. At the conclusion of this process, the final sampling frame comprised 424 organizations.

The third phase of sampling was executed in two stages. Initially, a matrix was constructed to classify the organizations in the sampling frame according to category, geographic location (south, central, north), and organizational size (small, medium, large). Given the difficulty of obtaining precise data on the number of researchers employed in non-academic organizations, organizational size was determined by triangulating

information provided by key informants with the research team's contextual knowledge of Benin's research environment. By combining category, location, and size, the 424 organizations were distributed into 126 subgroups. This large number of subgroups proved difficult to manage. The majority of organizations were concentrated in southern Benin, which generated empty cells in the matrix that were subsequently removed. In addition, subgroups representing professional organizations were excluded, as these entities do not directly employ social science researchers. Consequently, the number of subgroups was reduced from 126 to 25, internally homogeneous but heterogeneous between them.

The fourth phase of sampling involved the random selection of organizations proportional to the size of each subgroup. This procedure yielded a final sample of 62 organizations (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Population segmentation and sampling of organizations involved in the social science research system in Benin

Subgroups (SG)	Categories of institutions	Location	Size	Share of the total number	Number of sampled organizations
SG1	C1	South	G	0.26	1
SG2	C1	Center	G	0.26	1
SG3	C1	North	G	0.26	1
SG4	C2	South	G	0.26	1
SG5	C2	South	M	7.31	3
SG6	C3	South	M	1.57	1
SG7	C4	South	F	2.09	1
SG8	C5	South	F	2.35	1
SG9	C6	South	M	3.39	1
SG10	C7	South	F	18.80	15
SG11	C7	South	M	5.22	2

SG12	C8	North	F	5.48	2
SG13	C8	North	M	0.52	1
SG14	C8	Center	F	2.87	1
SG15	C8	South	F	13.84	8
SG16	C8	South	M	0.78	1
SG17	C9	South	F	1.57	1
SG18	C9	South	M	1.04	1
SG19	C9	South	G	1.31	1
SG20	C10	South	F	10.18	5
SG21	C11	South	F	0.26	1
SG22	C12	South	F	3.92	2
SG23	C12	South	M	0.78	1
SG24	C13	South	F	11.49	6
SG25	C13	South	M	4.18	2
Total				100.00	62

**Categories of institutions.** C1: National universities; C2: State-accredited private universities; C3: Public agencies supporting ministries; C4: Ministries; C5: International research institutes; C6: National research institutes; C7: Print media outlets; C8: Broadcasting stations; C9: Television; C10: International funding organizations; C11: National funding organizations; C12: Private sector; C13: NGOs. Size. F: Small; M: Medium; L: Large.

Three quantitative field surveys were undertaken, each targeting a distinct category of stakeholders: researchers, research administrators, and policymakers. Questionnaires tailored to each category, comprising closed, semi-open, and open-ended items, were employed. These instruments were digitized and administered through the Kobo Collect survey platform. Researchers and research administrators were drawn from organizations engaged in social science research, including higher education institutions, research institutes, NGOs, and consulting firms. Policymakers were selected from national universities, government ministries, public agencies, and funding organizations.

In addition to these three quantitative surveys, several administrators affiliated with regulatory bodies (such as government ministries) and funding agencies were interviewed. Although not directly engaged in research production, they occupy a pivotal role at the initial stages of research administration. They establish or validate funding criteria, determine project eligibility in accordance with institutional procedures, and decide upon the modalities and timing of fund disbursement. In doing so, they exert significant influence over the ways in which researchers manage their projects. These administrators from regulatory and funding bodies were interviewed using a questionnaire adapted

from the instrument designed for administrators of research organizations.

The media do not engage in research production in the strictest sense. Nevertheless, they contribute significantly to the generation and dissemination of social science research outputs. By foregrounding salient issues, they stimulate scholarly inquiry and facilitate the accessibility of research findings to broader user communities. Given their mediating role within the research ecosystem, the media cannot be excluded from this study. Accordingly, it was deemed essential to complement the series of quantitative surveys with a media-focused survey. Investigative journalists were therefore recruited and interviewed across diverse media outlets, utilizing a questionnaire adapted from the instrument administered to social science researchers.

It is essential to underscore that the performance indicators derived from primary data were based on information collected from researchers and administrators within research-producing organizations, as well as from policymakers. Data obtained from investigative journalists (media stakeholders), administrators in supervisory and funding institutions, and key informants (qualitative surveys) were incorporated to enrich and triangulate the analysis of performance indicators.

Accurate information on the population of social science researchers, particularly those employed in non-academic organizations, was unavailable. Consequently, the sample sizes for researchers, administrators, and policymakers were determined rationally, based on the relative institutional weight within the research system. Accordingly, we planned to randomly select and survey

between 15 and 110 researchers, depending on the size of the sampled public universities; 10 researchers per private university; 20 researchers per national research institute; 10 researchers per international research institute; 10 researchers per NGO; five researchers per research and consulting firm; and one investigative journalist per sampled media outlet. For administrators, the plan was to randomly select three respondents from each research-producing organization and each sampled oversight and funding institution. For policymakers, one respondent was to be randomly selected from each sampled national university, ministry, public agency, and funding organization.

Nevertheless, in light of contextual realities, the planned sample sizes for the surveys were adjusted to more accurately reflect the diversity of organizations within the research system. For instance, certain civil society organizations employed only a very limited number of researchers (one or two individuals) and were at times difficult to locate due to unstable geographic positioning. Consequently, the number of researchers initially planned for this category could not be fully achieved. Within funding organizations, only one of the three administrators originally targeted per institution could be interviewed, which further constrained the sample. To offset discrepancies between the planned and actual sample sizes, the number of researchers and administrators randomly selected from public universities was increased. These institutions, in fact, employ the majority of researchers and research administrators in Benin. Finally, the availability of policymakers posed challenges during the survey period, resulting in a reduced number of interviews conducted (8 out of 15 planned). Moreover, the majority of policymakers who agreed to participate were women (6 out of 8). As a result, the sample of decision-makers exhibits a substantial non-response bias (46.7%), which must be considered in the interpretation of the findings.

The surveyed researchers, administrators, and policymakers were randomly selected from the various sampled organizations. Within the final sample, approximately 65% of researchers and 84.6% of administrators from research organizations were interviewed in higher education institutions, compared to the initially planned 60.9% and 77.7%, respectively. Public universities ultimately accounted for 52.5% of the sample of researchers and 53.8% of the sample of administrators from research organizations, compared to the initially planned 48.3% and 33.3%, respectively. For NGOs, the proportion of researchers decreased from the planned 25% to the surveyed 20.9%. Furthermore, the majority of

policymakers surveyed (62.5%) hold positions in research oversight and funding institutions. Table 2.5 details the distribution of respondents by organizational category, compared to the initial sample.

The distribution of the final sample of respondents by geographic area is presented in Table 2.6. This table highlights that the majority of social science researchers surveyed (approximately 90%) are located in the south of the country. Two factors likely contributed to this. First, Benin's largest public university, the University of Abomey-Calavi, is located in the south and employs roughly 64%<sup>12</sup> of the teaching and research staff. Second, most legislative and regulatory bodies are located in the south. The individual interviews were conducted from November 2023 to March 2024.

<sup>12</sup> In 2017, Benin had 1314 teacher-researchers, distributed among the four public universities (MESRS, 2023). Among them, 846 teachers were affiliated with the University of Abomey-Calavi (<https://uac.bj/>), representing 64.4% of all teacher-researchers.

Table 2.5. Distribution of planned and surveyed sample size by category of institution

Categories of institutions	Researchers				Administrators of organizations that produce research				Administrator of supervisory and financing institutes				Political decision-makers				Investigative journalists (the media)			
	Expected number		Number surveyed		Expected number		Number surveyed		Expected number		Number surveyed		Expected number		Number surveyed		Expected number		Number surveyed	
	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%
Higher education institutions	195	60.9	208	65.0	21	77.7	33	84.6	-	-	-	-	3	20.0	1	12.5	-	-	-	-
Public universities	155	48.3	168	52.5	9	33.3	21	53.8	-	-	-	-	3	20.0	1	12.5	-	-	-	-
Private universities	40	12.5	40	12.5	12	44.4	12	30.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Governmental Organizations	80	25.0	67	20.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	13.3	2	25.0	-	-	-	-
Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	100	34	100
Print media outlets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	50.0	17	50.0
Broadcasting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	41.2	14	41.2
Television	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8.8	3	8.8
Government	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	25.0	4	44.4	4	26.6	4	50.0	-	-	-	-
Ministries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	12.5	1	11.1	2	13.3	3	37.5	-	-	-	-
Public agencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	12.5	3	33.3	2	13.3	1	12.5	-	-	-	-
Research Institutes	30	9.4	30	9.4	6	22.2	6	15.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National Institutes	20	6.3	20	6.3	3	11.1	3	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
International Institutes	10	3.1	10	3.1	3	11.1	3	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private sector (offices)	15	4.9	15	4.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Funding organization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	75.0	5	55.5	6	40.0	1	12.5	-	-	-	-
National organizations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	12.5	2	22.2	1	6.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
International organizations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	62.5	3	33.3	5	33.3	1	12.5	-	-	-	-
Total	320	100	320	100	27	100	39	100	24	100	9	100	15	100	8	100	34	100	34	100

Table 2.6. Distribution of the surveyed sample size by geographical area

Zones	Municipalities	Researchers		Administrators		Political decision-makers	
		Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%
South	Abomey-Calavi	194	54.8	24	50.0	4	50.0
	Cotonou	63	17.8	17	35.4	1	12.5
	Ouidah	6	1.7				
	Porto-Novo	33	9.3	3	6.3	2	25.0
	Adjarra	8	2.3				
	Akpro-Missereté	12	3.4				
	Bohicon	1	0.3				
	Total	317	89.6	44	91.7	7	87.5
North	Materials	1	0.3				
	Nikki	1	0.3				
	Parakou	35	9.9	4	8.3	1	12.5
	Total	37	10.5	4	8.3	1	12.5
Total		354	100	48	100	8	100

## CHAPTER 3

# FRAMEWORK OF “DOING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT”

### Key Messages

- The social science research infrastructure in Benin is significantly underfunded. The nation employs approximately 1,034 social science researchers, with an annual public expenditure on social science research, inclusive of salaries, amounting to approximately €626,727.45<sup>13</sup>.<sup>14</sup>. This Chart translates to roughly €606.12 per social science researcher annually.
- The social science research infrastructure in Benin is characterized by a lack of coordination. Consequently, research initiatives are often fragmented, occasionally redundant, and infrequently effective in fostering actions conducive to social development.
- A small proportion of researchers engage in projects relevant to public policy without national coordination or public incentives, aside from scientific competition, the pursuit of recognition, the requirements of an academic career, and the search for well-funded international projects.
- The social science research system in Benin is significantly hindered by several internal factors, including inadequate infrastructure and mentoring systems, insufficient administrative support, and a lack of alignment between this support and the evolving demands of research. Additionally, the substandard quality of research training, limited employment opportunities, and insufficient incentives for pursuing a career in social science research further compromise the system’s overall performance.
- A substantial portion of Benin’s scientific output is disseminated through journal and conference papers, primarily targeting intellectual engagement within the scientific community. This output serves to meet publication requirements for academic career progression and the successful execution of collaborative or internationally funded scientific projects. However, dissemination of research findings to local stakeholders is infrequent, with only approximately one in six researchers having produced at least one policy brief for policymakers in the past three years.
- The prevailing social science research landscape in Benin remains markedly non-inclusive. The participation of local communities—who are often the subjects of inquiry—within the research process is minimal. Likewise, collaboration between scholars and traditional media outlets in the dissemination of scientific findings to the wider public is notably weak. The Beninese research system provides virtually no institutional incentives to encourage the communication of research outcomes through non-academic channels.
- The relationship between researchers and policymakers is similarly fragile. Only a limited number of scholars gain direct access to political decision-making bodies. Moreover, it is uncommon for social science research to be explicitly directed toward informing political stakeholders. These conditions represent significant barriers that must be addressed in order to establish a dynamic and effective research system capable of making substantive contributions to national development.

### 3.1 Characteristics of Surveyed People

The characteristics of the surveyed participants are presented in greater detail in Annex 1; here, only a concise overview is provided. Most of the researchers

interviewed (82%) were between 18 and 46 years of age, indicating that the majority of social science researchers in Benin are relatively young. Nearly all respondents were Beninese nationals (98%) and predominantly male, with women comprising only 15%. A substantial proportion (96%) possessed at least a Master’s degree, while a small

<sup>13</sup> Estimated annual public expenditure on social science research includes salaries, operating and program costs, and capital assets (Domgho et al., 2018).  
<sup>14</sup> We consider 1 XOF = 0.0015 EURO (€)

minority (4%) held a Bachelor's degree, included due to their active involvement in data collection, processing, and analysis. Approximately 38% of the researchers had completed a doctorate, and 20% were in the process of pursuing one. A limited share had obtained their Master's (7%) or Doctorate (14%) abroad. In terms of professional experience, most researchers (80%) reported between 1 and 10 years of engagement in social science research in Benin.

Administrators, by contrast, were predominantly older, with 67% falling between 46 and 64 years of age. Women were similarly underrepresented in this group, with only two out of ten administrators being female. Almost all administrators surveyed (97%) were Beninese nationals, and a significant majority (87%) held a doctorate or postdoctoral qualification. Administrators in Benin typically consist of researchers or individuals with extensive experience in research production. More than half of those with advanced degrees had obtained them abroad or through collaborative programs with foreign universities. Professional experience in social science research administration was substantial, with 69% reporting between 6 and over 20 years of practice.

Political decision-makers interviewed were predominantly women (75%), aged between 37 and 56. All were Beninese nationals and held at least a Master's degree. Half (50%) had completed a doctorate, while 13% were currently pursuing one. Among those with doctorates, half had obtained their degree abroad or through joint doctoral programs with foreign institutions. The majority (86%) reported between 6 and 15 years of professional experience in social science research and policy within Benin. Only 13% had between 1 and 5 years of experience in foreign policy, reflecting the country's limited representation in regional and international decision-making bodies.

## 3.2 Production of Social Science Research in Benin

### Research Inputs

#### Research Staff

There is currently no secondary data that provides exact Charts on the number of social science researchers in Benin. Consequently, an approximate estimate has been generated by triangulating the most recent secondary data with primary data collected from individuals directly engaged in research activities within the country. According to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), Benin counted

1,314 teacher-researchers in public universities in 2023 (MHESR, 2023). Based on estimates provided by research administrators, approximately 18.12% of these were social science specialists. This proportion suggests that public universities hosted around 238 teacher-researchers in the social sciences during 2023. In addition, survey data indicated that public universities awarded an average of 90 Master's and Doctoral degrees in social sciences in the same year. This allows us to estimate the total number of social science researchers in public universities at 508<sup>15</sup> in 2023.

Most of the private universities surveyed allocate greater resources to higher education than to social science research, with some institutions neglecting the latter altogether. The survey revealed that only 33% of private universities are actively engaged in social science research through structured programs, particularly by supervising Master's and Doctoral students. Although precise data on the number of faculty and researchers employed in these institutions are unavailable, survey findings suggest that private universities awarded an average of 28 Master's and Doctoral degrees in social sciences in 2023. Accordingly, among the 29 private universities identified during the stakeholder mapping of social science research, approximately 10 demonstrated significant involvement in research activities, with an estimated average of 280 social science researchers per year.

Stakeholder mapping further identified approximately 118 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and research firms engaged in social science research in Benin. Investigations revealed that most of these organizations employ only a small number of researchers, typically between one and two individuals. Based on this evidence, it is estimated that NGOs and research firms collectively employ between 118 and 236 social science researchers annually, with an average of 177 researchers.

Public research centers and institutes employed a total of 137 researchers in 2023 (MHESR, 2023). Survey data indicated that the average proportion of social science researchers within these institutions was 30.5%, as reported by research administrators. This corresponds to approximately 42 social science researchers working in public research institutes. With regard to international research institutes, our surveys identified 12 social science researchers across four institutions (Annex 4), representing about 44.4% of the international institutes identified during stakeholder mapping. By extrapolating this proportion, the estimated number of social science researchers in international research institutes amounts to approximately 27.

15

238 teaching and research staff + (90 Master's and PhD programs / 3 public universities)

Taken together, these estimates suggest that Benin had around 1,034 social science researchers in 2023 (Table 3.1). The country's total population was projected to be approximately 13 million in 2023, according to the World Bank (2024). This yields a ratio of 79.5 researchers per

million inhabitants. Such a ratio remains relatively low compared to certain neighboring countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, where the ratio was estimated at 170 in 2016 (CAPEC & GDN, 2016).

**Table 3.1. Estimated size of the social science research population in Benin and representativeness of the sample of researchers studied**

Organizational categories	Estimated population of researchers		Sample surveyed		Wilcoxon test 1
	Staff	Share (in %)	Staff	Share (in %)	
Public universities	508	49.1	168	52.5	Z = -0.943; dl = 1; p-value = 0.345
Private universities	280	27.1	40	12.5	
Civil society	150	14.5	67	20.9	
Private sector	27	2.6	15	4.7	
National Research Institutes	42	4.1	20	6.3	
International research institutes	27	2.6	10	3.1	
Total	1034	100	320	100	

1. The Wilcoxon test was used to compare the distribution of researchers by organizational category between the estimated population and the study sample. A p-value greater than 0.01 indicates that the differences between the population and the study sample in terms of the distribution of researchers by type of organization are not statistically significant at the 1% level.

Public universities and research institutes are the institutions with the largest number of social science researchers holding a doctorate or preparing for one (Table 3.2). During the survey period, approximately 58%

of researchers were preparing for a doctorate or held a doctorate or postdoctoral position. This suggests that their number was approximately 597 (1034 researchers  $\leq$  0.577) in 2023.

**Table 3.2. Number of social science researchers by degree and gender, by research organization category**

Categories of organizations	Degrees						Gender			
	Preparing for a doctorate		Doctorate		Postdoctorate		Man		Women	
	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%
Public University	43	25.6	73	43.5	9	5.4	142	84.5	26	15.5
Private university	7	17.5	12	30.0	5	12.5	38	95.0	2	5.0
Non-governmental organization	3	4.5	4	6.0		-	54	80.6	13	19.4
Private sector	2	13.3	3	20.0		-	14	93.3	1	6.7
National Research Institute	6	30.0	9	45.0		-	18	90.0	2	10.0
International Research Institute	3	30.0	5	50.0		-	7	70.0	3	30.0
Together	64	20.0	106	33.1	14	4.4	273	85.3	47	14.7

Eff.: Number; %: Frequency as a percentage; N=320.  
Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Women constitute approximately 15% of social science researchers in Benin. This corresponds to an estimated 152 female researchers out of a total of 1,034 in 2023

( $\geq 0.147$ ). Among those pursuing doctoral studies or holding a doctorate or postdoctoral qualification, women represent about 14%, equivalent to approximately 81

female researchers out of 597 ( $\geq 0.136$ ). The proportion of women is relatively higher within national research institutes, where they account for 30% of the social science research staff. According to surveyed researchers (predominantly male), the principal factors contributing to women's underrepresentation in the research system include: (i) marital responsibilities and family-related constraints; (ii) limited interest in research; and (iii) insufficient willingness or perseverance to undertake extended academic training. Empirical evidence supports this observation: one study demonstrated that, out of a cohort of 100 girls entering the school system at the Initiation Course (IC), approximately 60 progressed to the Middle Course 2nd year (MC2), 27 completed the first cycle of secondary education (equivalent to grades 7–9 in the United States), and only 16 continued their studies through the final year of high school (grades 10–12) (Katchikpe, 2022).

## Funding

According to FAO (2024), public expenditure on research and development (R&D) in Benin was estimated at approximately €20.9 million in 2020. This corresponds to an investment of around 0.2% of the country's GDP, which stood at €13.4 billion in 2019. It is likely that this Chart underestimates the actual allocation to R&D, as the estimate is limited to the agricultural sector. Nonetheless, Benin remains far below the benchmark established by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which recommends annual R&D investment equivalent to 1% of GDP.

No official data exist regarding public R&D expenditure in the social sciences in Benin. Consequently, drawing on evidence that social sciences accounted for 3% of R&D human resources in 2016 (Domgho et al., 2018), we assume that they absorb approximately 3% of total public R&D expenditure. This assumption reflects a proportional distribution based on the number of researchers engaged in national research activities. On this basis, public R&D expenditure in the social sciences is estimated at €626,727.45, with an average of €606.12 per researcher annually. Approximately one-third of this amount is allocated to salaries of researchers employed by the state (Domgho et al., 2018). These Charts underscore the persistent underfunding of the social science research system in Benin.

Approximately 61% of public research and development (R&D) expenditure in Benin was financed through government resources, while 39% originated from foreign donors in 2022 (FAO, 2024). This distribution reflects a substantial governmental commitment to R&D funding.

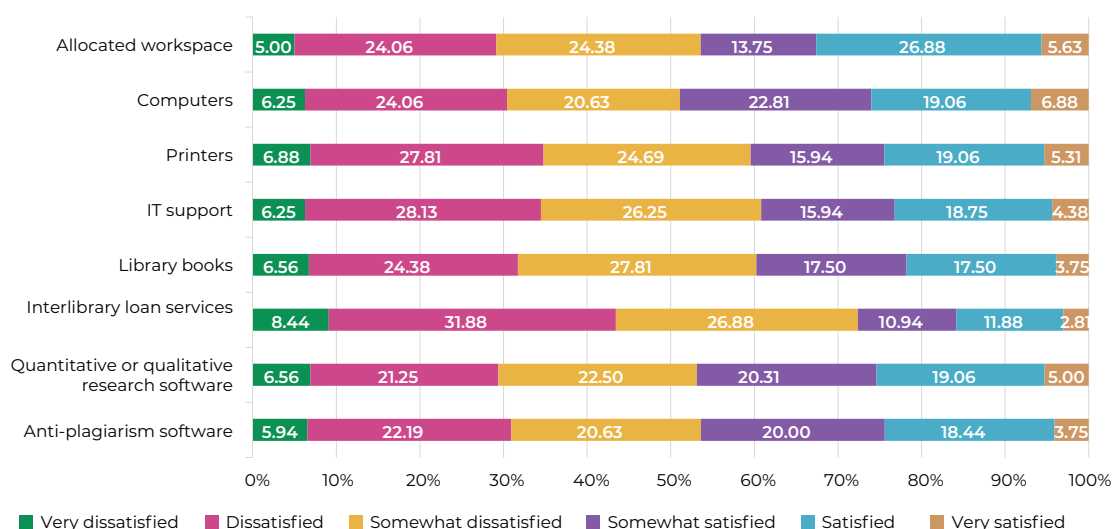
Given that researchers are remunerated by the state and rely on public infrastructure and facilities, the relative share of foreign contributions remains comparatively limited. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the role of foreign funding may be underestimated in official statistics, as these Charts exclude resources obtained directly by researchers in the form of international research grants or consultancy fees. The absence of a monitoring system renders such funding invisible in national accounts. Moreover, it appears that the contribution of the private sector to R&D financing is not systematically recorded.

## Infrastructure and Data

The quality of research infrastructure was assessed by soliciting researchers' self-reported levels of satisfaction regarding the availability of material resources indispensable for the conduct of social science inquiry within their institutions, employing a scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied). The findings, presented in Chart 3.1, indicate that half of the respondents conveyed generalized dissatisfaction across all dimensions of the research infrastructure evaluated. In other words, researchers articulated pervasive discontent with the adequacy of material resources supporting the production of social science scholarship. This pattern of dissatisfaction was consistently observed among male researchers (Annex 2).

However, female researchers demonstrated comparatively lower levels of dissatisfaction (Annex 2). Women expressed greater dissatisfaction with the availability of printers, IT support, and interlibrary loan services (Annex 2). Nonetheless, more than half of the female respondents indicated satisfaction with their allocated workspace, computers, library collections, quantitative and qualitative research software, and anti-plagiarism tools (Annex 2). These findings suggest that, although women remain underrepresented in the social science research system in Benin, they appear to enjoy relatively greater access to material resources necessary for research production compared to men. This situation may be attributed to gender promotion initiatives implemented by the State and international organizations, which have facilitated women's access to resource mobilization opportunities. Among these initiatives are the national gender promotion policy, launched in 2010, and the establishment in 2021 of the National Women's Institute, under the Presidency of the Republic of Benin, with the mandate of advancing women's empowerment.

Chart 3.1. Researchers' satisfaction levels with social science research infrastructure



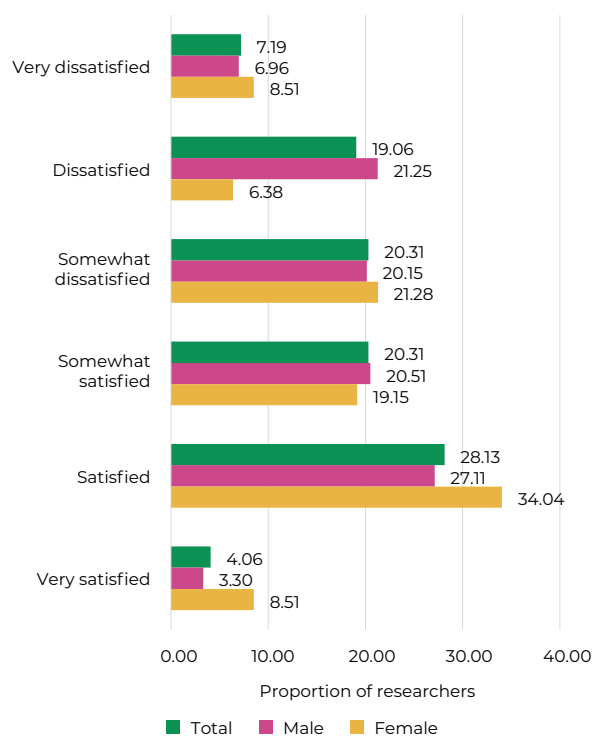
Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

The quality of access to primary sources was evaluated using the same rating scale, ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied). The findings indicate that a majority of researchers surveyed (53% of respondents) expressed general satisfaction with the ease of access to primary sources of information and data (Chart 3.2). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that nearly half of the respondents reported dissatisfaction with access to primary data, a situation likely attributable to challenges such as limited resources, respondents' mistrust of researchers or institutions, and related constraints. Overall, women reported higher levels of satisfaction with access to primary data (62% of cases) compared to men (51% of cases). This outcome suggests that female researchers may experience relatively easier access to primary data than their male counterparts.

Surveys have revealed that, on average, 29% of social science research output in Benin is open access<sup>16</sup>. This proportion varies across disciplines. Given the multiplicity of social science disciplines, we consider the four most represented disciplines in our sample for this analysis: sociology (35%), economics (29%), development studies (17%), and geography (15%). The average share of open access research output is 26% in sociology, 27% in economics, 29% in development studies, and 41% in geography. Overall, nearly two-thirds of researchers (62%) have less than 20% of their output available in open access (Chart 3.3). This low proportion can be explained by the sometimes very high costs associated with open access publishing and by the poor quality of available infrastructure, which limits the production

of research that meets international standards for scientific publishing.

Chart 3.2. Researcher satisfaction levels regarding access to primary sources of information and data



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

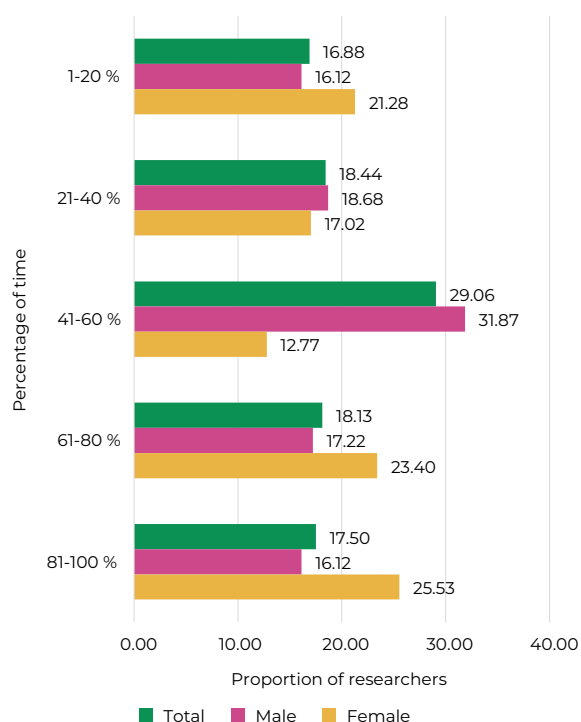
<sup>16</sup> Open access refers to online search results that are free from any access restrictions (e.g., access rights) and many usage restrictions (e.g., certain copyright and licensing restrictions).

Chart 3.3. Share of open access output by social science researchers



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

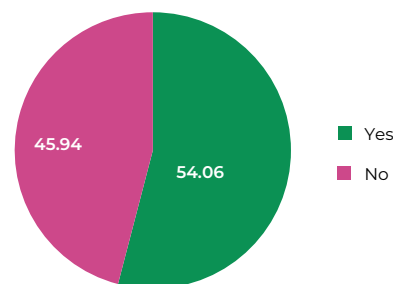
Chart 3.4. Percentage of time researchers spend on research



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

1-20%: at most 1 day/week or 1-2 months per year; 21-40%: at most 2 days/week or 3-4 months per year; 41-60%: at most 3 days/week or 5-6 months per year; 61-80%: at most 4 days/week or 7-8 months per year; 81-100%: at most 5 days/week or 9 months or more per year.

Chart 3.5. Is the time that researchers devote to research sufficient?



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

### Research time investment

Overall, researchers indicated that they devote, on average, half of their professional time to social science research, with the remainder allocated to teaching, administrative responsibilities, or income-generating activities. This corresponds to approximately 2.5 working days per week. Assuming a standard year comprises 250 working days, the surveyed researchers dedicate an average of 125 days annually to research. The findings further reveal that more than half of the respondents devote less than 50% of their weekly working time to research (Chart 3.4), equivalent to fewer than three days per week. Within this group, 26% reported devoting no more than one day per week to research, 29% between one and two days, and 45% between two and three days. In addition, approximately 46% of the researchers surveyed stated that they had been unable to allocate sufficient time to research during the past three years (Chart 3.5). This situation was attributed in part to inadequate research funding. A number of respondents emphasized that, without supplementary income-generating activities, they would encounter serious difficulties in meeting their own basic needs and those of their families.

### Research Culture and Support Services

#### Institutions and Policies

The literature review and interviews with key informants revealed that Benin presently lacks a central public institution responsible for regulating and coordinating the social science research system. This finding was corroborated by 84% of the researchers and 82% of the administrators surveyed. The latter reported that they had never encountered a public institution specifically mandated to oversee social science research. The minority (16%) who acknowledged the existence of such an institution referred either to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) or to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD).

The National Institute of Statistics (NISD) is indeed the main institution producing official statistics in Benin. It is the principal authority of the national statistical system and is responsible for coordinating all activities related to the development, production, use, and archiving of official statistics<sup>17</sup>. The National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD) is responsible for implementing Law No. 2022-07 of June 27, 2022, which requires statistical approval prior to the conduct of any socioeconomic study by public or semi-public institutions, private entities, or international organizations that involves data collection from third parties and whose results may be generalized at least to the municipal level (NISD, 2022). In this capacity, NISD contributes to the oversight of primary data collection in the social sciences, with the objective of ensuring both the reliability and effective management of public data. Nevertheless, NISD does not perform the functions typically expected of a central authority for the governance of social science research. As outlined by Egbetokun et al. (2020), an active, state-run institution dedicated to managing public social science research should fulfill three essential functions: (i) guaranteeing a minimum level of commitment to social science research consistent with national objectives and priorities; (ii) ensuring a stable flow of funding to sustain the system; and (iii) assuming ownership of the social science research agenda by establishing norms and standards and by aligning research activities with national development priorities. The NISD does not currently fulfill any of these functions.

The governance structures of Benin's overall research system, encompassing all disciplines, are the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) and the General Directorate for Scientific Research and Innovation (GDSRI) (MHESR, 2023). Both entities operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR). The NCSTR, created by Decree No. 2015-584 of November 18, 2015, is entrusted with several key responsibilities: (i) defining the national policy on research in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI); (ii) formulating the strategic plan for the advancement of STI research; (iii) coordinating the national scientific research and innovation system; and (iv) monitoring the implementation of decisions arising from its deliberations. The GDSRI, by contrast, functions as a technical directorate within the MHESR, with a mandate to design, coordinate, and oversee the State's research and innovation policy (MHESR, 2023). It is important to note, however, that both structures remain largely invisible in practice, and their complementary responsibilities exhibit a degree of overlap.

In summary, the social science research system in Benin

lacks effective coordination. As a result, research activities in the field are highly fragmented, discontinuous, occasionally duplicative, and seldom succeed in fostering innovation, informing decision-making, or supporting development initiatives. One key informant, serving as the director of a university department, observed that in Benin "there is a supply of research without a corresponding demand for it." Similarly, another informant, a former minister, emphasized that social science researchers in Benin are excessively dispersed and overly self-focused.

Furthermore, approximately 86% of the researchers and 97% of the administrators surveyed reported that a national social science research policy does not exist in Benin, or that they were unaware of its existence. Among the 15% of researchers who acknowledged the existence of such a policy, the majority (85%) stated that they did not know its official designation. The literature review and interviews with key informants likewise confirmed the absence of a national framework specifically governing social science research in Benin. Nevertheless, the country has recently adopted a strategic document intended to guide and enhance the quality of research and innovation: the National Research and Innovation Policy (NRIP) 2022–2032. The objectives of this policy are to: (i) promote endogenous research, innovation, and intellectual property; (ii) reorganize the legal and institutional framework for research and innovation; and (iii) strengthen mechanisms for mobilizing and managing research and innovation funding (MHESR, 2023). Although the NRIP does not contain provisions explicitly targeting social science research, its implementation could exert influence on the broader social science research system. However, without a dedicated coordination structure, the policy would be unable to effectively address the lack of synergy among stakeholders or optimize the use of resources and expertise within the social science research system.

With regard to women's participation in politics, the situation has improved markedly in recent years. A review of the literature indicates that the proportion of women represented in political decision-making bodies rose from 7% in 2019 to 26% in 2023 (UNDP, 2023). This progress is largely attributable to the constitutional reforms of December 11, 1990, which were revisited and implemented by the government in 2019 (UNDP, 2023). Among other provisions, these reforms introduced a quota reserving 22% of parliamentary seats for women.

### Peer Review Culture

Mentoring refers to the academic and personal relationship established between a more experienced

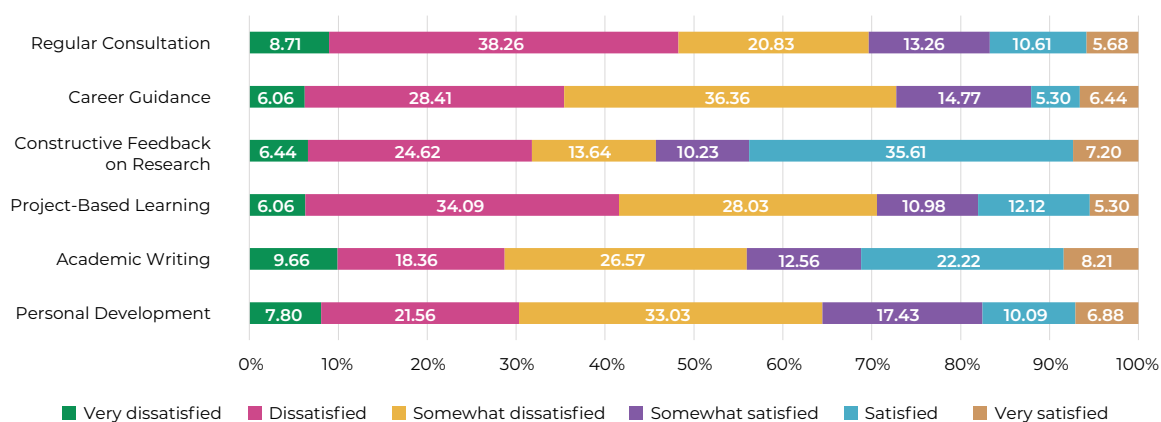
professor or researcher (mentor) and a less experienced colleague (mentee), in which the mentor assumes a more active role in supporting the mentee's academic and research career development until the latter attains a comparable level of expertise (GDN, 2023).

In Benin, however, the mentoring system in social science research is generally confined to academic mentoring, which primarily involves the supervision of Master's theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as the informal guidance provided to teaching assistants by university professors. In the present study, the quality of the mentoring system was evaluated by measuring researchers' satisfaction levels, using a scale from 1

(very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied), the dimensions of mentoring assessed in this study included:

(i) personal development, (ii) academic writing, (iii) project-based learning, (iv) constructive feedback on research, (v) career guidance, and (vi) regular consultation. The survey results indicated that approximately 83% of the researchers interviewed reported having access to mentors in the field of social sciences. Among these, the majority (61% on average) expressed overall dissatisfaction with the various aspects of mentoring examined (Chart 3.6). Constructive feedback on research emerged as the only dimension for which more than half of the respondents (55%) reported general satisfaction.

Chart 3.6. Researcher satisfaction levels with the current mentoring system in social science research



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

The widespread dissatisfaction expressed by young researchers regarding the current social science mentorship system can be attributed, among other factors, to the excessive workload borne by many mentors, which limits their capacity to provide effective supervision. This workload is largely the result of the steadily increasing student population in universities, where the majority of social science mentors are based. The student-teacher ratio, which stood at one teacher for every 56 students in 2007 (NISEA, 2012), had risen to one teacher for every 111 students by 2022 in Benin (Economy & Tech, 2022). This trend inevitably reduces the amount of time professors can devote to supervising research, as greater attention must be directed toward teaching responsibilities (Siyabola et al., 2014). Consequently, a significant gap has emerged between the supply and demand for mentorship in social science research, a situation partly explained by the shortage of competent and willing mentors.

Peer review serves as a critical mechanism for enhancing the overall quality of research outputs. Consequently,

the volume of peer-reviewed publications and the proportion of citable research constitute important indicators of the performance of a research system. Data on peer-reviewed social science research in Benin were collected from a sample of researchers, while information on citable research was obtained from the Scimago/Scopus database. This database encompasses four relevant fields: (i) Business, Management, and Accounting; (ii) Economics, Econometrics, and Finance; (iii) Psychology; and (iv) Social Sciences, which include 24 distinct disciplines. The findings reveal that the number of peer-reviewed social science articles published in journals and conference proceedings ranged from 0 to 53 per researcher over the past three years (Table 3.3). On average, this Chart is six. In other words, a typical social science researcher in Benin publishes approximately six peer-reviewed scientific articles in journals and conference proceedings within a three-year period (Table 3.3). According to Scimago, nearly all social science publications authored by Beninese researchers are classified as citable, representing approximately 98% of the total output (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.3. Statistics on the number of peer-reviewed social science publications for the last three years, as reported by the researchers surveyed (N = 320)**

Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Peer-reviewed scientific article published in an international journal	151	0	25	2.26	0	0.24
Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a regional journal	118	0	15	1.16	0	0.14
Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a national journal	132	0	17	1.08	0	0.11
Peer-reviewed scientific article published in conference proceedings	118	0	31	1.32	0	0.17
Total number of peer-reviewed scientific articles published in journals and conference proceedings	201	0	53	5.82	2	0.54

No Obs. indicates the number of researchers out of 320 who have had at least one peer-reviewed social science publication in the last three years.  
Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

**Table 3.4. Statistics on the total number of citable social science publications from Benin by field, from 2020 to 2022**

Domains	Number of publications	Number of citable publications	Proportion of citable publications
Business, management and accounting	24	23	95.8
Economics, econometrics and finance	55	53	96.4
Psychology	14	14	100.0
Social Sciences	256	251	98.1
Total	349	341	97.7
Number of social science researchers in Benin	1034		
Ratio per social science researcher	0.338	0.329	

The term "citable document" includes research articles, journals, conference proceedings, and other types of academic documents published in international scientific journals. The field of "social sciences" includes 24 distinct disciplines within the social sciences.  
Source: Scimago database

The volume of social science publications per researcher, estimated using the Scimago/Scopus database, is approximately 0.34 (Table 3.4). This represents a significant discrepancy compared to the volume of publications reported by the surveyed researchers, which averaged 6 articles per researcher (Table 3.3). This disparity is explained by the fact that a large proportion of social science publications produced by Beninese researchers are not indexed in internationally recognized databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, etc.).

For instance, the contextual analysis revealed that Benin hosts several scientific journals within public universities and research institutes; however, none of these journals are indexed in internationally recognized databases. It is also important to note that the overall volume of social science publications in Benin remains comparatively low, averaging 116 publications per year over the past three years, according to Scimago/Scopus. This Chart contrasts sharply with countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, which

record averages of more than 1,300 and 2,353 publications per year, respectively (Egbetokun et al., 2020).

Survey findings further highlight a disparity in publication output between male and female researchers. Over the past three years, women have published an average of three articles, compared to approximately six for men—twice the female output (Annex 3). This disparity underscores the underrepresentation of women in the social science research system. Contributing factors include the family responsibilities that women often must balance alongside teaching and research obligations. In addition, the inadequate quality of the current mentorship system constitutes a significant barrier to women's research productivity.

### Capacity Building

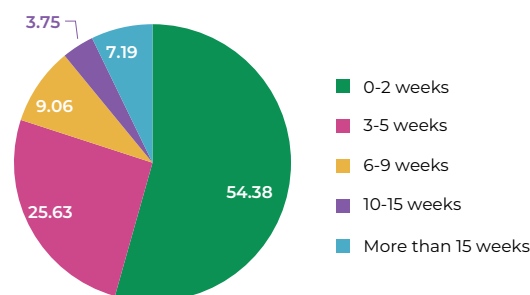
Research capacity is defined as the ability to generate high-quality social science outputs (GDN, 2023).

It constitutes a central determinant of the overall

performance of the research system. Capacity building in this domain may be achieved through research training, exchange programs, mentorship, and other initiatives designed to enhance researchers' competence in producing rigorous scientific work. Survey data revealed that more than half of the researchers in Benin had participated in social science research training within the past three years. For the majority (54.4%), the cumulative duration of such training ranged from one to two weeks (Chart 3.7). Furthermore, 54% of respondents indicated that women accounted for only about 10% of participants in these training programs (Chart 3.8). Complementary surveys of administrators showed that public universities allocate an average of approximately €2,744.79 annually to strengthening social science research capacity. This corresponds to an average annual investment of approximately €16.21<sup>18</sup> per researcher in public universities.

Overall, more than half of the researchers surveyed reported dissatisfaction with all dimensions of capacity-building initiatives within their institutions (Chart 3.9). This dissatisfaction was particularly acute with respect to the preliminary assessment of specialized training needs and the management of research activities. Such findings indicate that current efforts to strengthen research capacity are not adequately aligned with the competencies actually required by researchers. As one key informant emphasized, institutions engaged in research production in Benin generally lack a coherent plan for capacity building and knowledge development. Moreover, the mechanisms supporting research capacity enhancement in the social sciences remain insufficient, thereby weakening the overall performance of the social science research system in Benin.

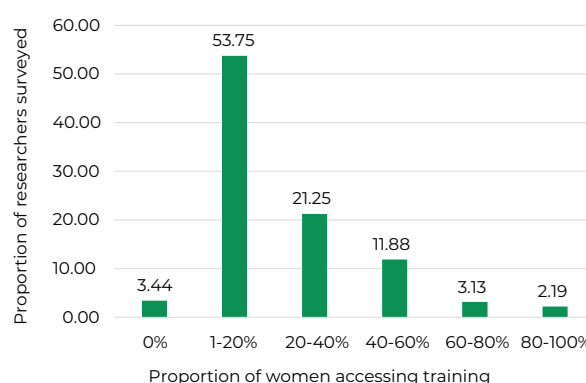
Chart 3.7. Duration of social science research training received by researchers over the past three years



54.38% of the researchers surveyed estimate that the cumulative duration of social science training received over the past three years is between 1 and 2 weeks.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

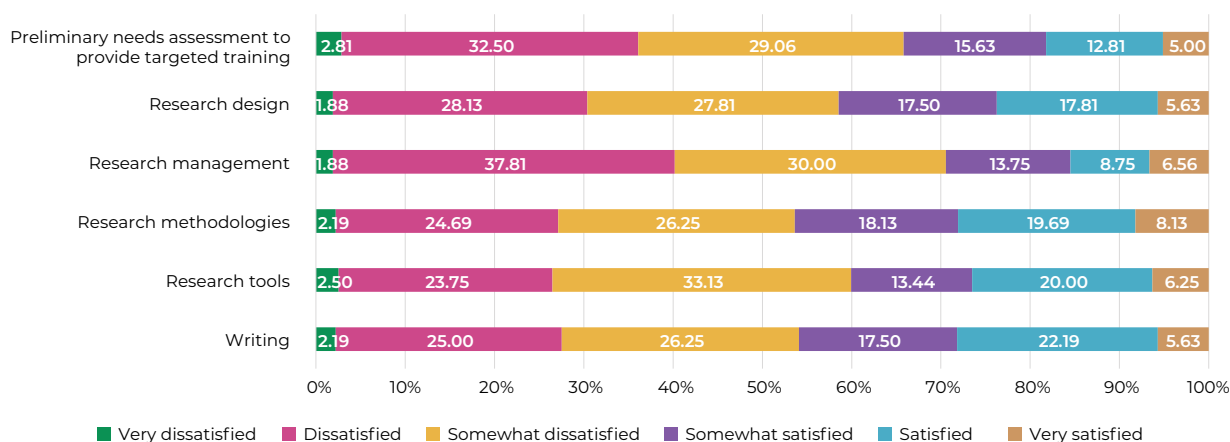
Chart 3.8. Proportion of women accessing research training in the social sciences in the institutions covered by the survey



53.75% of the researchers surveyed believe that the proportion of women accessing research training in social sciences is between 1 and 20%.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Chart 3.9. Researcher satisfaction levels with regard to different aspects of social science research capacity building



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

18 (€2744.79 3 public universities) / 508 researchers

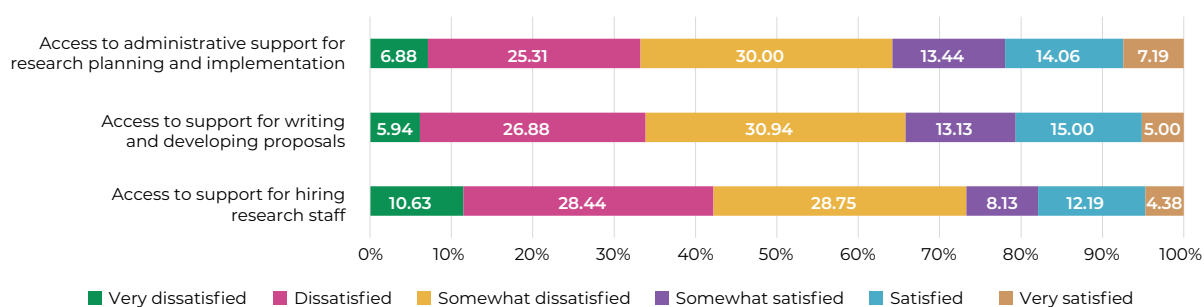
## Administrative Support for Research

The quality of administrative support for research within an institution refers to its capacity to provide effective logistical assistance to research professionals. Such support encompasses clerical services, office management, and facilitation of grant applications. Although administrative support services for research exist in Benin, they remain inadequate. The majority of researchers and administrators surveyed confirmed this observation (Charts 3.10 and 3.11). As one university department director remarked: "...Administrative support for research exists, but is not readily apparent...". Similarly, another interviewee, serving as the coordinator of a

research program, noted: "...the quality of administrative support does not yet meet researchers' expectations...".

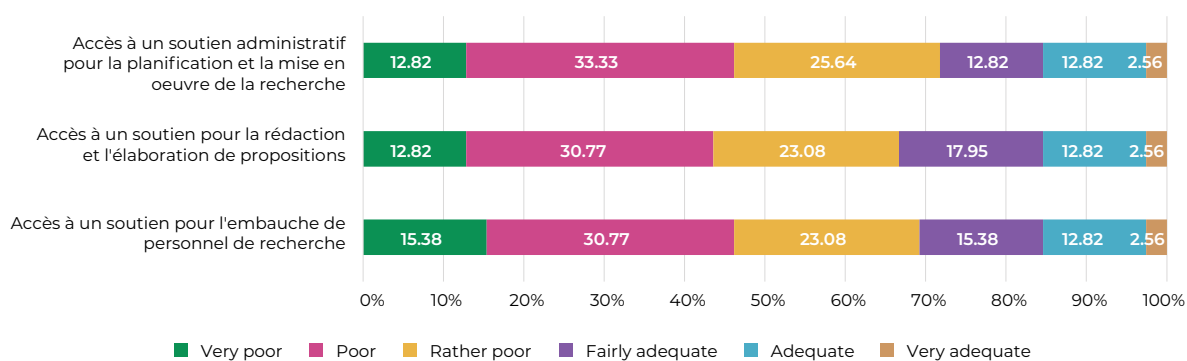
More broadly, universities and public research institutes in Benin are characterized by cumbersome administrative processes, which translate into complex and centralized bureaucratic procedures for fund management. These constraints limit the provision of administrative support essential for research activities within these organizations. Indeed, it is frequently observed that the agility of research project initiators surpasses the responsiveness of the administrative system.

Chart 3.10. Researcher satisfaction levels regarding the administrative support available to conduct social science research



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Chart 3.11. Administrators' satisfaction levels with the administrative support available to social science research



Source: Surveys of administrators.

## Research Outcomes and Training

### Academic Production

The number of published but uncitable social science documents originating from Benin is minimal, averaging 0.01 per researcher over the past three years, according to the Scimago database (Table 3.5). This finding confirms that the majority of journal articles and conference papers produced by Beninese scholars in the social sciences undergo peer review prior to publication and are internationally recognized. The results further indicate a substantial volume of scholarly output per

social science researcher. On average, the combined total of peer-reviewed articles and other forms of academic work—including non-peer-reviewed articles, working papers, books, reports, and policy briefs—amounts to approximately 15 documents per researcher in Benin, based on survey data (Table 3.6).

This Chart is slightly more than twice the number of peer-reviewed and published articles per researcher. Peer-reviewed articles alone represent nearly 40% of the overall scholarly output of social science researchers in Benin.

This pattern may be partly explained by the fact that the number of peer-reviewed publications constitutes a key

criterion for the promotion of researchers and teacher-researchers in the country.

**Table 3.5. Statistics on the number of documents published between 2020 and 2022 by social science researcher**

Domains	Number of citable documents	Number of uncitable documents	Total	Proportion of non-citable documents
Business, management and accounting	23	1	24	4.2
Economics, econometrics and finance	53	2	55	3.6
Psychology	14	0	14	0.0
Social Sciences	251	5	256	2.0
Total	341	8	349	2.3
Number of social science researchers in Benin	1034			
Total ratio per social science researchers	0.329	0.01	0.338	

The term "citable document" includes research articles, journals, conference proceedings, and other types of academic documents published in international scientific journals. The field of "social sciences" includes 24 distinct disciplines within the social sciences.

Source: Scimago database

**Table 3.6. Statistics on the number of peer-reviewed social science publications and other types of documents for the last three years (N = 320)**

Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Peer-reviewed scientific articles published in journals and conference proceedings	201	0	53	5.82	2	0.54
Non-peer-reviewed scientific article published	35	0	25	0.44	0	0.11
Working document accessible to the public	127	0	43	2.63	0	0.32
Book(s) as sole author	41	0	4	0.24	0	0.04
Book(s) as (one of the) editor(s)	37	0	10	0.27	0	0.06
Book chapter(s)	29	0	20	0.34	0	0.09
Report (for example, technical, project, or consulting firm report)	178	0	60	4.94	2	0.52
Policy brief (short document on the political implications of your research)	58	0	6	0.48	0	0.07
Total number of peer-reviewed articles and other types of documents	260	0	163	15,16	8	1.21

No Obs. indicates the number of researchers out of 320 who have had at least one peer-reviewed social science publication or at least one other type of document.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Among the types of documents presented in Table 8, the average output of policy briefs per researcher—typically intended for policymakers—remains relatively low.

Overall, the average production is 0.48 briefs per social science researcher. In fact, policy briefs were authored by only 58 researchers, with an average of approximately three briefs produced over the past three years. This finding suggests that social science researchers in Benin

communicate only a limited portion of their research results to policymakers, or alternatively, that policymakers demonstrate limited interest in the findings generated by researchers. This observation corroborates the conclusion of Sambieni (2018), who emphasized the weak linkage between social science researchers and policymakers in Benin. Beyond policy briefs, the least frequently produced

types of documents include non-peer-reviewed scientific articles, books, and book chapters (Table 3.6).

Table 3.7 presents citation counts for articles published in journals and conference proceedings, as estimated from Scimago/Scopus data. This indicator serves as a measure of the intellectual impact of researchers' publications within the scientific community (Université Laval, 2024). The results indicate that each article published in journals and conference proceedings was cited an average of approximately nine times between

1996 and 2022. Publications in the fields of economics, econometrics, and finance recorded the highest citation rates, whereas those in business, management, and accounting received comparatively fewer citations per document. The "social science" category in the Scimago database encompasses nearly 24 disciplines, including anthropology, communication, development studies, law, sociology, political science, and related fields. This breadth of coverage explains why it accounts for the largest share of citations.

**Table 3.7. Number of citations of social science research products in Benin, from 1996 to 2022**

Domains	Number of documents	Number of citations	Number of citations per document
Business, management and accounting	63	450	7.14
Economics, econometrics and finance	179	2148	12.00
Psychology	49	405	8.27
Social Science	724	6427	8.88
Total	1015	9430	9.29

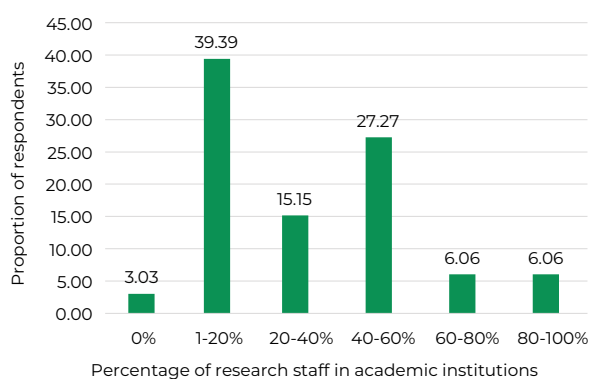
The "social sciences" field includes 24 distinct disciplines within the social sciences.

Source: Scimago database

## Research Training

The quality of research training in this subsection is evaluated through the proportion of academic staff holding doctoral degrees. A doctorate represents both the highest academic qualification in higher education and an advanced credential in research. Accordingly, the greater the percentage of doctoral staff within higher education institutions, the higher the expected quality of research training. The current proportion of social science research staff with doctorates was assessed by requesting administrators to provide percentage ranges.

**Chart 3.12. Percentage of university staff working in or related to the social sciences, according to the administrators surveyed**



Source: Surveys of administrators.

The findings, presented in Chart 3.12, indicate that in approximately 12% of academic institutions, more than 60% of staff engaged in or affiliated with the social sciences hold a doctorate, whereas in about 42% of institutions, no more than 20% of staff possess this qualification. On average, 40% of staff hold a doctorate in roughly 42% of institutions. These results point to a relatively low quality of research training in the social sciences in Benin. Overall, the average proportion of university staff in the social sciences holding a doctoral degree is 33%.

Furthermore, Charts 3.7 and 3.9 indicate that research training programs in Benin generally last less than two weeks, and researchers overall express dissatisfaction with the quality of such training. It is noteworthy, however, that the proportion of staff holding doctoral degrees in Benin is nearly equivalent to that of Nigeria, one of the continent's leading producers of social science research. According to Egbetokun et al. (2020), the average Nigerian institution reported that approximately 35% of its social science staff possessed a doctorate. This suggests that although Benin produces a considerably lower volume of scientific output compared to Nigeria, the quality of research education and training may nonetheless be comparable in both contexts.

Survey data from research administrators revealed that in 2023, public universities in Benin awarded an average of

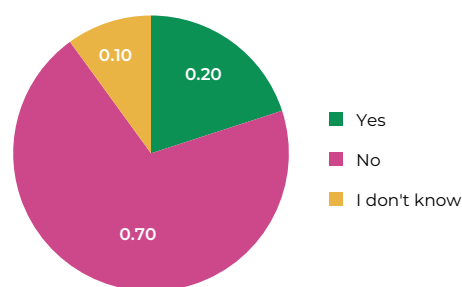
90 Master’s and Doctoral degrees in the social sciences, while private universities awarded an average of 28. By extrapolation, the total number of students who obtained advanced degrees (Master’s, ISCE level 7, and Doctorate, ISCE level 8) in Benin in 2023 is estimated at approximately 550. Descriptive statistics on the profile of surveyed researchers (Annex 1) show that about 9% were between 18 and 26 years of age. Based on this proportion, the estimated number of students aged 18 to 26 who obtained advanced degrees in 2023 is 52 (550 × 0.094). The largest share (74%) of advanced degree recipients was between 27 and 46 years of age.

## Opportunities and Sustainability

### Researchers’ Job Market

Attractive career opportunities in research are fundamental to the development of a robust, high-performing, and dynamic research system capable of contributing to national development. In Benin, however, the majority of surveyed researchers (70%) reported that no attractive career opportunities exist in the field of social science research (Chart 3.13). Moreover, most expressed dissatisfaction with the overall incentives associated with pursuing a career in social science research (Chart 3.14).

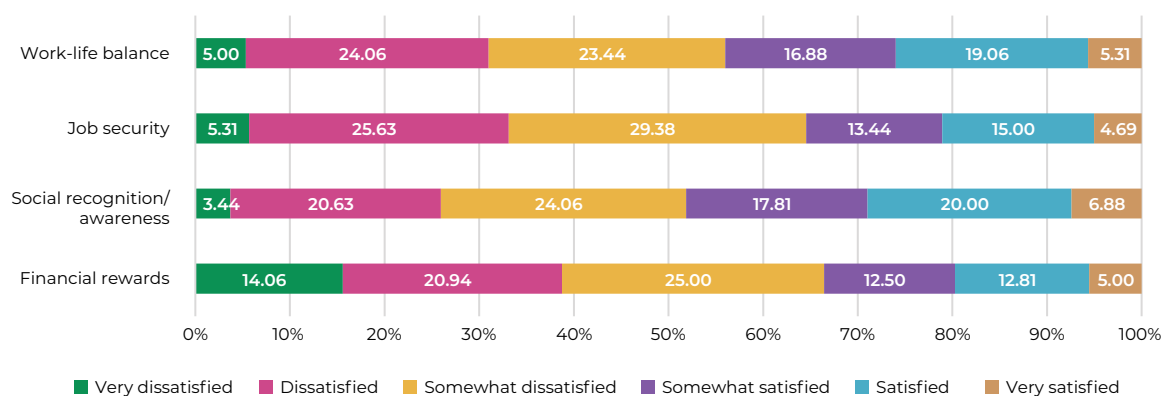
Chart 3.13. Proportion of researchers who do or do not feel that there are attractive career opportunities in social science research



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Dissatisfaction was particularly pronounced in relation to job security and financial remuneration (Chart 3.14). This situation can be explained by the fact that, in general, the research profession in Benin is closely tied to university teaching or is formally recognized only within the framework of research institutes. In practice, recognition as a researcher by the Beninese state requires employment either as a lecturer-researcher in a university or as a researcher in an institute or center. Outside these institutional structures, there are very few officially recognized career opportunities for researchers in the country.

Chart 3.14. Researchers’ assessment of the overall incentives associated with a career in social science research



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

A considerable proportion of individuals identified as researchers in this study are not employed under formal contracts and consequently experience intermittent and unstable incomes. Many are compelled to undertake additional work in order to supplement their earnings. The absence of a central coordinating structure for the social science research system, combined with the limited funding allocated to research, constrains the development of attractive and sustainable career opportunities for researchers in Benin. Although career

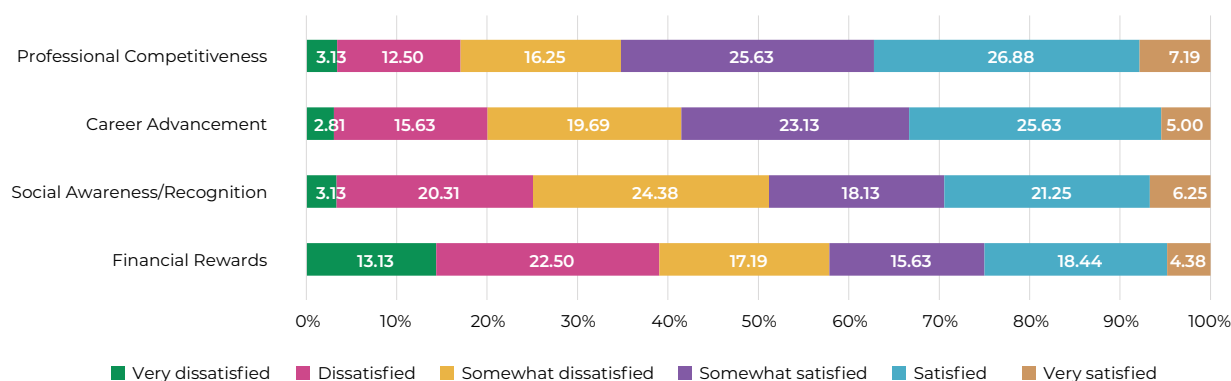
prospects in social science research appear more favorable at the international level, they remain difficult for Beninese researchers to access due to their limited visibility in global academic networks and the language barriers arising from the requirement of proficiency in English.

Beyond the promotion system for teacher-researchers in public universities and researchers in national institutes or centers, which is established and overseen by the African

and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (AMCHE), there exist very few incentives for social science research in Benin. Chart 3.15 illustrates researchers' satisfaction levels regarding selected aspects of incentives related to social science research production. The data reveal that respondents are generally satisfied with incentives linked

to competitiveness and career advancement within Benin. However, they express widespread dissatisfaction with respect to social recognition and financial remuneration. This indicates that, overall, research outputs are insufficiently valued or fail to correspond effectively to the practical needs of society.

Chart 3.15. Researchers' assessment of overall incentives related to social science research production



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

### 3.3 Dissemination of Research

#### Stakeholders and Networks

##### National Geography of Research

The social science research ecosystem in Benin encompasses a wide array of organizations fulfilling diverse functions. Stakeholder mapping identified approximately 424 active entities, comprising 8% higher education institutions, 24% non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 47% media outlets, 3% national government agencies, 5% research institutes, 4% consulting firms, and 9% research funding bodies. A significant majority of these organizations (82%) are concentrated in the southern region of the country. The stakeholder survey ultimately covered 92 organizations (Annex 4), surpassing the 62 initially planned. This expansion was largely attributable to the limited number of researchers within many NGOs, as well as challenges encountered in interviewing individuals from certain selected organizations. With the exception of public universities, where research staff numbers are relatively well documented, it was not possible to estimate the precise size of social science research personnel in other organizations. Consequently, the concentration of social science researchers at the institutional level is analyzed based on the proportion of surveyed researchers per institution (Table 2.5) and through application of the Herfindahl-Hirschman index (Bailly & Carrère, 2015).

This index is estimated as follows:

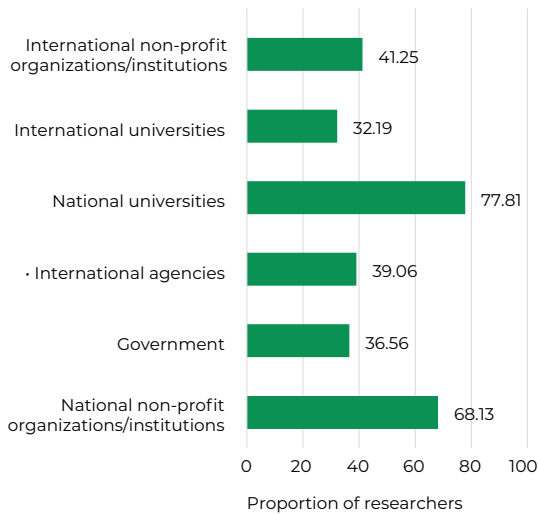
$$IHH = \sum_{i=1}^n (S_i)^2$$

index  $S_i$  shows the proportion of social science researchers per institution  $i$  and  $n$  the total number of institutions covered by the study. The estimated index is 2836 ( $> 2000$ ), confirming a high level of concentration of researchers within the social science research system in Benin. Approximately 52.5% of social science researchers in Benin are located in just three public higher education institutions: the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), the University of Parakou (UP), and the National University of Agriculture (NUA). Of these, approximately 71% are affiliated with UAC.

##### Diversity of Stakeholders and Collaboration

Interactions both within and across organizational categories are essential to ensure the effective functioning of the research system. Survey data indicate that the most intensive collaborations in social science research in Benin occur between public universities and national non-profit organizations (Chart 3.16). Nevertheless, more than half of the researchers surveyed reported engaging in collaborations with individuals outside their organizations at a relatively low frequency in the context of their research activities (Chart 3.17).

**Chart 3.16. The stakeholders with whom the researchers surveyed collaborate**



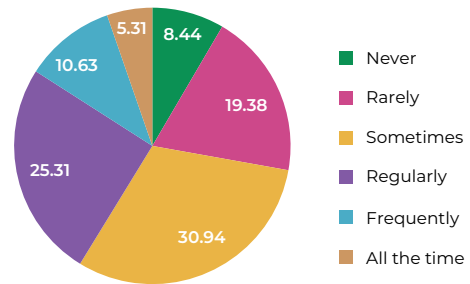
32.19% of the researchers surveyed stated that they had interactions with international universities.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Overall, researchers perceive access to research discussions as favorable for academics, non-academic researchers, and women. However, minority groups, policymakers, community associations, and individual community members experience significantly lower levels of accessibility (Chart 3.18). Yet, these categories represent the primary potential users of research outputs. This finding demonstrates that the current social science

research environment in Benin remains markedly non-inclusive.

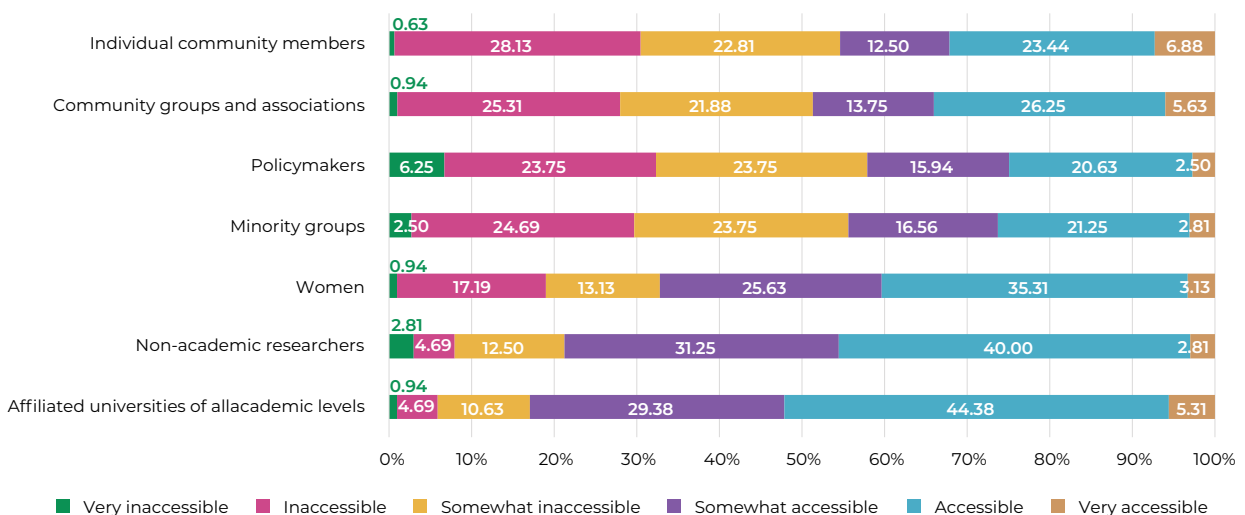
**Chart 3.17. Frequency of researchers' collaboration with people outside their research institutions**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

The lack of inclusiveness is closely associated with insufficient funding for research. As one key informant, a former policymaker, observed during interviews: "... It is not difficult for the university rector to involve policymakers in research, but there is a serious problem with resources that does not facilitate collaboration...". In other words, inclusion entails costs that are frequently overlooked and insufficiently considered in the design and financing of research projects. Nevertheless, inclusion is indispensable for ensuring the quality and relevance of research. It guarantees that research results are representative and applicable, thereby enhancing their long-term value and impact.

**Chart 3.18. Researchers' perceptions of the accessibility of different groups of stakeholders to research discussions**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

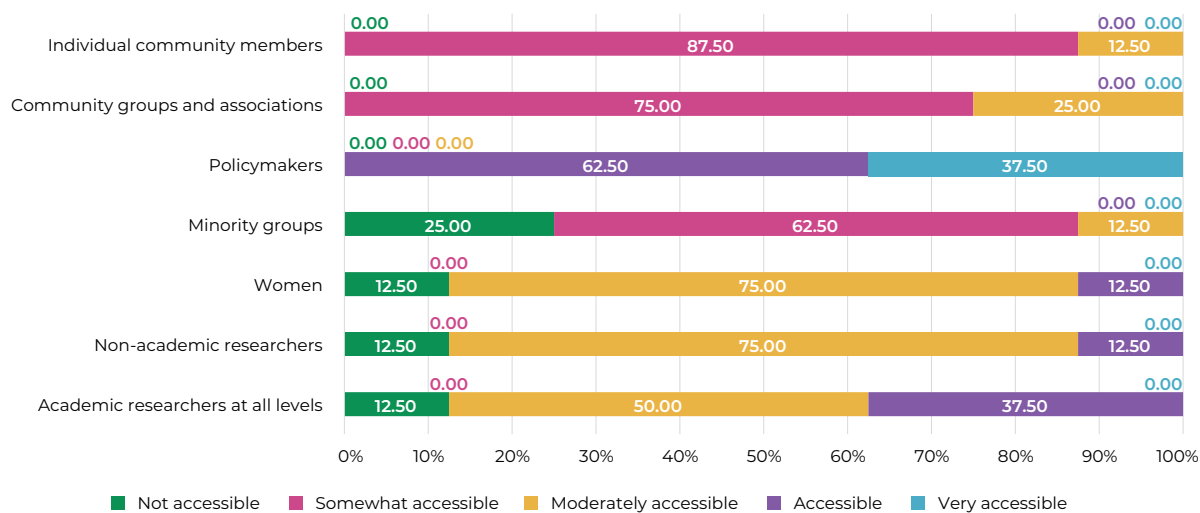
Survey responses from policymakers indicated that academic researchers, non-academic researchers, and women enjoy moderate access to policy discussions

related to research (Chart 3.19). In other words, these groups are not subject to excessive restrictions that would hinder their participation in policy debates. By

contrast, minority groups, community associations, and individual community members were perceived as having limited opportunities to engage in such debates (Chart 3.19). Interviews with key informants further revealed that policy discussions concerning research have often lacked sufficient openness to foster agreements

that transcend individual interests. As one informant, a former senior official at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) in Benin, observed: "... Public debates on social issues are quite limited and not open enough for consensus to emerge and transcend particular interests...".

**Chart 3.19. Policymakers' perception of the extent to which research-related policy conversations are open to the participation of different stakeholders (n=8)**



Source: Surveys of political decision-makers.

**Table 3.8. Statistics on the number of distinct co-authors (N = 320)**

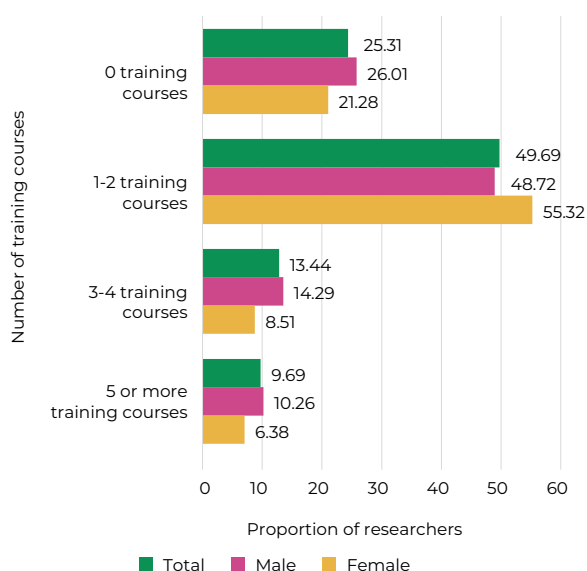
Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Co-authors in your institution	171	0	30	2.31	1	0.22
Co-authors being doctoral students	117	0	15	1.05	0	0.11
Co-authors from another national research institution	85	0	18	0.83	0	0.11
Co-authors of another government, central or local administration	32	0	10	0.19	0	0.04
Co-authors of a civil society organization (NGO...)	42	0	15	0.41	0	0.08
Co-authors from a foreign donor organization or a private foundation	21	0	7	0.16	0	0.04
Co-authors from a foreign research institution in the region	29	0	15	0.29	0	0.08
Co-authors from a foreign research institution outside the region	28	0	15	0.37	0	0.10
Number of co-authors from another discipline	77	0	20	0.97	0	0.15
Total	193	0	83	6.59	2	0.63

No Obs. indicates the number of researchers out of 320 who had at least one co-author of a publication in the last three years.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Furthermore, the surveyed researchers reported engagement in intersectoral collaborations. Table 3.8 presents the number of distinct co-authors with whom they collaborated over the past three years. The data show that, on average, each researcher worked with approximately seven co-authors on their scientific outputs during this period (Table 3.8). Collaborations in social science research were relatively more frequent with colleagues from the same institution, doctoral students, and national research institutes. With respect to interdisciplinary collaborations, the average researcher reported approximately one co-author from a discipline outside the social sciences over the past three years (Table 3.8). Overall, collaborations involving other governments and foreign donors in social science research were the least common.

**Chart 3.20. Number of research communication training sessions attended by researchers over the past three years**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

### Research Communication Skills

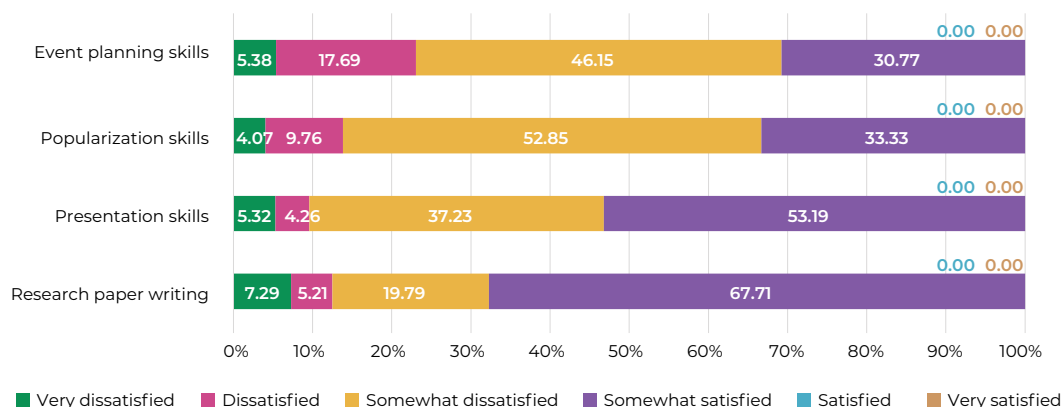
Three-quarters of the researchers surveyed (75%) reported participating in no more than two research communication training sessions over the past three years (Chart 3.20). On average, each researcher attended approximately two such sessions during this period. Overall, researchers expressed satisfaction with the skills acquired in writing research papers and presenting research findings (Chart 3.21).

However, they reported general dissatisfaction with the competencies gained in disseminating research and organizing events (Chart 3.21). In Benin, most research communication training programs devote little or no attention to these dimensions. Instead, they primarily emphasize the development of skills related to writing and publishing scientific articles in high-impact international journals, rather than fostering communication and promotion of research at the local level. Interviews with key informants further confirmed that communication surrounding social science research results in Benin remains limited.

As one lecturer-researcher at a public university observed: “...Communicating research results is fundamental. However, I think that Beninese researchers have not yet fully grasped the importance of communication. Yet, it is this that provides visibility to everything that is being done...”.

Another key informant, the director of a Non-Governmental Organization, declared: “...Regarding institutions and civil society organizations, communicating about research results is not common practice. As soon as results are obtained, reports are produced and simply submitted to partners, but communication about these results is very rare...”

**Chart 3.21. Researcher satisfaction levels with some aspects of research communication training**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

## Research Disseminating Methods

### Local Journals

Benin does not currently possess any national social science journals indexed in the Scopus database. Nevertheless, suitable regional journals included in this database provide outlets for the dissemination of research findings. Table 3.9 presents the number of social science journals in Africa indexed in Scopus, indicating that the continent as a whole host 78 such journals.

**Table 3.9. Number of social science journals in Africa on Scimago in 2022**

Domains	Number of journals
Business, management and accounting	8
Economics, econometrics and finance	10
Psychology	6
Social Science	54
Total	78
Number of social science researchers in Benin	1034
Ratio per social science researchers	0.075

The "social sciences" field includes 24 distinct disciplines within the social sciences.

Source: Scimago database

The ratio of journals in the region to the number of social science researchers is 0.075, which corresponds to approximately one journal for every fourteen social science researchers in Benin. The African Journals Online (AJOL) indexing platform also offers relevant information on regional journals not covered by Scopus. As of March 2024, AJOL listed nearly 742 journals, of which 487 were open access across all disciplines.

Within the social sciences, the platform hosted 582 journals, only one of which is published in Benin (Table 3.10): *Annales des Sciences Agronomiques (ASA)*. Accordingly, on the AJOL platform, there is approximately one journal available for every two Beninese social science researchers.

The literature review further revealed that Benin hosts approximately 23 local scientific journals managed by entities or faculties within public universities, which publish articles and other scholarly documents in French and/or English. However, the overall quality of publications in these journals is frequently inadequate. In

addition, the majority of these journals lack visibility at the national, regional, and international levels, despite being listed in the National Library of Benin and possessing ISSNs. Based on the number of local journals hosted by public universities, the ratio of journals per researcher is estimated at 0.022, corresponding to approximately one journal for every forty-five Beninese social science researchers. It is also noteworthy that none of the local journals disseminate research findings in the country's indigenous languages.

**Table 3.10. Number of social science journals on AJOL**

Newspaper categories in AJOL	Number of journals
African Studies	100
Art & Architecture	20
Economics & Development	93
Education	54
Finance & Management	32
History	6
Humanities	104
Language & Literature	34
Philosophy	9
Political Science & Law	29
Psychology & Psychiatry	22
Religion	11
Sociology & Anthropology	71
Total	582
Number of social science researchers in Benin	1034
Ratio per social science researchers	0.563

Source: AJOL database <sup>19</sup>.

### International Exhibitions/Collaborations

International collaborations in social science research are relatively widespread in Benin. Table 3.11 presents the number of publications in which author affiliations span more than one country and include at least one Beninese researcher or an individual affiliated with a Beninese institution. The data indicate that approximately 69% of social science publications produced by Beninese researchers between 2020 and 2022 involved collaboration with foreign research institutions, according to Scimago. This finding is consistent with the results shown in Chart 15, which reveal that 71% of researchers reported collaboration with international universities and/or agencies during the past three years. Table 3.12, which

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajol/browseBy/category>

details the average number of distinct co-authors from foreign institutions over the same period, shows that only 50 out of 320 researchers had at least one co-author from abroad, with an average of approximately five distinct

foreign co-authors. Overall, the average researcher collaborated with about one co-author affiliated with a foreign institution during the last three years.

**Table 3.11. International collaborations in the social science research system in Benin, over the period 2020-2022**

Domains	Number of documents	Number of documents with international collaboration	Average proportion of international collaboration
Business, management and accounting	24	13	54.8
Economics, econometrics and finance	55	32	58.1
Psychology	14	11	75.6
Social Science	256	183	71.7
Total	349	239	68.5

The "social sciences" field includes 24 distinct disciplines within the social sciences.

Source: Scimago database

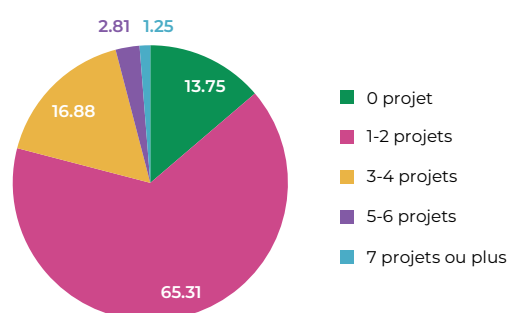
**Table 3.12. Statistics on the number of distinct international co-authors in social science research in Benin (N = 20)**

Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Co-authors from a foreign donor organization or a private foundation	21	0	7	0.16	0	0.04
Co-authors from a foreign research institution in the region	29	0	15	0.29	0	0.08
Co-authors from a foreign research institution outside the region	28	0	15	0.37	0	0.10
Number of distinct co-authors in a foreign institution	50	0	33	0.83	0	0.19

No Obs. indicates the number of researchers out of 320 who had at least one international co-author in the last three years.

Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

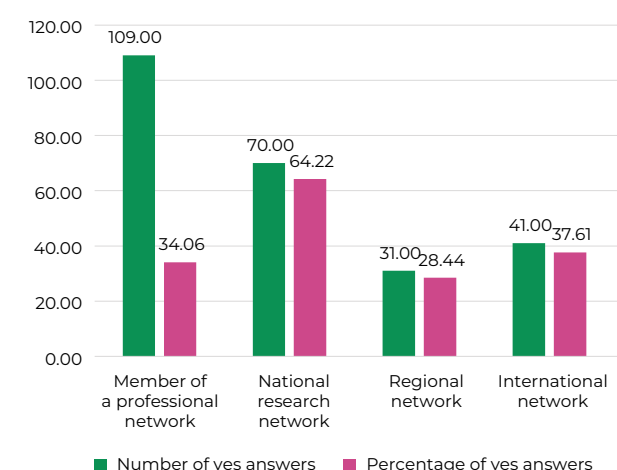
**Chart 3.22. Number of international research projects in which the surveyed researchers have worked over the past three years**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Surveys conducted among research administrators revealed that the number of international research projects involving institutions ranged from zero to ten, with an average of approximately one project per institution per year. These international collaborative initiatives were more frequently directed by male researchers. Of ten international projects, only three were led by women. Overall, about 65% of the researchers surveyed reported participation in one or two international research projects during the past three years (Chart 3.22).

**Chart 3.23. Researchers' membership in a professional research network**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Furthermore, 34% of the researchers polled indicated that they have a professional research network. Chart 3.23 depicts, in absolute terms and as a percentage, the types of networks to which the surveyed researchers belong. It demonstrates that 64% of people having a professional network have a national network, 28% a regional network, and 38% a global network. These findings show that social science researchers are more likely to participate in local research networks.

## Research Outreach Deliverables

### Conferences and Debates

Scientific conferences, typically directed toward an academic audience, and public debates, which primarily engage non-academic participants such as policymakers and civil society stakeholders, play a vital role in the communication of research. They serve as key mechanisms for disseminating research findings to a wider public. Survey data from administrators revealed that each institution organized, on average, four scientific conferences and one public debate during the past three years (Table 3.13). Notably, only 64% of administrators reported having organized at least one scientific conference, while 49% indicated having organized at least one public debate. The typical institution in the sample hosted two scientific events per year but no public debates over three years. This observation aligns with responses from researchers regarding their participation in scientific conferences or seminars. A majority of researchers surveyed reported attending at least one scientific event organized either by their own institution (80.6%) or by other institutions within the country (61.9%) during the past three years (Chart 3.24). By contrast, participation in international scientific conferences was relatively limited, with approximately 68.4% of surveyed researchers indicating that they had not attended any such conference in the last three years (Chart 3.24).

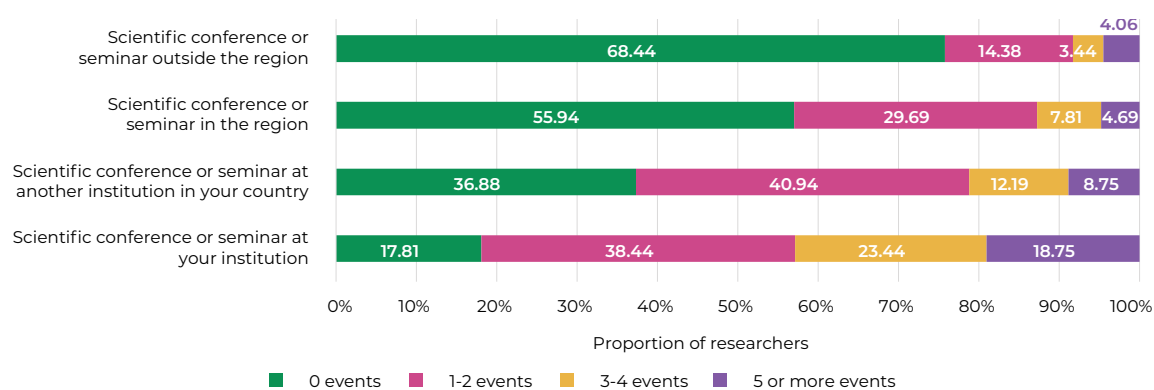
**Table 3.13. Number of scientific conferences and public debates organized by the institutions investigated over the last three years in Benin (N = 39)**

Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Organized scientific conference – national audience	24	0	7	1.59	1	0.34
Organized scientific conference – regional audience	18	0	7	1.05	0	0.29
Organized scientific conference – international audience from outside the region	14	0	8	0.95	0	0.31
Total number of scientific events per institution	25	0	20	3.59	2	0.81
Public debates (involving researchers, politicians and civil society)	19	0	11	1.05	0	0.34

No Obs. indicates the number of administrators out of 39 who have recorded at least one scientific conference or public debate in their institutions over the past three years.

Source: Surveys of administrators.

Chart 3.24. Number of events in which the surveyed researchers participated over the past three years



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

### Online Research Presence

Irrespective of the publication of scientific articles in regional and international journals, which are generally made available online immediately following acceptance, fewer than 28% of researchers in the sample reported taking the initiative to disseminate their research results online, either independently or through institutional support, in order to enhance their visibility within the scientific community (Chart 3.25). Among these, only about 26% maintained personal web pages provided by their institutions to facilitate access to their individual work. In addition, merely 23% were registered as authors in internationally recognized scientific databases. These databases are widely available and accessible without restrictions related to discipline or country of origin, with notable examples including Google Scholar, Publons, ORCID, ResearchGate, and Academia.edu. This situation contributes to the limited visibility of social science research in Benin. Indeed, most researchers demonstrate very limited familiarity with online platforms and other available mechanisms for increasing the visibility of their research outputs.

Capacity development in this domain is evidently required. In addition, the limited visibility of research is compounded by the fact that most local scientific journals are not accessible online and therefore do not provide open access to their archives. Furthermore, 44% of the research administrators surveyed reported that their institution maintains a website intended to disseminate research outputs (Chart 3.25). However, these websites are often not updated on a regular basis. It is thus apparent that in Benin, the significant opportunities offered by the internet are not being effectively harnessed to enhance the visibility of social science research outputs.

The blue and orange bars represent researchers' responses to the following questions: (i) Does your institution provide personal web pages for accessing

your research? (ii) Are you a registered author in an international research database or database? The green and purple bars represent administrators' responses to the question: Does your institution have a website that explains staff activities and makes research outputs available? The purple bar indicates the number of "yes" answers, while the green bar indicates the percentage of "yes" answers.

Chart 3.25. Online visibility of social science research conducted in Benin



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey and administrators.

### Media Engagement for Research Outreach

With respect to the dissemination of research findings through the media, survey results indicated that, over the past three years, only 12% of researchers contributed articles to the mainstream press. Approximately 27% reported sharing their work online, 25% promoted their research through television, and 33% participated in radio programs to communicate their discoveries. Accordingly, the surveys reveal that, during this three-year period, the average researcher contributed one article to the mainstream press, engaged twice in online dissemination or blogging, appeared on two radio programs, and made

one television appearance to present their research outputs (Table 3.14).

It is important to highlight that only about one-third of social science researchers disseminate their research results locally through media channels, with radio broadcasting being the most frequently utilized. The relatively low proportion of researchers engaging in media communication may be explained by the high costs associated with such activities. Radio broadcasting and the internet are generally preferred, likely because they are more accessible than print media and television, particularly in areas where electricity supply is limited. In

2021, fewer than half of Benin's population (approximately 42%) had access to electricity (World Bank, 2021a). Moreover, internet access remained restricted for nearly 66% of the population, according to World Bank data (2021b).

A key informant stated: "...Scientific articles are submitted to scientific journals. However, this does not preclude writing two pages in newspapers as an independent initiative." However, it is only when there are events that the press is called upon to make the work of a given structure visible...".

**Table 3.14. Statistics on the number of media interventions for the dissemination of research results by researchers over the last three years (N = 320)**

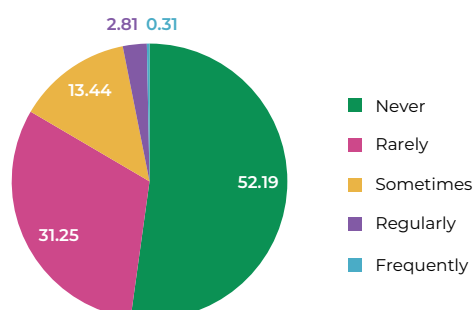
Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Article in mainstream newspapers	41	0	50	0.97	0	0.28
Online intervention/Blog posts	96	0	50	2.03	0	0.32
Radio interview	115	0	50	2.38	0	0.34
Television appearance	87	0	50	1.04	0	0.20

No Obs. indicates the number of researchers out of 320 who have made at least one media appearance to disseminate their research results over the past three years. Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

## Popularization of science

In response to the question, "How often do journalists/media contact you after the publication of a research article/report?", 17% of researchers indicated that they are contacted sometimes or regularly (Chart 3.26).

**Chart 3.26. Frequency with which journalists/media contact the researchers interviewed after the publication of a research article/report**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Furthermore, it was noted that media requests do not always align with researchers' research interests. Indeed, according to a key informant: "...The media make specific

requests that are not always aligned with ongoing research themes. Moreover, their eagerness does not always allow the necessary time for a research project to mature...".

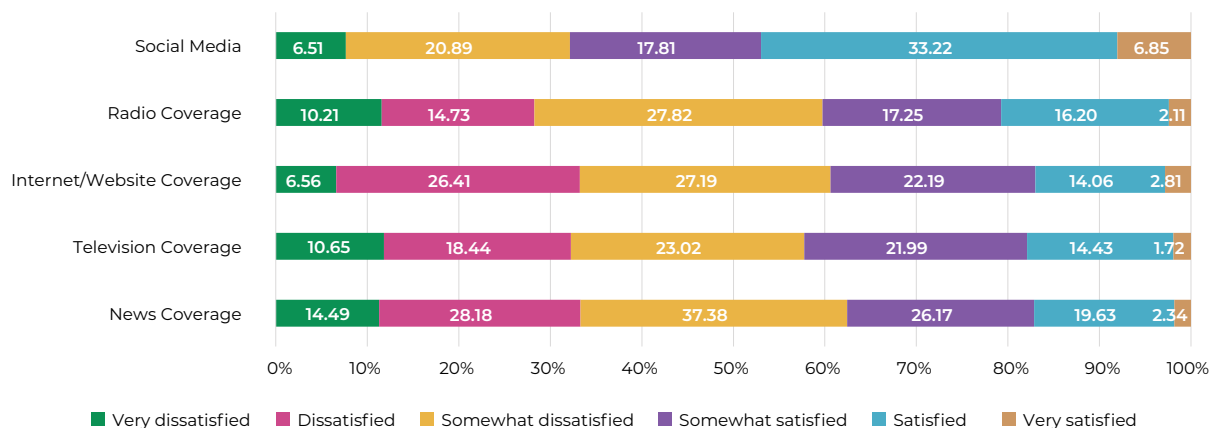
There is limited collaboration between researchers and media outlets for disseminating research. This is partly attributed to shortcomings in researchers' training. A key informant stated: "... Access to the media requires strengthening researchers' media skills. It is also necessary to strengthen opportunities for interaction between different stakeholders...".

More than half of the researchers surveyed reported dissatisfaction with the coverage of scientific events and published research by journalistic outlets, television, radio, and institutional websites (Chart 3.27). By contrast, they expressed comparatively greater satisfaction with coverage through social media platforms (Chart 3.27). Research administrators revealed a nearly identical pattern, generally indicating dissatisfaction with non-academic media coverage, with the notable exception of social media (Chart 3.28). Social media indeed provides rapid and easily accessible dissemination of information concerning scientific events. Among the platforms most frequently employed by research organizations today are LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that the dissemination of published

or ongoing research via social media within Beninese research organizations remains very limited. Beyond the dimension of social recognition, there are virtually

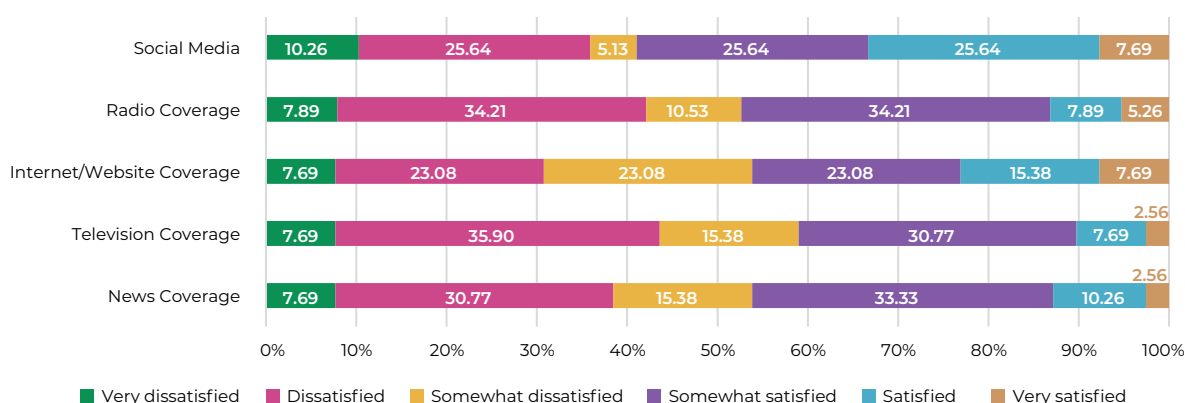
no incentives within the Beninese research system to encourage the dissemination of research outputs through media channels.

**Chart 3.27. Quality of media coverage of organized events and research published by non-academic media, according to the researchers surveyed**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

**Chart 3.28. Quality of media coverage of organized events and research published by non-academic media, according to research administrators**



Source: Surveys of administrators.

### 3.4 Implementation of Research

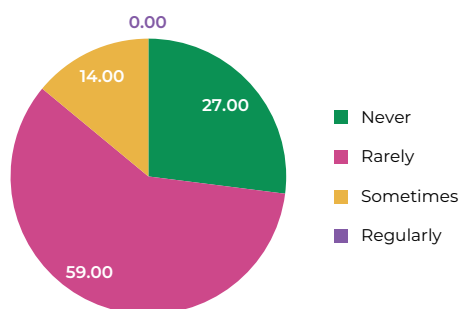
#### Policy-Relevant Research

##### Political Value of Research

Overall, researchers in Benin benefit from a certain degree of freedom to pursue investigations on socially significant issues without being subject to undue interference from political stakeholders (Chart 3.29). The average (median) respondent indicated that negative influence from policymakers on research outcomes is relatively uncommon. This observation is consistent with insights obtained from key informants. As one such informant emphasized: "...To my knowledge, there are no obstacles to the production and communication

of scientific research results, except when one enters the political sphere...". For some respondents, this is due to low internal research funding. According to them, a researcher's level of independence in scientific production is influenced by the source of the funding they receive for their research. One key informant, for example, remarked: "...policymakers do not exert influence on researchers. Rather, it is the financial partners who do, because they fund research that aligns with their agendas." Thus, researchers do not have the freedom to choose their research topic if they want to obtain external funding. Those who provide the funds determine research priorities. Our politicians do not fund research and therefore have no direct control over it.

**Chart 3.29. Researchers' perceptions of the influence of policymakers on research outcomes**



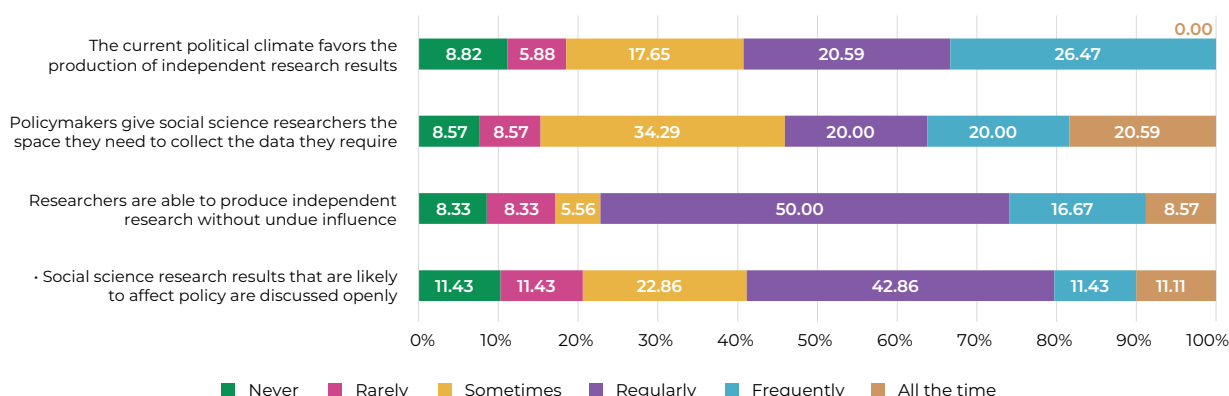
Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Do they even know what research is being done in our universities and research centers? With the exception of the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (NIARB), which is directly funded by the national budget and where politicians can influence some or all of the research. But this case is different because a large amount of research escapes government funding and control ...

Furthermore, according to a key informant, "...in the social sciences, affected populations sometimes wish to reveal raw truths, even though some may be difficult to express publicly in the face of the political community...". This could explain why 14% of the researchers surveyed reported occasional interference from policymakers in social science research findings (Chart 3.29).

Research administrators generally concur with researchers regarding the influence of policies on research outcomes. More than half of the administrators surveyed indicated that the current environment in Benin is favorable to the production of independent research results (Chart 3.30). They emphasized that researchers are able to conduct their work autonomously without undue interference, and that social science findings with potential policy relevance are openly debated (Chart 3.30). Nonetheless, administrators also noted that policies do not consistently provide adequate space for the data collection required by researchers. This limitation is likely linked to the challenges associated with obtaining data from state institutions.

**Chart 3.30. Administrators' perceptions of the influence of policymakers on social science research outcomes**



Source: Surveys of administrators.

A relatively small proportion of researchers surveyed (15%) reported having conducted research commissioned directly by policymakers (Chart 3.31). Among these, the majority (85%) undertook fewer than three commissions during the past three years. A similar pattern was observed among research administrators, with only 21% indicating that their institution had engaged in research commissioned directly by policymakers over the same period (Chart 3.31). Surveys of policymakers revealed that approximately one-third had commissioned research on specific topics by submitting requests to individual researchers or research teams, whether national or international, with an average of one request in the past three years. These findings suggest that policymakers seldom seek the expertise of researchers on matters of social relevance when formulating policies. As one key

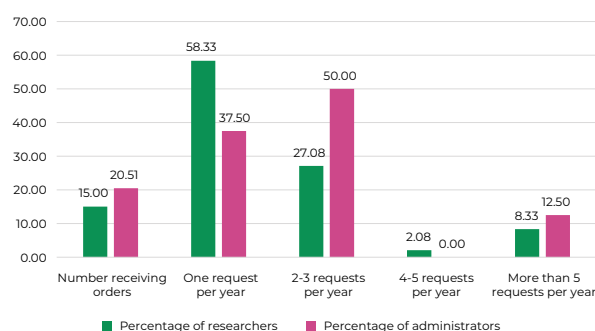
informant emphasized: "...The link between academics and policymakers remains very weak in Benin...". It is noteworthy, however, that most policymakers possess professional experience in social science research (Annex 1). Furthermore, an interview with a key informant involved in the formulation of the 2022–2032 National Research and Innovation Program (NRIP) highlighted that, even when researchers are consulted, achieving consensus in the common interest during policy development remains highly challenging.

Furthermore, only 9% of the researchers surveyed reported receiving funding for policy-commissioned research, with an average of approximately €29,028 over the past three years. Similarly, just 8% of the administrators surveyed indicated that their institution

had obtained funding for policy-commissioned research, averaging around €35,139 per institution during the same period.

These findings reinforce the observation that policymakers demonstrate limited demand for and use of scientific evidence in the formulation and implementation of development policies. In addition, policymakers appear to rely more extensively on research organizations than on individual researchers when commissioning studies.

**Chart 3.31. Number of research projects commissioned directly by policymakers over the past three years**



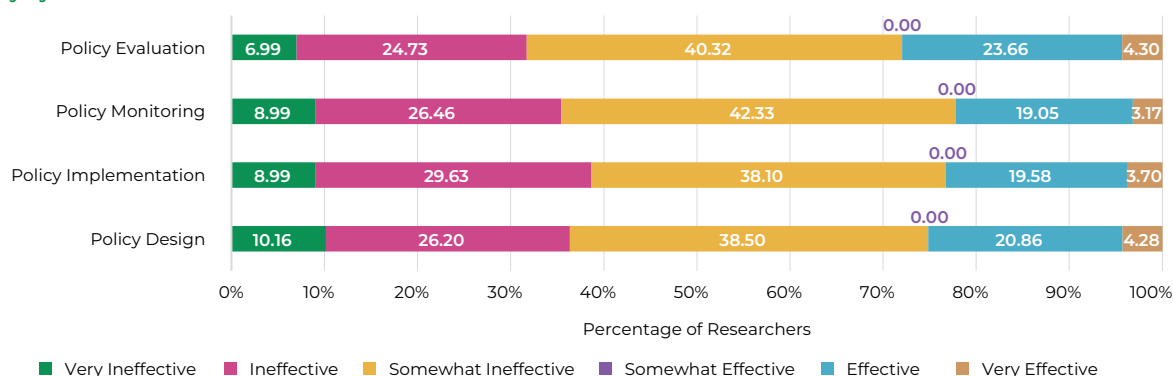
Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey and administrators.

### Policy-Oriented Research

The preceding sections underscored the limited interaction between social science researchers and

policymakers in Benin. More than 70% of researchers characterized this interaction as ineffective across all stages of the policy cycle (Chart 3.32). Surveys of policymakers corroborate this finding, indicating that only one-third regularly seek the expertise of researchers during policy formulation and implementation (Chart 3.33). This weak linkage between research and policy can be attributed, in part, to the insufficient communication of social science research outputs, as previously discussed. As one key informant observed: "... Decisionmakers perceive researchers as disconnected from their real concerns. A change in how researchers communicate is imperative to encourage policymakers to invest in research...". Table 3.6 further confirms that few scientific publications in Benin are explicitly directed toward policymakers, with only 18% of researchers having authored and published at least one policy brief in the past three years. On average, researchers produced 0.48 policy briefs during this period. Another factor contributing to the disconnect, according to respondents, is the limited interest of policymakers in scientific research. One key informant remarked: "...Governments in Francophone Africa do not have a culture of valuing research as a foundation for development. They perceive the researcher as an idealist incapable of making concrete contributions...". Moreover, policymakers are seldom engaged in the production and dissemination of social science research findings, with only 38% of those surveyed reporting co-authorship of documents such as policy briefs with researchers.

**Chart 3.32. Researchers' perceptions of the quality of their collaboration with policymakers at different stages of the policy cycle**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

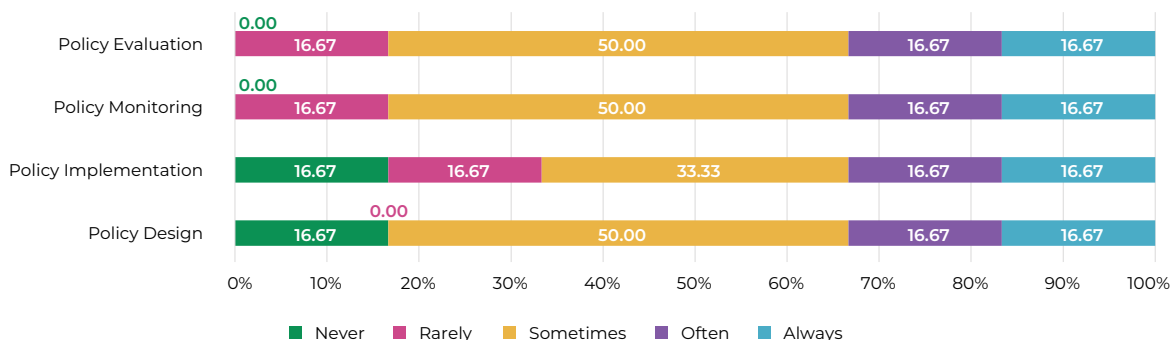
Furthermore, several respondents noted that, on the one hand, academics face considerable challenges in collaborating with policymakers, while on the other hand, policymakers generally seek the expertise of researchers only when confronted with pressing difficulties. In comparing this situation with other contexts, one key informant remarked: "...In Vietnam, for example, things

are not like that. The Ministry of Livestock and Agriculture works in consultation and direct collaboration with the Hanoi University of Agriculture. And there, it is inevitably more effective. Even working with communes in our country as an academic is not easy...". To address the disconnect between policy and research, another informant proposed the adoption of the triple helix

paradigm, which promotes a partnership among government, businesses, and university research units. Within this framework, research demand is articulated by businesses, supported by the state, while research results are produced by academics for immediate

application to social welfare. This paradigm may be effective in disciplines such as economics, management, and technology, but less so in fields such as sociology, anthropology, and social geography, where business demand for research remains limited.

**Chart 3.33. Frequency of collaboration between policymakers and social science researchers according to the phases of the political cycle**

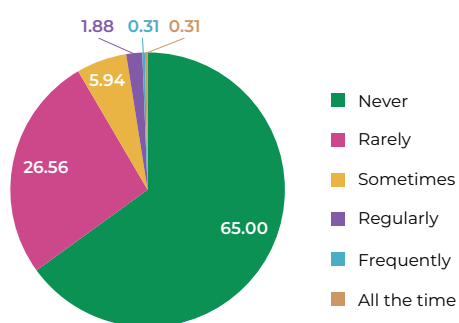


Source: Surveys of political decision-makers.

In Benin, it is relatively uncommon for political stakeholders to contact researchers following the publication of scientific articles or research reports (Chart 3.34). Public universities and research institutes frequently organize scientific events and conferences to disseminate research findings. However, the participation of political decision-makers in such events remains limited, as they often delegate representatives when invited, largely due to demanding schedules.

holding political office. More broadly, in Benin, academics are occasionally appointed to positions of political responsibility, though their representation remains modest. For instance, researchers currently account for approximately 23% of ministerial positions in the Beninese government. As noted by Egbetokun et al. (2020), when a significant share of policymakers lacks research training or demonstrate limited inclination toward research, they are more likely to undervalue the role of research in policymaking.

**Chart 3.34. Frequency with which political stakeholders contact the researchers interviewed after the publication of a research article/report**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Within our sample of social science researchers, only a small proportion have occupied positions of political responsibility at either the central (2%) or decentralized (3%) levels during the past three years. This limited engagement is largely attributable to the fact that most of the researchers surveyed either lacked access to political opportunities or expressed little interest in

### Research-Based Policymaking

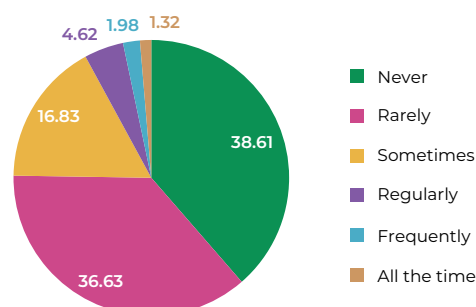
Moreover, only a small proportion of researchers have served as members of policy advisory bodies at either the central (2%) or decentralized (3%) levels during the past three years. This finding underscores the near absence of formal collaboration between researchers and policymakers in Benin.

In general, researchers seldom participate formally in political decision-making structures. Similarly, informal interactions between researchers and policymakers remain limited, as indicated by survey responses. Indeed, only 5% of the researchers interviewed, both junior and senior, reported having engaged regularly and informally with policymakers over the past three years to discuss the use of evidence in policymaking (Chart 3.35).

Nevertheless, collaborations between research and policy in Benin tend to be more informal than formal. As one key informant noted: "...Formally, collaboration is very rare. But depending on individual personal relationships with decision-making circles, things do happen...". In other

words, observed collaborations between researchers and policymakers often occur through affinity networks and informal, non-public forms of cooperation.

**Chart 3.35. Frequency with which researchers have interacted informally with political stakeholders over the past three years**

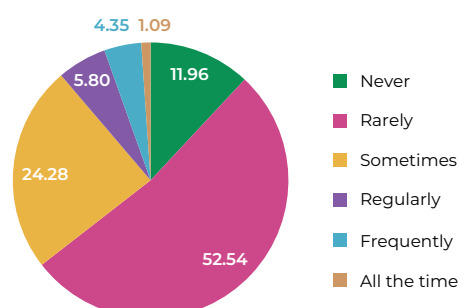


Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

Although the interaction between research and policy remains limited, the majority of researchers surveyed (67%) expressed the view that social science scholars possess the capacity to influence policymaking and to persuade policymakers to integrate research findings into the policy process.

A similar perception was shared by most research administrators surveyed (62%). These results highlight the presence of an under-recognized and underutilized potential for social science research within the political sphere. In response to this situation, one key informant observed: "...I call for policymakers to become aware that without research, there is no development. I would like to see researchers reorganize themselves to become autonomous in order to capture the attention of policymakers and communicate effectively about their work...".

**Chart 3.36. Frequency of citation of academic works in government publications/reports**



Source: DRA in Benin, Researchers Survey.

## Research-Based Policy Mechanisms

Citations of academic research in policy documents remain infrequent. Only 35% of the researchers surveyed reported that social science research is referenced in government publications or reports (Chart 34). Moreover, when asked: "to indicate the total number of citations of their work in policy documents", only 4 of the 354 respondents provided a Chart greater than zero. These included two professors from public universities and two experts from the private sector. The reported citations ranged from 1 to 5, with an average of 4 citations per researcher over the past three years. In addition, technical support provided to policymakers for the implementation of relevant policies—such as targeting, monitoring, and impact evaluation—remains very limited. This finding corroborates the evidence presented in Charts 3.32 and 3.33, which demonstrate that collaboration between researchers and policymakers in the development and implementation of policy is weak and largely ineffective.

## Research as a tool for policy innovation

According to surveys of policymakers, members of the political community generally regard social science research and the evidence it generates as highly valuable within the policy cycle. Specifically, 63% of policymakers surveyed considered evidence from social science research to be very useful, 25% deemed it useful, and only 13% perceived it as of limited utility. Nevertheless, this perception cannot be taken as representative of all stakeholders within the system, as several research administrators reported a lack of interest among policymakers in involving researchers in policy formulation and implementation. Key informants provided illustrative remarks: "...It is rare for a researcher to receive a request for evidence from a policymaker. Normally, this should be standard practice. Unfortunately, researchers are not consulted, and everyone is just thinking in their own corner..."; "...Benin writes beautiful policy documents well in advance. Yet, since they are not based on research results, they are difficult to operationalize. Action should be prioritized, as is the case elsewhere..."; "...In general, the emphasis should be on producing results, even if they remain unused. The results are valuable but not exploited effectively. In terms of research capacity, our nationals are competent, but the difference lies in our research infrastructure, which is inadequate..."; "...In principle, policies should be grounded in objective research data, free from manipulation by decision-makers. A public policy built upon unaltered data should be effective and sound, but this is not the case...".

Thus, although the policy community acknowledges the usefulness of research findings, they are seldom

integrated into the policy cycle. Only a limited number of researchers gain direct involvement in political decision-making bodies. Moreover, it remains uncommon for scientific work to be explicitly designed to communicate social science findings to political stakeholders. These conditions represent significant barriers that must be addressed in order to establish a dynamic and effective

research system capable of making a substantive contribution to national development.

It is therefore evident that the current organization of the social science research system in Benin does not facilitate optimal interaction between policymakers and researchers.

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

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## Key Messages

- The social science research system in Benin demonstrates relatively low performance, constrained by internal factors that hinder the production, dissemination, and utilization of research for development purposes.
- Enhancing the performance of the system requires: (i) the establishment and operationalization of a public institution tasked with coordinating the system, (ii) the creation of a national fund dedicated to research infrastructure, (iii) the implementation of structured training and capacity-building programs for researchers, (iv) the introduction of incentives to promote scientific outreach at the local level, and (v) the institutionalization of mentoring schemes for early-career social science researchers.
- Further investigation is needed on: (i) the specific capacity-building requirements of researchers, (ii) the costs associated with scientific communication and the factors influencing them, and (iii) the demand for mentorship among young researchers.
- The objective of this study was to evaluate the current state of the social science research system in Benin with respect to the production, dissemination, and application of scientific knowledge for sustainable development. The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the principal findings of the study, their practical implications, the limitations encountered in applying the Sustainable Development Research Approach (SDRA), and potential directions for future research.

# SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

## Scientific Knowledge Generation Capacity in Benin

Benin's position in the production of social science knowledge in Africa and globally has shown improvement over the past fifteen years, primarily due to the academic promotion system established by AMCHE and the support provided through international funding and partnerships. Nevertheless, the country continues to be a relatively small producer, with scientific output remaining modest in comparison to Nigeria, whose social science publications in 2022 were nearly twenty-six times greater than those of Benin. In addition, the average production of scientific documents per researcher was estimated at approximately 0.34 for the period 2020–2022, thereby confirming the country's limited productive capacity in the field of social science research.

The limited research capacity observed in Benin is attributable to several constraining factors, foremost among them the inadequate quality of research infrastructure. Within many social science departments of national universities, which serve as the principal research-producing institutions, one finds deteriorated facilities, obsolete laboratories, a shortage of modern equipment, unreliable electrical services, and restricted access to stable internet connectivity. In addition, laboratories and libraries are often under-resourced, with insufficient collections of reference materials and specialized scientific journals. Scientific production is further impeded by inadequate administrative support, which fails to meet the needs of social science researchers. This support is frequently obstructed by cumbersome procedures, characterized by complex and centralized bureaucratic mechanisms for fund management. Moreover, the scarcity of domestic research funding constitutes a critical constraint on the advancement of scientific production in Benin.

A significant proportion of researchers in the sample are unable to devote adequate time to research activities due to the irregular nature of their income and the limited career opportunities available to researchers outside the state system. Consequently, many are compelled to engage in supplementary income-generating activities to sustain themselves and their families.

The inadequate quality of research training in the social sciences, coupled with a weak mentorship system, further constrains Benin's capacity for scientific production. Owing to insufficient domestic funding, only limited financial resources are allocated to training and capacity-

building initiatives for researchers. Moreover, existing programs are not consistently aligned with the skills required by researchers. In general, research institutions in Benin lack structured capacity-building strategies, mechanisms for consolidating achievements, and adequate support systems for strengthening research competencies in the social sciences. Despite the country's young population, which provides a potentially abundant workforce for social science research, the mentorship system remains ineffective in fostering new researchers. This is largely due to the unavailability of senior academics, whose heavy teaching responsibilities prevent them from adequately guiding their mentees in the pursuit of social science research.

The constraints on scientific output in Benin are further exacerbated by the absence of effective coordination within the research system. The country lacks an institutional framework dedicated to the governance of social science research, and no public institution or central authority has been mandated to fulfill this role. As a result, the system operates without clear guidelines and fails to generate attractive and sustainable opportunities for researchers. In addition, the lack of a central coordinating body contributes to fragmented and redundant research initiatives, which struggle to foster innovation or to support effective actions for sustainable development, while collaboration among stakeholders within the system remains weak. Research priorities in Benin appear to be largely shaped by development aid, which determines budget allocations and, in some cases, overlooks the priorities of local communities and researchers.

## Scientific Communication and Popularization in Benin

The dissemination of scientific knowledge through communication and popularization is indispensable for social science research to exert a tangible impact on society. This study revealed weak communication of social science research findings at the local level in Benin. Only one-third of social science researchers engage in outreach practices designed to translate and present research results in clear, accessible language for non-academic or non-specialist audiences, whether through traditional or social media, and typically no more than twice within a three-year period. This limited engagement is largely attributable to research communication training programs, which generally neglect science outreach and the promotion of research at the local level, focusing instead on the development of skills for publishing

scientific articles in high-impact international journals. Moreover, the research system provides no incentives to encourage dissemination of findings through media channels, apart from the social recognition accorded to the researcher.

In addition, Beninese researchers tend to have limited online visibility, partly due to insufficient familiarity with digital platforms and tools that could facilitate the promotion of their work. This lack of visibility is compounded by the fact that national journals are not indexed in internationally recognized databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. As a result, these journals remain largely invisible, and the quality of their publications is at times inadequate.

### Research Implementation of Policymaking in Benin

The correlation analyses between scientific output and governance quality indicators in Benin, as presented in Chapter 1 of this document, demonstrate the absence of a significant relationship between social science research and the effective formulation or implementation of public policies by the Beninese government. Although social science output has increased over time, it has not contributed to enhancing the quality of governance in the country. Likewise, governance has not exerted a significant influence on the level of social science production. These findings highlight the weak linkage between research and public policy. In other words, despite the existence of a relatively favorable political environment for research, particularly in terms of academic freedom, there remains a clear mismatch between the growing supply of research and the limited demand from policy users.

The weak connection between research and policy in Benin can be explained, in part, by the limited communication of social science research findings, as highlighted in the preceding section. In practice, only one in six researchers produces and disseminates policy briefs for policymakers, with an average of two briefs over a three-year period. This indicates that social science researchers in Benin demonstrate limited engagement in developing and disseminating research outputs specifically tailored to convey their knowledge and results to policymakers in accessible language. Moreover, although researchers possess the capacity to exert a positive influence on policy decisions, few are afforded the opportunity to participate directly in decision-making bodies. Those who engage in projects relevant to public policy typically do so in the absence of national coordination or public incentives, motivated instead by scientific competition, the pursuit of academic

recognition, career advancement requirements, and the search for well-funded international projects.

Conversely, policymakers—many of whom are university graduates and, in some cases, professors or researchers—rarely solicit the expertise of academic specialists on matters of social relevance during the formulation or implementation of policies. Moreover, even when researchers are engaged, achieving consensus that effectively serves the public interest proves highly challenging. This situation reflects a broader lack of interest among policymakers in scientific research. Their participation in the production and dissemination of social science findings is limited, and they seldom attend scientific conferences or workshops. Nevertheless, policymakers acknowledge that research and empirical evidence constitute resources of considerable importance for national development.

### Implications of Outcomes

The principal findings of this study identify five priority areas of intervention to strengthen the production, dissemination, and utilization of research in Benin, among these findings are:

**The establishment of a national body to coordinate the social science research system.** Such a body could take the form of a committee composed of representatives from key stakeholders, including universities, relevant government ministries and agencies, research institutes, civil society organizations, and funding entities. This coordinating body should be fully operational and mandated to: (i) develop a joint planning mechanism to align research priorities with national development needs; (ii) facilitate the creation of competitive funding opportunities for principal research stakeholders, based on criteria such as demonstrable societal impact and the existence of clear consultation and feedback mechanisms with local communities and stakeholders; (iii) ensure compliance with ethical standards and principles governing research; and (iv) undertake additional tasks related to the advancement and promotion of the social sciences. The implementation of this proposal should be led by the government in close collaboration with research institutions.

**The establishment of a national fund dedicated to social science research infrastructure.** This is essential to strengthen the country's research capacity. This fund would be designed to support the construction, maintenance, and modernization of critical infrastructure for social science research, while streamlining administrative procedures related to the financing and disbursement of resources. It would specifically cover

laboratory equipment, specialized libraries, internet connectivity, software, and other indispensable tools required to facilitate research activities. The National Fund for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (NFSRTI), currently serving as the principal national research funding institution in Benin, is well-positioned to assume leadership in advancing initiatives of this nature.

**The implementation of structured training and capacity-building plans for researchers.** This is indispensable to strengthen their ability to communicate and disseminate scientific knowledge at the local level. These plans should focus on developing competencies for presenting research findings to non-academic audiences—including policymakers, socio-professional organizations, local communities, and other stakeholders—through both traditional and social media channels. They should also incorporate training in the effective use of digital platforms and tools to enhance the visibility of researchers and their work. The design and execution of such plans must be informed by a systematic assessment of the skills required and the actual needs of researchers, necessitating preliminary studies. Research-producing institutions bear responsibility for formulating and implementing these capacity-building strategies. To further improve the dissemination of scientific knowledge in Benin, additional research should be undertaken to evaluate the costs associated with scientific communication, identify the factors influencing these costs, and propose measures to reduce them.

**The implementation of incentives to promote local science communication.** This is essential for enhancing the visibility and societal impact of research within communities. Integrating criteria related to the local dissemination of research findings into the promotion process for researchers and academic staff would contribute significantly to this objective. Such criteria could include, for instance, the number of published press articles, the production of popular science videos, or the creation of podcasts. Additional measures might involve the allocation of publication bonuses for these forms of content and the establishment of awards to recognize researchers and science communicators who demonstrate excellence in outreach and popularization. Responsibility for implementing such initiatives lies with the bodies overseeing researcher promotion, in collaboration with the government and research institutions.

Institutionalizing Mentorship for Early-Career Researchers. The establishment and formal integration of a structured mentorship system within the policies of academic and research institutions is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to the professional development of young researchers, providing them

with guidance, networks, and opportunities for career advancement. Such a system would require the creation of formal mentoring programs, the training of mentors, and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These programs should encompass reciprocal learning, emotional support, career counseling, and the promotion of a balanced work-life dynamic. This recommendation is directed to national universities and research institutes, which may be supported by the government and international organizations to ensure the system's effectiveness. Actions within this framework could be further refined through additional research on the demand for mentorship in the field of social science research in Benin.

### Limitations of Research

The principal challenge in implementing the DRA concerns access to secondary data, a recurrent issue in Francophone African countries. For instance, the absence of reliable data on the number of researchers employed in institutions beyond national universities created significant difficulties in mapping stakeholders and selecting a representative sample of the research population. A second limitation relates to the obstacles encountered during individual interviews with policymakers. Scheduling and conducting these interviews proved particularly problematic, owing to the demanding schedules of some policymakers and, in other cases, their limited willingness to participate in surveys. A third limitation involves the bibliographic database (Scimago) employed in this study. This database does not provide comprehensive coverage of all scientific journals and publications, particularly those originating from African countries. As a result, the data derived from this indexing system underestimate the scientific output of African nations, including Benin.

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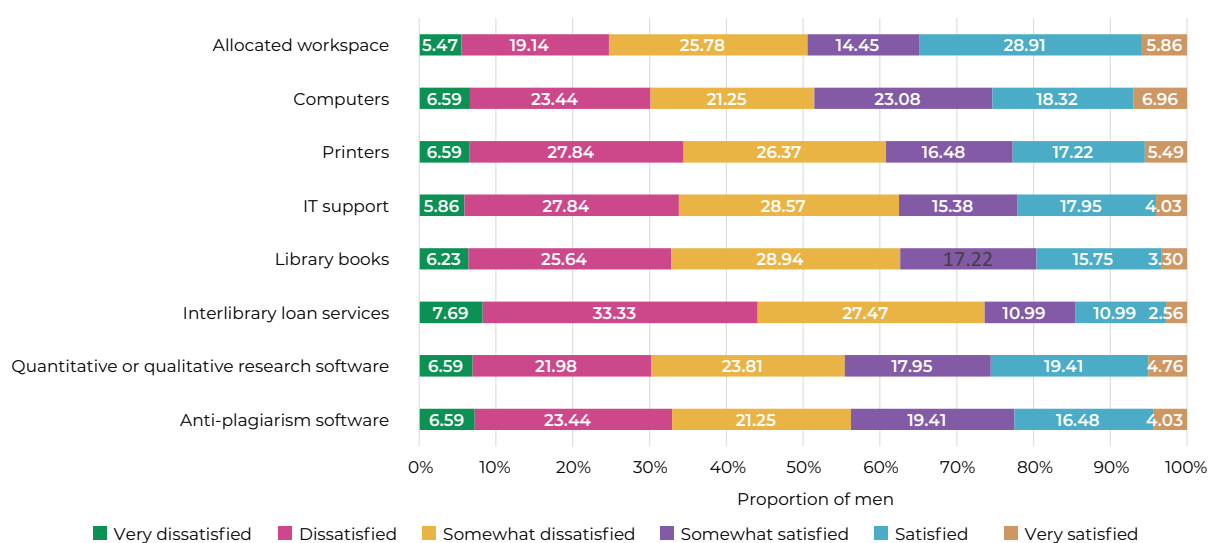
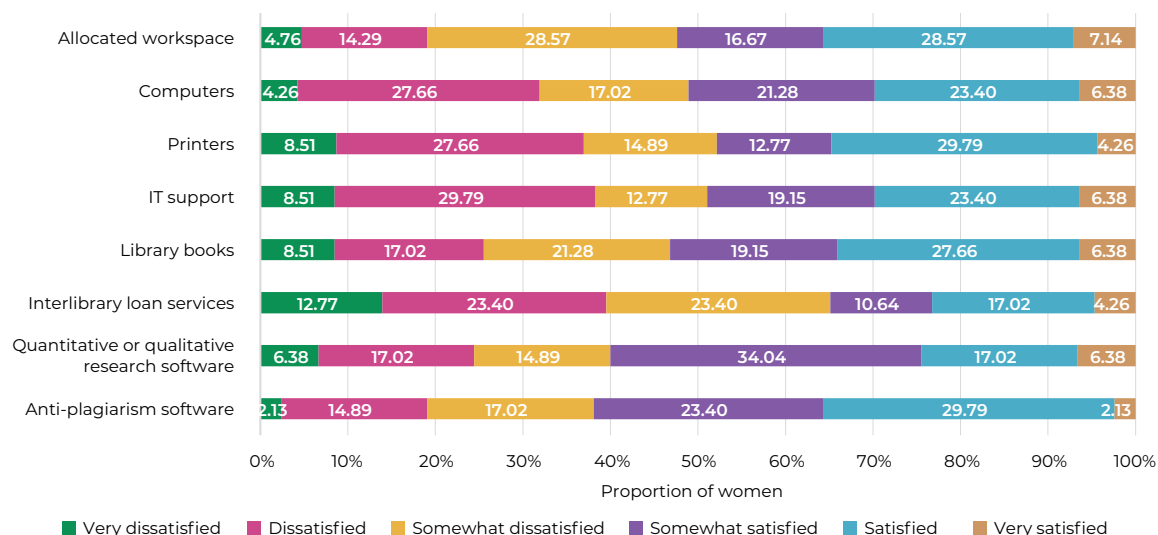
# ANNEXES

## Annex 1. Profile of the surveyed people

Variables		Researchers		Administrators		Political decision-makers	
		Eff.	%	Eff.	%	Eff.	%
Age (year)	18-26	30	9.4	-	-	-	-
	27-36	139	43.4	-	-	2	25.0
	37-46	94	29.4	13	33.3	3	37.5
	47-56	49	15.3	17	43.6	3	37.5
	57-64	7	2.2	9	23.1	-	-
	More than 64	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
Gender	Man	273	85.3	32	82.1	2	25.0
	Women	47	14.7	7	18.0	6	75.0
Nationality	Beninese	314	98.1	38	97.4	8	100
	Franco-Beninese	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
	Ivorian	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
	Kenyan	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
	Rwandan	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
	Togolese	2	0.6	1	2.6	-	-
Education level	License	14	4.4	-	-	-	-
	Master	122	38.1	4	10.3	3	37.5
	Preparing for a doctorate	64	20.0	1	2.6	1	12.5
	Doctorate	106	33.1	25	64.1	4	50.0
	Postdoctoral	14	4.4	9	23.1	-	-
Master's type	National	113	92.6	3	75.0	3	100
	Stranger	9	7.4	1	25.0	-	-
Step in the preparation for the doctorate	At first	27	42.2	-	-	-	-
	In the middle	21	32.8	1	100.0	-	-
	At the end	16	25.0	-	-	1	100
Type of doctorate	National	88	83.0	12	48.0	2	50.0
	Stranger	15	14.2	11	44.0	1	25.0
	National & International	3	2.8	2	8.0	1	25.0
Type of postdoctoral fellowship	National	13	92.9	5	55.6	-	-
	Stranger	1	7.1	4	44.4	-	-
Number of years of research experience in the country	1-5	160	52.8	-	-	1	14.3
	6-10	82	27.1	-	-	3	42.9
	11-15	38	12.5	-	-	3	42.9
	16-20	15	4.9	-	-	-	-
	More than 20	8	2.6	-	-	-	-
Number of years of experience in research abroad	0	229	75.6	-	-	-	-
	1-5	57	18.8	-	-	-	-
	6-10	8	2.6	-	-	-	-

	11-15	8	2.6	-	-	-	-
	16-20	-	-	-	-	-	-
	More than 20	1	0.3	-	-	-	-
Number of years of experience as a research administrator	0	-	-	1	2.6		
	1-5	-	-	11	28.2		
	6-10	-	-	6	15.4		
	11-15	-	-	5	12.8		
	16-20	-	-	5	12.8		
	More than 20	-	-	11	28.2		
Number of years of political experience in your country	1-5	-	-	-	-	1	12.5
	6-10	-	-	-	-	3	37.5
	11-15					4	50.0
Number of years of experience in foreign policy	0	-	-	-	-	7	87.5
	1-5	-	-	-	-	1	12.5
	6-10	-	-	-	-	-	-

### Annex 2. Researcher satisfaction levels with social science research infrastructure, by gender (N=320)



### Annex 3. Number of peer-reviewed social science publications by gender, reported by surveyed researchers for the last three years (N=320)

Gender	Indicators	No Obs. > 0	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median	Typical error
Man	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in an international journal	134	0	25	2.46	0	0.28
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a regional journal	112	0	15	1.29	0	0.15
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a national journal	118	0	10	1.15	0	0.11
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in conference proceedings	103	0	31	1.44	0	0.20
	Total number of peer-reviewed scientific articles published in journals and conference proceedings	175	0	50	6.33	3	0.60
Women	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in an international journal	17	0	11	1.09	0	0.28
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a regional journal	6	0	14	0.40	0	0.30
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in a national journal	14	0	17	0.70	0	0.36
	Peer-reviewed scientific article published in conference proceedings	15	0	11	0.66	0	0.25
	Total number of peer-reviewed scientific articles published in journals and conference proceedings	26	0	53	2.85	1	1.15

### Annex 4. List of some institutions of the people surveyed

No	Institutions surveyed	Categories
1	University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC)	Public University
2	University of Parakou (UP)	Public University
3	National University of Agriculture (NUA)	Public University
4	Clinical Research Institute of Benin (CRIB)	National Research Institute
5	National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin (NIARB)	National Research Institute
6	Bioversity International	International Research Institute
7	Research Institute for Development (RID)	International Research Institute
8	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	International Research Institute
9	World Vegetable Center	International Research Institute
10	International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)	International Research Institute
11	African School of Economics (ASE)	Private university
12	Adonai Higher Institute of Management (AHIM Adonai)	Private university
13	UATM Gasa Formation	Private university
14	African University of Cooperative Development (AUCD)	Private university

15	Higher School of Commerce and Management (HSCM)	Private university
16	International Polytechnic University Dr Obiang N'Guema M'Basogo (IPU-ONM)	Private university
17	Higher School of Management (HSM)	Private university
18	John Paul II Institute	Private university
19	Pigier Benin	Private university
20	Higher Institute of Expertise and Management (HIEM)	Private university
21	Catholic University of West Africa (CUWA)	Private university
22	Higher School of Management, Computer Science and Science (HSMCSS)	Private university
23	Cosine Advice	Private sector
24	COTEF SARL	Private sector
25	Golf Expertise	Private sector
26	High Performance in Management and Consulting (HPMC) sarl	Private sector
27	International Resources and Expertise for Development (IREDC) Consulting	Private sector
28	YADA Consulting	Private sector
29	Volunteer Action of Benin-International (VABI NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
30	Youth Action for Optimal Development (YAOD NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
31	Action Initiative for Sustainable Development (AISD)	Non-Governmental Organization
32	Social Action for the Eradication of Poverty (SAEP) NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
33	Advocacy-NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
34	Amnesty International Benin	Non-Governmental Organization
35	Youth Associations for the Economic and Social Development of Benin (YAESDB-Benin)	Non-Governmental Organization
36	Move-NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
37	CARE International	Non-Governmental Organization
38	Benin Center for the Environment and Economic and Social Development (BCEESD) NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
39	Local Economic Development Center (LEDC NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
40	Agricultural Promotion and Livestock Adaptation Studies Center for Climate Change (APLASCCC-BENIN)	Non-Governmental Organization
41	Research Center for Biodiversity Management (RCBM NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
42	International Centre for Research and Training in Social Sciences (ICRTSS)	Non-Governmental Organization
43	Research Circle for the Identification and Promotion of Alternatives for Sustainable Development (RCIPASD NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
44	Civic Academy for Africa's Future (CAAF)	Non-Governmental Organization
45	RCREID-ONG	Non-Governmental Organization
46	ECLOSION NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
47	Women's Initiative for Development (WID)	Non-Governmental Organization
48	Initiative for Research and Action for Global Development (IRAGD-NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
49	Laboratory of Students and Pupils Responsible for Sustainable Development in Benin (LSPRSD-BENIN)	Non-Governmental Organization
50	Environmental Liner	Non-Governmental Organization
51	GBEWA NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

52	NGO The Potential Builder (POBA)	Non-Governmental Organization
53	MIWA International NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
54	NGO Nature Plurielle (NP-NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
55	NGO Yes-Benin Network	Non-Governmental Organization
56	National Fund for Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (NFSRTI)	National funding organization
57	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFBCA)	International financing organization
58	United Nations (UN) - Benin	International financing organization
59	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Chair (UNESCO)	International financing organization
60	Benin Agency for the Valorization of Research Results and Technological Innovation (BAVRRTI)	Public agency
61	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MALF)	Ministry
62	Canal 3 Benin TV	Television
63	EDEN TV	Television
64	ORTB	Television
65	Ado FM	Broadcasting
66	Arzeke FM	Broadcasting
67	Atlantic FM	Broadcasting
68	Federation of Community and Similar Radio Stations of Benin (FCSRSB)	Broadcasting
69	Fraternity FM	Broadcasting
70	Radio Frisson	Broadcasting
71	Radio Benin Culture	Broadcasting
72	Radio Maranatha	Broadcasting
73	Radio Planet	Broadcasting
74	Radio Su Tii Dera	Broadcasting
75	Radio wêkê	Broadcasting
76	Benin Web	Print media
77	The New Generation	Print media
78	The Press of the Day	Print media
79	The Priority	Print media
80	The Tribune of the Capital	Print media
81	News	Print media
82	Today's Poster	Print media
83	Audacity News	Print media
84	The Other Daily	Print media
85	The Grand Jury	Print media
86	The Great Morning	Print media
87	The Emerging Country	Print media
88	Progress	Print media
89	The Sun Benin Info	Print media
90	The Telegram	Print media
91	The 4 truths	Print media
92	Rankings	Print media

## Annex 5. Summary of the political context and major events that have marked the social science research sector in Benin

Periods	Elements of the Political Context	Major events that have marked the field of social science research
1905-1958	French colonization	The entire research system, in social sciences and other fields, branched out into institutions such as RIOO <sup>20</sup> for oil palm, ITAR <sup>21</sup> for food crops, IRCT <sup>22</sup> for cotton, and non-specialized institutes like OOSTR <sup>23</sup> and FIBA <sup>24</sup> .
1960-1965	Proclamation of Dahomey's independence in 1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1960, Dahomey became a member of UNESCO<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• Cooperation agreement between Dahomey and France in the field of higher education in 1961</li> <li>• Agreement between two ministers of national education, Dahomey and Togo, in 1964, for a joint higher education with the scientific section in Porto-Novo (Dahomey) and the literary section in Lomé (Togo)</li> <li>• The agreement establishing the Institute of Higher Education of Benin (IHEB) was signed between Dahomey, Togo, and France in 1965, with two centers: one for scientific studies in Porto-Novo and the other for literary studies in Lomé. The IHEB was run by the French.</li> </ul>
1965-1969	Political instability (Coup d'état by Colonel Christophe Soglo in 1965, Coup d'état by Lieutenant-Colonel Alphonse Alley in 1967, election of Emile Derlin Zinsou in 1968 marked by a 74% abstention rate, Coup d'état orchestrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice Kouandété in 1969)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Porto-Novo Higher Education Centre was established in 1968.</li> <li>• Held in 1969, of the major strike organized by the General Union of Students and Pupils of Dahomey (GNSPD) under the regime of President Emile Derlin Zinsou.</li> </ul>
1970-1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military coup and proclamation in 1972 of the "Revolution" by Mathieu Kérékou, who advocated a new policy of national independence</li> <li>• Mathieu Kérékou opted for Marxism-Leninism in 1974.</li> <li>• The first postcolonial reform of the Dahomey education system, the "Grossetête-Dossou-Yovo" reform in 1971</li> <li>• UGEED denounces the "Grossetête-Dossou-Yovo" reform as a reform imposed by foreign experts and fraudulently implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1970, an agreement was signed between France and Dahomey concerning higher education in Dahomey, signed by the Dahomean Minister of National Education (Edmond Dossou-Yovo) and the French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in charge of cooperation (Yvon Bourges).</li> <li>• The National University of Dahomey was established in 1970 by Presidential Council Decree No. 70-217/CP/MEN</li> <li>• In 1970, French research institutes such as the Tropical Forestry Technical Center (TFTC), the Institute of Livestock and Veterinary Medicine of Tropical Countries (ILVMTC), and the Institute of Tropical Agronomic Research (ITAR) merged to form the Group for Study and Research for the Development of Tropical Agronomy (GSRDTA). The research activities of these French agricultural research institutes continued in Dahomey under the terms of agreements signed with France.</li> <li>• The National Union of Higher Education (NUHE) was created in 1972.</li> </ul>

20 Research Institute for Oils and Oilseeds (RIOO)

21 Institute of Tropical Agronomic Research (ITAR)

22 Research Institute for Cotton and Exotic Textiles (RICET)

23 Office of Overseas Scientific and Technical Research (OOSTR)

24 French Institute of Black Africa (FIBA)

25 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to establish peace through international cooperation in education, science and culture.

1975-1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the "New School" reform: a "New School" in Dahomey in 1975</li> <li>• In 1975, the name Dahomey was changed to the People's Republic of Benin.</li> <li>• In 1977, a failed coup attempt by a team of French mercenaries to overthrow the government of Benin led by Mathieu Kérékou, whose political party, the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin (PRPB), was the only one allowed in the country.</li> <li>• The Communist Party of Benin (CPB) was created in 1977, in clandestine opposition to the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin (PRPB).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Laboratory of Rural Economics and Sociology (LRES) was created in 1975 within the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education.</li> <li>• The National Center for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) was created in 1976.</li> <li>• In 1976, the name of the University of Dahomey was changed to the National University of Benin (NUB).</li> <li>• Funding for food crop research plummeted in 1978 due to the nationalization of the research system in Benin.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) was created in 1980.</li> </ul>
1981-1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe repression followed by a relentless hunt for "counter-revolutionaries" during the NUB student protest against the PRPB regime in 1985</li> <li>• The PRPB regime became more rigid, with an increasingly acute economic crisis and high socio-political tension between 1985 and 1989.</li> <li>• In a speech to the nation in 1989, Kérékou declared that "all the vital forces of the nation must dedicate themselves to the correct execution of the tasks required by the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program."</li> <li>• That same year, President Mathieu Kérékou granted a general amnesty to all political prisoners and exiles. Mobilized by students and trade unionists, the population of Cotonou took to the streets and demanded the resignation of the Kérékou regime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation in 1981 of a Ministry of Literacy and Popular Culture (MLPC) to accelerate literacy and education in national languages.</li> <li>• Inauguration in 1986 of the research station of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA-Benin), member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)</li> <li>• Creation in 1986 of the Beninese Centre for Scientific and Technical Research (BCSTR) and establishment of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR)</li> <li>• In 1987, the plans of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed draconian economic measures: additional levies of 10% on wages, hiring freezes, forced retirements.</li> <li>• The Regional Analysis and Social Expertise Laboratory (RASEL) was created in 1989.</li> <li>• The 1988–1989 school year was declared a blank year for all establishments whose educational activities remained paralyzed due to the economic crisis.</li> </ul>
1990-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held in 1990, the Conference of the Living Forces of the Nation and the General Assembly of Education (GAE)</li> <li>• Democratic transition and inauguration of Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo as democratically elected president in 1991</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of new competency-based curricula in Beninese education in 1990</li> <li>• Development and adoption of the educational policy framework document in 1991</li> <li>• Constituent congress in 1992 of the second higher education union, the autonomous union of higher education and scientific research (AUHESR)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathieu Kérékou is inaugurated as President of the Republic. Nicéphore Soglo resigns after an attempt to contest the results in 1992.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update of the NCSTR's legal framework in 1992</li> <li>• Creation of the National Institute of Agricultural Research in Benin (NIARB), placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MALF)</li> <li>• The years 92 to 95 were marked by a series of student strikes against the effects of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and a probable political will to privatize NUB.</li> <li>• The National Office for Food Security Support (NOFSS), with a Technical Research Directorate, was created in 1996.</li> <li>• From 1999 to 2001, a series of teacher strikes, with the support of student movements, to demand payment of salaries at the real index and to protest against the management of NUB.</li> <li>• RESL became the Agricultural Policy Analysis Program (APAP) in 1996, now under the direction of NIARB</li> </ul>
2001-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathieu Kérékou was re-elected in 2001 for a second presidential term.</li> <li>• Implementation in the same year of the "Takpara-Sossa" reform with the decree creating a second national university in Parakou and changing the name of NUB which became the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2003, a new National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR) was established. The statutory members of the NCSTR are ministries and directorates of ministries, national research centers or institutes, and national universities.</li> <li>• The Research Institute for Development (RID) signed a headquarters agreement with the Government of Benin in 2003.</li> <li>• Creation in 2004 of the Directorate of Scientific and Technical Research (DSTR) and revision of the decree establishing and governing the NCSTR</li> <li>• Development in 2004 of a national scientific research policy document outlining the main priority areas for research in Benin</li> </ul>
2006-2010	<p>Boni Yayi succeeded Mathieu Kérékou and advocated for a " cooperative and solidarity-based Republic " in 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decree establishing free preschool and primary education in Benin in 2006</li> <li>• The name of DSTR has been changed to the National Directorate of Scientific and Technical Research (NDSTR).</li> <li>• The Ministry of Primary Education, Literacy and National Languages (MPELNL) was created in 2007.</li> <li>• Mission to introduce national languages into the formal education system (MINLFES) in 2007</li> <li>• Creation in 2007 of the National Network of Private Operators for the Promotion of Literacy and Languages (NNPOPLL)</li> <li>• Global food crisis and rising prices of basic consumer goods in Benin in 2008</li> <li>• Decree establishing free tuition at public universities in 2008</li> <li>• In 2009, the NDSTR undertook the rewriting of the scientific policy document in order to have it validated by the NCSTR.</li> <li>• The National School of Agronomic Sciences and Techniques of Kétou (NSAST-Kétou) was created in 2009 and its operation has remained under the supervision of the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC).</li> <li>• The Mission to introduce national languages into the formal education system ended in 2009.</li> </ul>

2011-2015	<p>President Boni Yayi was re-elected in 2011 for a second five-year presidential term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The university centers of Kétou and Sakété were created in 2011 and constitute the embryos of the future University of Agriculture of Kétou (UAK).</li> <li>• The Beninese Agency for the Promotion of Scientific and Technical Research (BAPSTR) was established by Decree No. 2012-139 of June 7, 2012, under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR).</li> <li>• The National Fund for Scientific and Technical Research (NFSTR) was established by Decree No. 2012-140 of June 7, 2012, under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR).</li> <li>• Creation of the University of Agriculture of Kétou (UAK) by decree No. 213-140 of March 20, 2013</li> <li>• Decree No. 2013-453 of October 8, 2013, issued to reinstate the powers, organization and operation of the BCSTR.</li> <li>• In 2013, a strike by secondary and university teachers, a peaceful march by national education unions, ended in violence by law enforcement.</li> <li>• Creation in 2014 of a new National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR), in application of Law No. 2003.17 of November 11, 2003 relating to national education in Benin</li> </ul>
2016-2020	<p>A new government was put in place with the arrival of Mr. Patrice Talon to power in 2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four national universities were established in 2016 by decree no. 2016-638 of October 13, 2016: two multidisciplinary universities and two thematic universities. The multidisciplinary national universities are the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) and the University of Parakou (UP). The thematic national universities are the National University of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (UNSTIM) of Abomey and the National University of Agriculture (NUA) of Porto-Novo.</li> <li>• NOFSS was dissolved in 2016. Creation of the Technical Unit for Monitoring and Supporting Food Security Management (CT-TUMSFSM/MALF) which takes over part of the prerogatives of NOFSS.</li> <li>• The right to strike was revoked for healthcare and justice sector personnel (judges and non-judges) through laws passed in parliament in 2017.</li> <li>• Establishment in 2017 of the International City of Innovation and Knowledge (ICIK)</li> <li>• Launch in 2017 of the investment and development program Sèmè City</li> <li>• In 2018, the election of university rectors, vice-rectors, members of university governing boards, deans, directors, vice-deans, and deputy directors of university teaching and research units was abolished.</li> <li>• In 2020, the name of NDSTR was changed to the General Directorate for Research and Innovation (GDRI), and the name of BCSTR was changed to the Beninese Center for Scientific Research and Innovation (BCSRI).</li> </ul>

2021-2023	President Patrice Talon was re-elected for a second term in 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation in 2021 of the Beninese Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (BAQAHE) and the Beninese Agency for Research and Innovation (BARI)</li> <li>• Establishment of the Delegation for Control and Ethics in Higher Education by decree No. 2023-021 of January 25, 2023.</li> </ul>
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Annex 6. Statistical visa obtained from the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD) of Benin for conducting the DRA survey



RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN  
\*\*\*\*\*  
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCONOMIE ET DES FINANCES  
\*\*\*\*\*  
INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA STATISTIQUE  
ET DE LA DEMOGRAPHIE



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## VISA STATISTIQUE

N°54/2023/MEF/INStAD/DCSFM

DELIVRÉ À

<b>L'opération intitulée :</b> « <i>Evaluation de la performance du système des recherches en sciences sociales au Bénin</i> »	
<b>Responsables :</b>	<i>Centre Africain pour le Développement Equitable (ACED)</i>
<b>Appui financier :</b>	<i>Global Development Network (GDN)</i>
<b>Objectif général :</b>	<i>Evaluer l'environnement du Bénin en matière de recherche en sciences sociales, d'un point de vue systémique et analyser les contextes structurels ainsi que les facteurs explicatifs de ses performances</i>
<b>Bénéficiaire direct :</b>	<i>Centre Africain pour le Développement Equitable (ACED)</i>
<b>Conformité scientifique :</b>	<i>Attestée, le jeudi 30 novembre 2023.</i>

Cotonou, le 08 décembre 2023



Jules DAGA  
Directeur Général Adjoint de l'INStAD

Ce visa délivré pour servir et valoir ce que de droit, conformément aux articles 23 et 72 de la loi n°2022-07 du 27 juin 2022, rend **obligatoire les réponses** à ladite opération et, en respect des dispositions des articles 66 et 74 de la même loi, oppose le **secret statistique** aux personnes physiques ou morales, privées ou publiques ayant participé à quelque titre que ce soit à l'opération. Les résultats de l'étude doivent être publiés de **façon anonyme** et ne pourront en aucun cas être utilisés à des fins de contrôle fiscal ou de répression de quelque nature que ce soit.

Le présent visa a une durée de validité de trois (3) ans à compter de la date de sa signature.



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