

EquiPar Tool Pilot Evaluation



EquiPar



**Results and Recommendations of the 6 month pilot
25th September 2024**

Purpose of the EquiPar Tool..a reminder



- **Aim:** Provide systematic & practical guidance for setting up and/or strengthening partnerships
- Geared towards individual research projects (not institutional-level collaborations)
- Stimulate research project teams to discuss partnership issues, and develop appropriate strategies for individual projects at different stages of research cycle
- Provides a list of discussion questions, and resources across three key themes:

- People management and relationships

- Research activities and outputs

- Contracting and resource management

EquiPar Tool key themes across the research project cycle

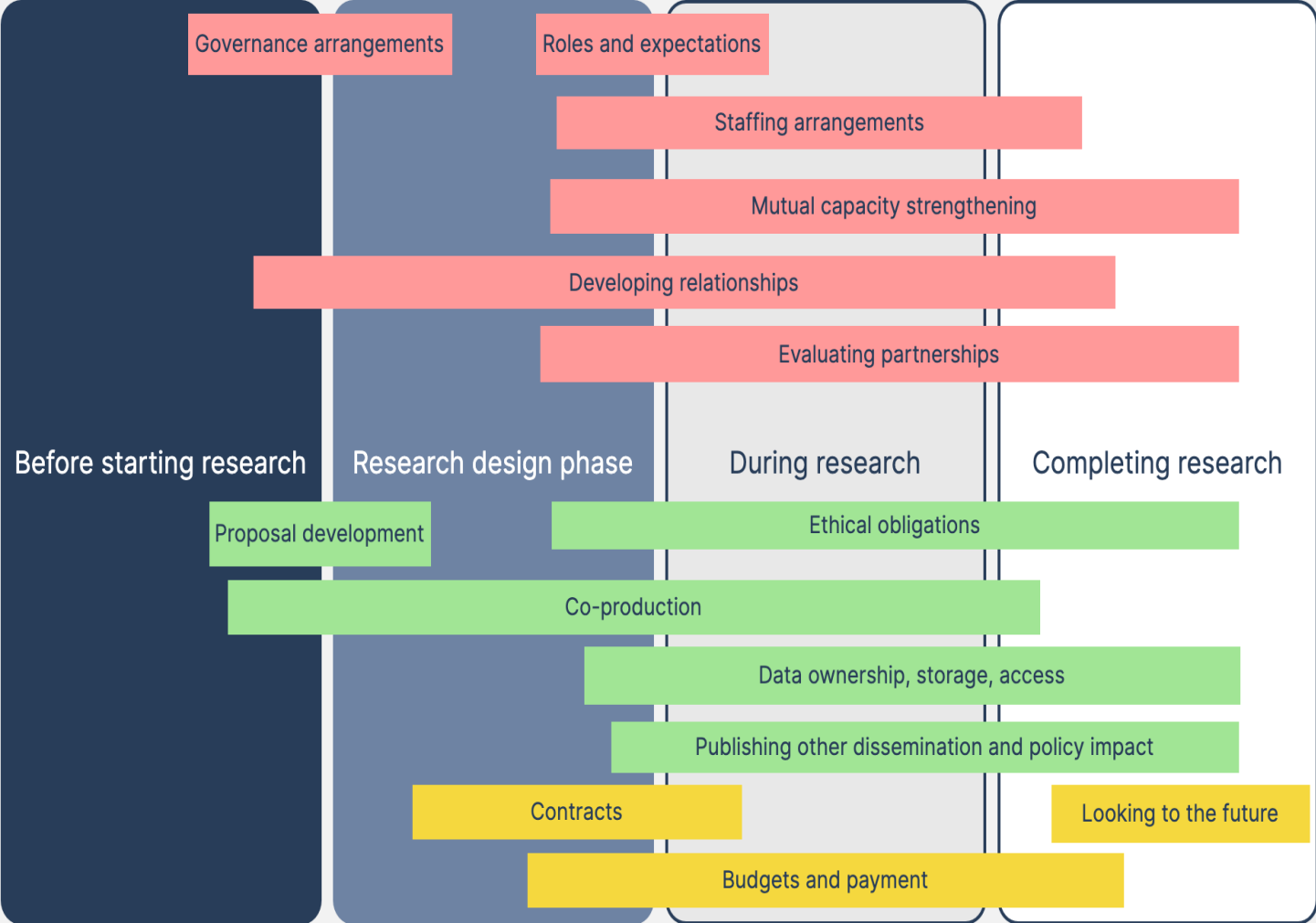


EquiPar

People management and professional relationships

Research activities and outputs

Contracting and resource management



Supporting equitable research partnerships



EquiPar

Aim and Objectives of the Evaluation

Aim:

To assess the perceptions and experiences of selected research partnerships with the EquiPar Tool, and to identify options for improvement.

Objectives:

- To describe why and how research teams used EquiPar (or why they did not)
- To assess team members' perceptions of the utility of EquiPar in planning, managing and monitoring their partnership, and any challenges they identified
- To document any changes to the operation of partnerships made as a result of using EquiPar
- To identify areas for improvement in EquiPar in terms of its content, clarity and ease of use, and to provide advice on how it could be used by research teams.

Methods



Equipar



Data overview



Equipar

In-depth Interviews

26 Sep 2023 – 29 Feb 2024

Respondents	LSHTM	Partners	Total
PIs/Co-Is	5	5	10
Key contacts/Early career researchers	7	-	7
Coordinators/Managers	1	3	4
Peer researcher	-	1	1
Total	13	9	22

Online Survey (anonymous)

15 Dec 2023 – 15 March 2024

- **Invited participants:** 46
- **Completed - LSHTM:** 6; **Partners:** 20
- **Total:** 26

Diverse research partnerships, at different stages



Equipar

- Ranged from 3 to 9 partners (including LSHTM)
- Partnerships between LSHTM and LMICs only (3 projects)
- Partnerships with LMICs and HIC institutions (3 projects)
- LMIC partners mostly located in Africa, one in S.E. Asia
- Teams organised by:
 - Work packages and expert teams (4 projects)
 - Country teams (1 project)
 - Topic areas (1 project)
- At different stages: early (1 project), midway (3 projects), late (2 projects)



EquiPar

Use of the EquiPar Tool

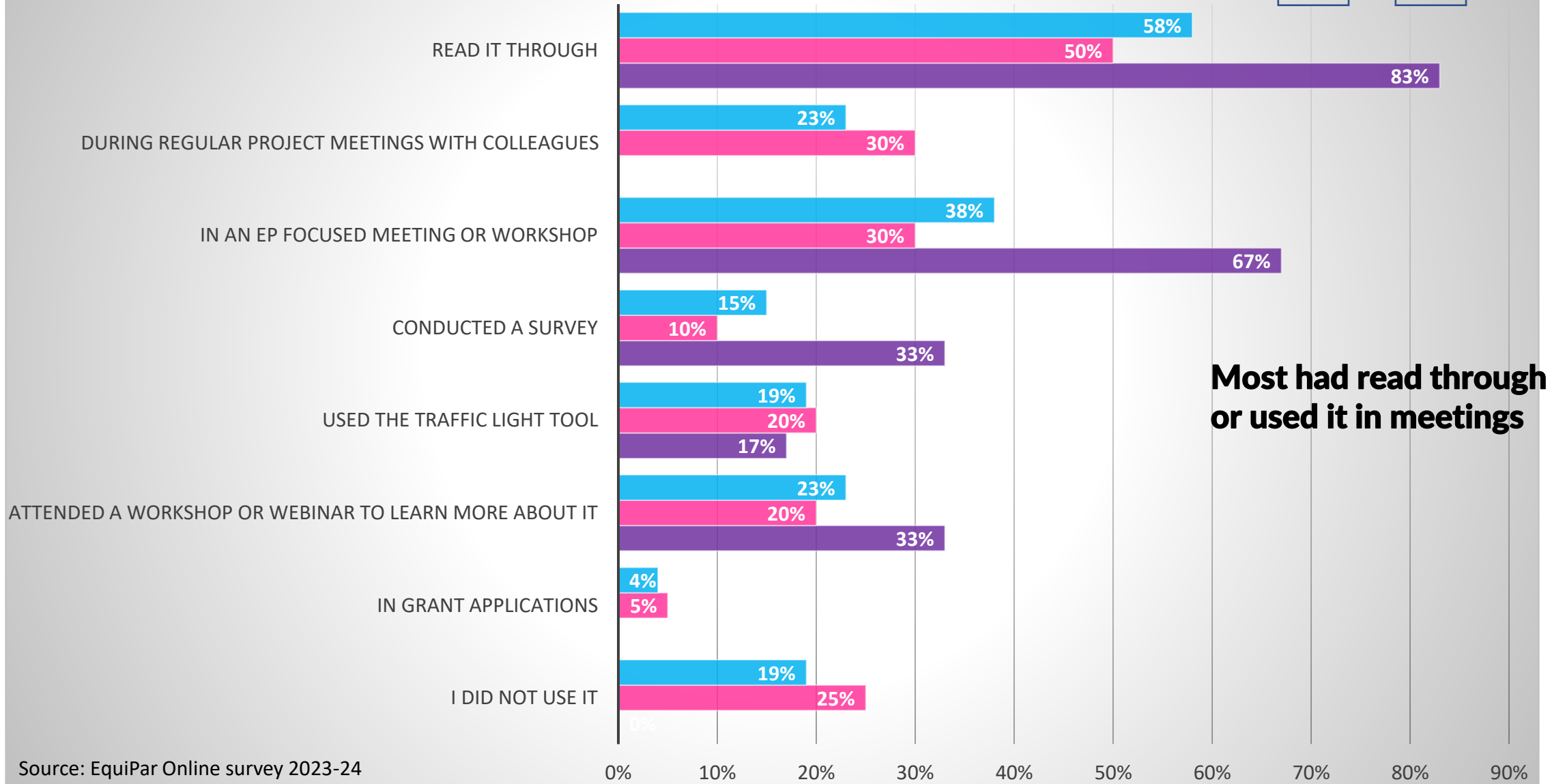
All participating projects had engaged with EquiPar in some way



EquiPar

How did you use the EquiPar Tool?

■ Combined ■ Partners ■ LSHTM
N=20 N=6



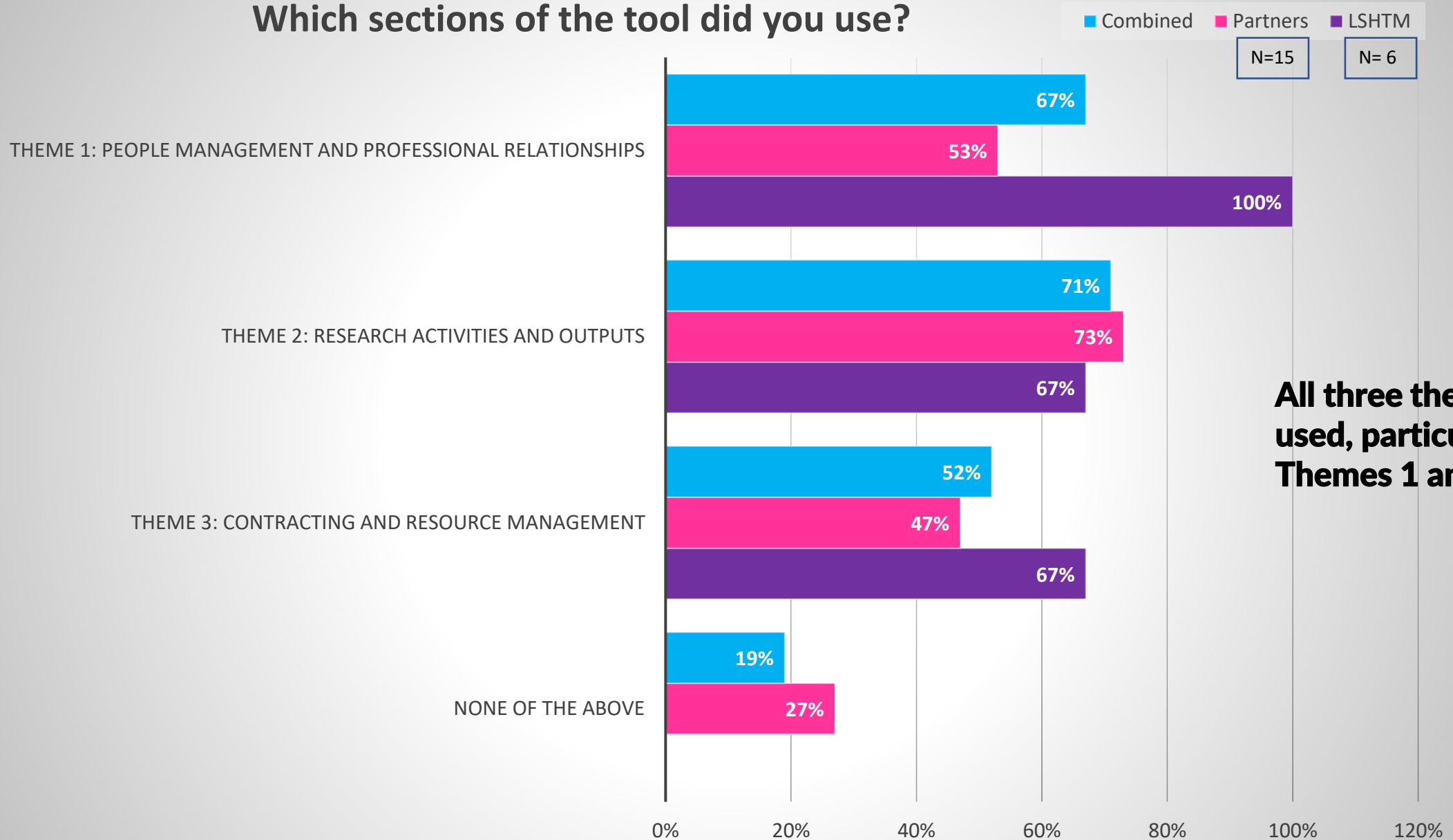
Most had read through or used it in meetings

Source: EquiPar Online survey 2023-24



Equipar

Which sections of the tool did you use?



All three themes were used, particularly Themes 1 and 2

Strategies of use



Equipar

■ Experiments with surveys of different lengths (3 projects)

'So now we're at this point where I'm supposed to come up with a shorter survey with the questions that are super relevant. Takes no more than 10 min. So I've tried to limit it to just 10 questions...And that is something that we're going to like now circulate once every 3 months before the 3 month all team meeting, so that if there are any issues from it we can discuss those in our meeting.' (LSHTM ECR P01)

■ Traffic light tool (2 projects)

■ Integration of survey/traffic light and focus group discussions and meetings

■ *'I think the criticism ...that came out with the traffic light system is... it's without like ...if you're just recording green yellow red you're not really thinking much about how you can improve on it whereas a focus group could get a lot more in depth information..so we're going to conduct both the traffic light system and the focus group in parallel.'* (LSHTM ECR, P03)



EquiPar

EquiPar Content and Structure

Most viewed it as comprehensive and well-structured



Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of content

- Covered key partnership areas

Adaptability and versatility

- *'I particularly liked the idea that you can actually use it at any point of your research relationship of your partnership either at the beginning or in the middle or even at the end. That makes it more open, you know...so depending on where you are in the research cycle.. And I am already thinking of using it even beyond the consortium research'. (Co-PI, P03)*

Structure and ease of use

- User-friendly and not overwhelming
- A few struggled with linguistic barriers, or found it complicated and lengthy



EquiPar

Perceived utility of the tool

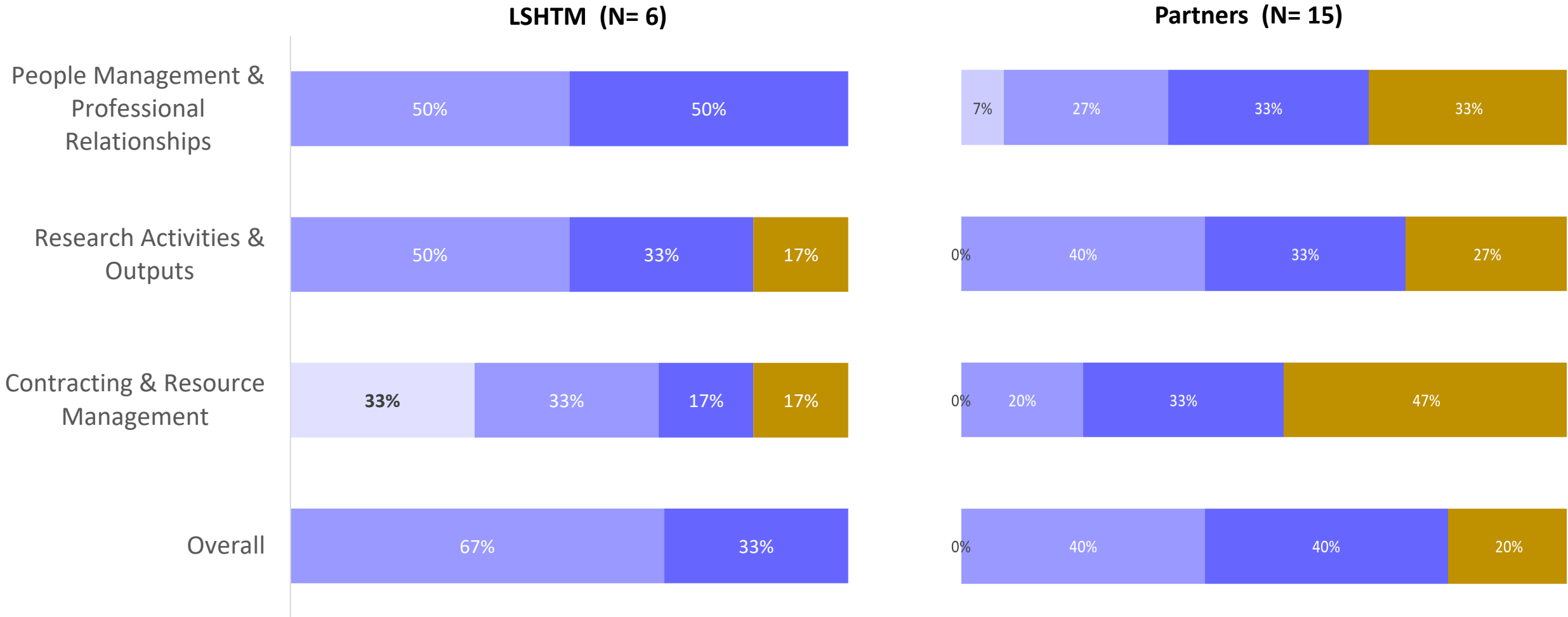
100% of LSHTM and 80% of partner respondents found EquiPar to be 'quite' or 'very useful'



Equipar

Perceived to be most useful across Themes 1 & 2

■ Not useful ■ Somewhat useful ■ Quite useful ■ Very useful ■ Did not use the tool



Source: Equipar Online survey 2023-24

Perceived to have made a positive impact

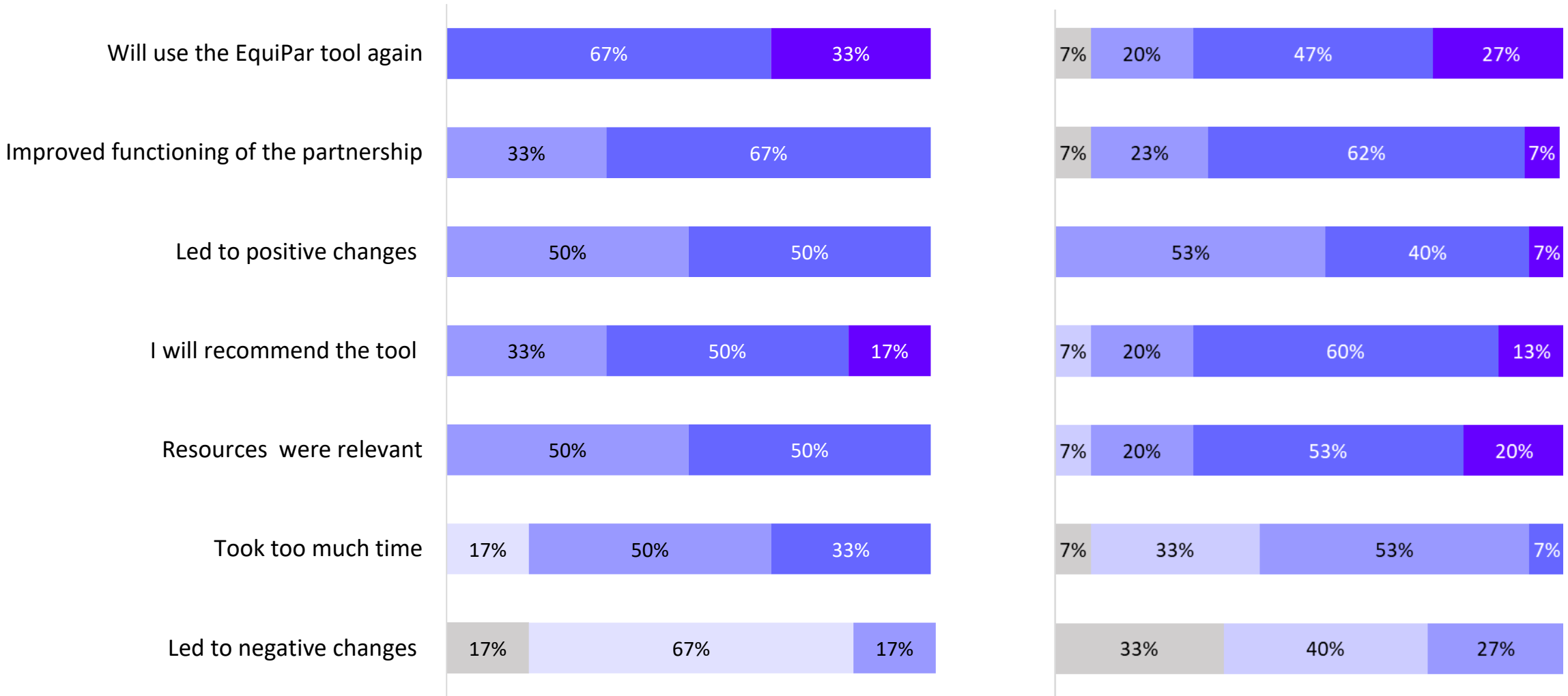


Equipar

■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree or disagree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly agree

LSHTM (N= 6)

Partners (N= 15)





Views from IDIs on utility of the tool

Enhancing awareness and encouraging discussion and reflection

- Providing a structured framework for considering equity
- Raising awareness of equity issues
- Facilitating discussions, opening conversations, encouraging transparency
- Promoting reflection and critical thinking

'I think like it has a lot of value in the sense that it kind of tries to put like, a formal, structure in place like it's all very well to kind of talk about being fair and in the ways that things are done between institutions, but this is the first time that there's something that you can actually use in a systemic and structured manner.' (LSHTM ECR P01)



EquiPar

Views from IDIs on utility of the tool

- **Encouraging changes to the functioning of partnerships**
 - Promoted process-oriented thinking about equity issues
 - Supported clarity on roles and resource allocation
 - Promoted training and capacity building
 - Supported inclusive authorship
 - Facilitating consideration of environmental sustainability
 - Usefulness of EquiPar beyond pilot projects
 - Awareness of complex interplay of multiple factors, including EquiPar

'I would say it's always a problem of attribution, isn't it? I think we've been using the tool, we've been doing the surveys, we've been having discussions. It's very hard to pin one specific change down to one particular intervention as it were. I think it's part of a broader conversation.' (LSHTM Co-PI, P03)

Usability enablers



EquiPar

- **Effectiveness of leadership:** buy-in from leadership and teams
- **Role of champions:** responsible for tracking progress
- **Overall team interest in equity:** amongst all research teams
- **Integration into the Planning Process:** instead of treating the tool as a separate checklist, incorporate into regular meetings and discussions

'We had our consortium meeting...the whole consortium, the 4 countries and the UK team. They gave us about 15 min too, so we called the session Taking the EquiPar tool to the larger Project X team. So, XX (LSHTM ECR/coordinator) and I presented.. we had slides..and we talked about the important parts of the EquiPar tool. And then after we had presented, we had a discussion, like a brainstorming session on how we can use it and how we can incorporate it into our busy ..because right now, you know, because of the intervention, the project teams, country teams are really busy. So we talked about how we can use it, can make time to use it across all the 4 countries.' (Co-PI, P03)

Challenges



EquiPar

- **Time constraints:** teams busy collecting data or completing project activities
- **Funding constraints:** especially for an EquiPar champion/point person
- **Infrastructural challenges:** variable access to internet and technology
- **Gender and professional hierarchies:** these could act as a barrier to frank discussion of equity issues
- **Funder and LSHTM requirements:** contractual, due diligence and financial process created systemic inequities that individual projects found hard to address

'As one of the partners once said, it feels like it's more like a commercial contract then, where, we're just fulfilling the requirements as opposed to a true partnership. And, and that's caused a lot of problems for us, I think, as the LSHTM team because that's not the way we normally operate..and we're sort of constantly having to try and counterbalance. That in effect in how we're working with the partners. But we have a very demanding funder.' (LSHTM Co-PI, P02)



EquiPar

Recommendations

EquiPar could be a useful tool for many partnerships, and warrants further investment, development and dissemination, both within and beyond LSHTM.



EquiPar

- 1. Make minor amendments to the EquiPar Tool content and wording:** e.g. adding references to professional hierarchies, review and simplify wording
- 2. Commission a designer to develop a user-friendly online version:** enhance clarity and ease of navigation
- 3. Develop enhanced guidance on options for using EquiPar within projects:** ideas and options for its use – from light touch to high intensity
- 4. Review and expand the links to resources, examples and case studies:** e.g. templates for surveys and publication agreements
- 5. Encourage use of EquiPar within LSHTM research partnerships:** awareness raising, orientation and training sessions, addition in LEO form, establish a community of practice for equitable partnerships within LSHTM
- 6. Disseminate information on EquiPar to the broader Global Health community:** publication, website, access to materials for external users
- 7. Continue to advocate for change in the wider institutional and sectoral environment:** advocacy with other stakeholders like funders and journals



Equipar

A positive step forward in a long journey...

I think in a way we're aiming to be equitable in a world that isn't equitable and I think acknowledging that ...should be like a disclaimer in the tool.. that we're doing our best. We live in a world that is systematically just not equitable...but within that, I think the tool does a good job.... there is a lot to be done but yeah, I think to start...the same as with many other social changes, it requires people being aware about it.' - LSHTM PI, P02



Equipar

Thank You

Comments

Questions

Suggestions

Key takeaways?