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**The Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI): Assessing the needs of the GESI Network regarding capacity building**

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**Objectives/aims**

The Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI) was launched to enhance the capacity for trans-sectoral research synthesis in Low & Middle Income Countries. A GESI Secretariat is hosted by the Centre for Systematic Reviews in Health Policy & Systems Research at the American University of Beirut to support and manage GESI functions. The GESI Secretariat built a Network of evidence synthesis centres in LMICs, which currently includes 37 centres from 24LMICs. This study aims to identify the needs of the GESI Network in terms of capacity building to produce and use evidence synthesis in LMICs, which will help target future GESI activities and match GESI Network members with potential funders.

**Methods**

The GESI Secretariat conducted one-on-one interviews with each member of the GESI Network to assess its needs regarding capacity building in: conducting evidence synthesis, knowledge translation, administration and budgeting, communication; other needs regarding access to databases; capacity to set research priorities, to work on cross disciplinary projects and to engage with stakeholders. The interviews took place between September 2017 and December 2017 on GoToMeeting and the Secretariat took consent for recording. The team analysed the transcriptions using thematic analysis. Results were tabulated and narratively reported.

**Main findings**

33 of the 37 centres responded. The four themes main themes emerged from the thematic analysis are: context, current successes and challenges, perceived needs and specific needs in which GESI could contribute. In our assessment, we asked about centres’ capacity in managing a project from applying for a grant to delivering timely outputs. Moreover, we asked about engagement with stakeholders and setting priority exercises. The complete results will be available by the time of the summit.