

1. INTRODUCTION

Cassava is both a subsistence and a cash crop in Cameroon and many other African countries.

- Innovation Support Services (ISS) are however needed to realize its full potential, especially in the post-harvest stages (Parmar et al., 2017).
- ISS encompass all types of tangible and intangible services that are provided across innovation processes taking place in the agri-food value chains.
- Several types of ISS can be found (Cf. Table 1) and they are provided by one or several Innovation Support service Providers (ISPs).

Characterizing ISS and ISPs in terms of the current service types and funding modes can inform practitioners and policy-makers about aspects that need to be strengthened.

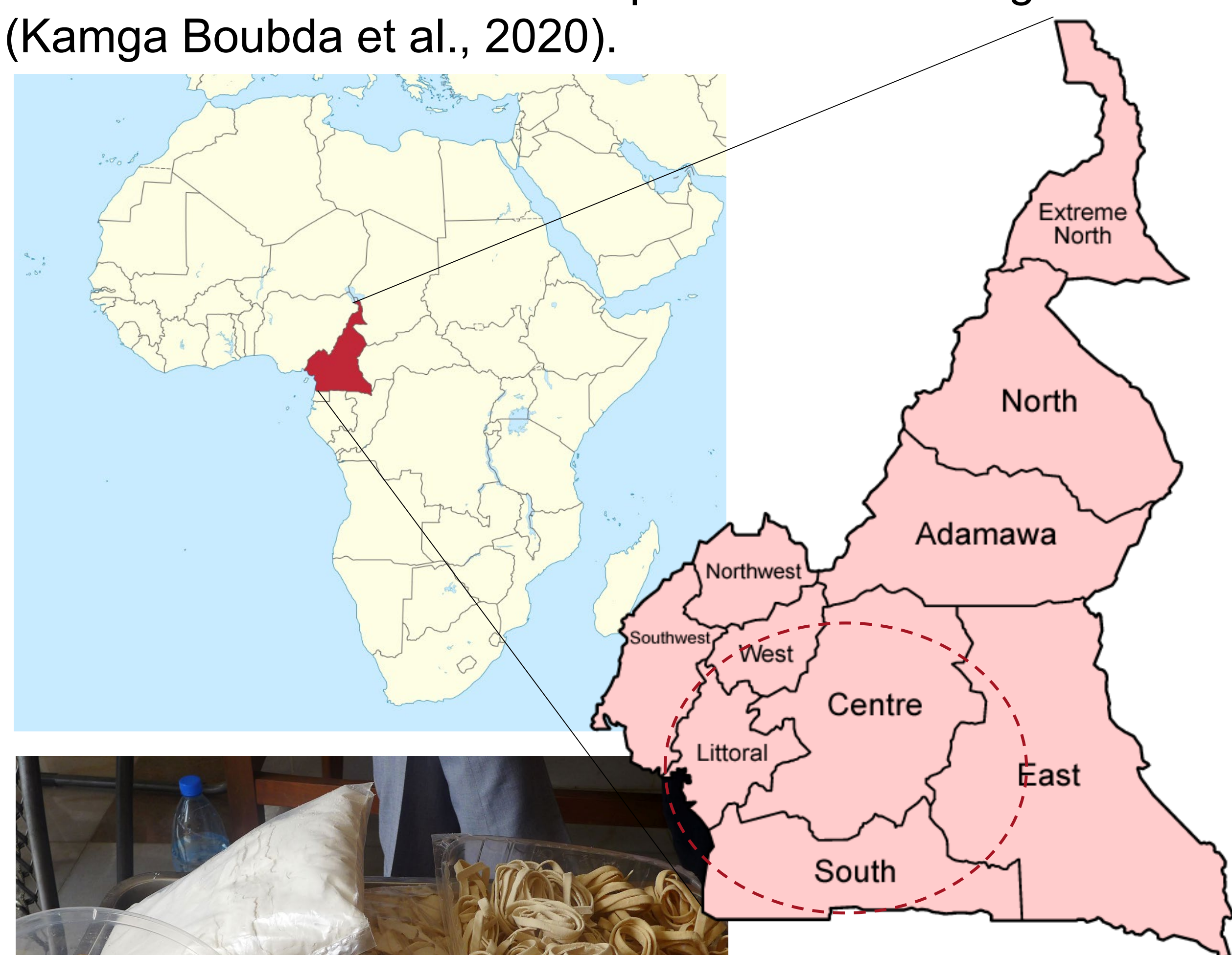
Table 1: Generic Innovation Support Service types

Abbreviations	ISS Types
KNOWL	Knowledge awareness and exchange
ADVIS	Advisory, consultancy and backstopping
MARKET	Demand articulation
NETWORK	Networking, facilitation and brokerage
TRAIN	Capacity building
RESS	Enhancing access to resources
INSTIT	Institutional support for niche innovation, and scaling mechanisms

Source: Ndah et al. (2020)

2. METHODOLOGY

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in the Southern, Central and Littoral Regions of Cameroon (Spring 2019) (Fig. 1) among 5 identified types of ISPs (n=24): Farmer-based organizations, firms, informal actors, national and international public sectors organizations (Kamga Boubda et al., 2020).



Cassava products

Figure 1: Location of the case study areas in Cameroon

3. FINDINGS

- Three ISS types (KNOWL, TRAIN, ADVIS) are observed as core to many ISPs' activity portfolios, whereas enhancing access to resources (RESS) and demand articulation (MARKET) are less provided. Institutional support for niche innovation and scaling mechanisms (INSTIT) are rarely provided.

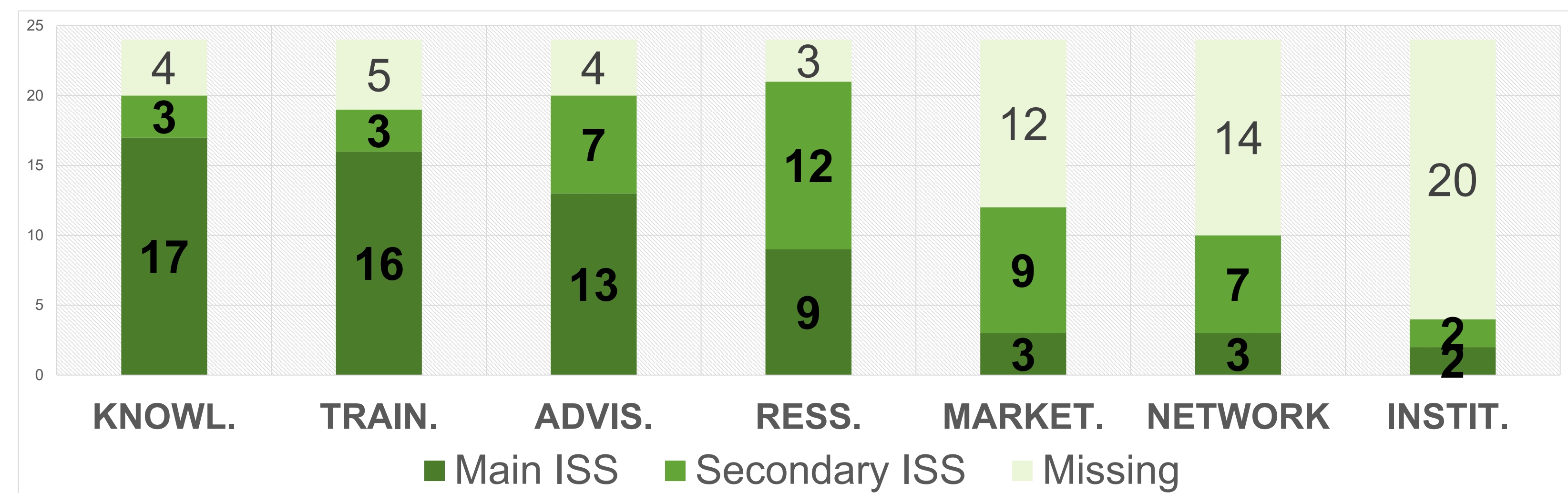


Figure 2: Distribution of ISS by types

Fig. 2, shows the distribution of ISS by types, provided by 25 innovation support service providers (ISP). "Main ISS" correspond to the core activity of ISS, while "Secondary ISS" are only occasionally provided by the ISPs.

- The ISS are predominantly funded and governed in the framework of projects for all ISS types (Fig. 3)

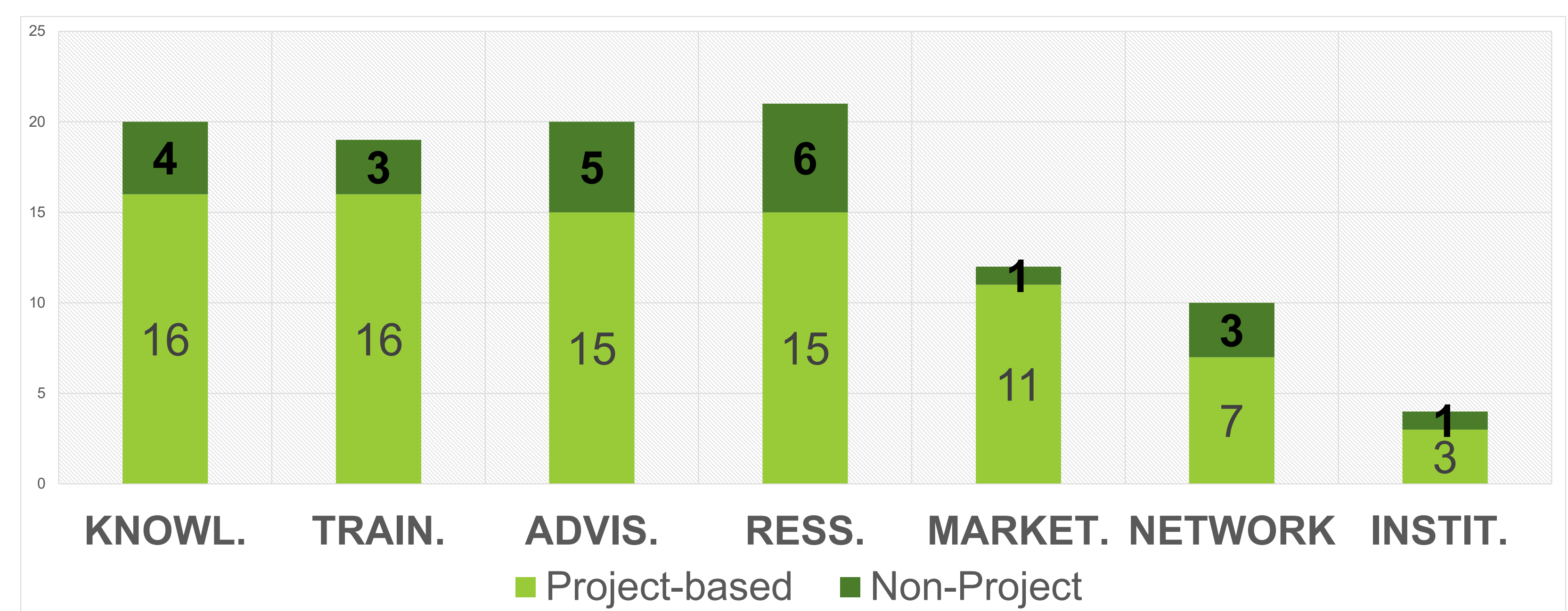


Figure 3: Distribution of ISS by type and funding mode

4. CONCLUSION

- ISS have been characterised in terms of type and funding mechanism (project vs. non-project).
- ISS traditionally provided by extension service providers clearly dominate, while the others are deficient, especially the institutional support to niche innovations and scaling-up.
- ISS are mostly funded in the framework of (short-term) projects which may cause some discontinuity in the service provision.
- ISPs need to be aware of the missing service types and to be supported in their efforts to develop new expertise.

References

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Contact (Project coordination): syndhia.mathe@cirad.fr