



APPRISE

Australian Partnership for Preparedness Research on Infectious Disease Emergencies Centre for Research Excellence

Introduction

From May to July 2019, the Australian Partnership for Preparedness Research on Infectious Disease Emergencies Centre for Research Excellence (APPRISE CRE) Investigators participated in a process of developing a Theory of Change. This Theory of Change will inform the implementation of the remaining two years of the CRE, as well as a guide the direction for the CRE beyond the funded period. The Theory of Change process was undertaken through a series of meetings with the APPRISE Executive, a workshop during the APPRISE Annual Meeting on 9 May, and individual meetings with the APPRISE team members. This document details the outcome from this process.

APPRISE Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is a diagrammatic representation of how and why a program will lead to expected outcomes. The Theory of Change outlines the expected impact of a program, the long-term outcomes, and the causal pathway to achieving those outcomes.

The over-arching vision of the APPRISE CRE aims to achieve is: *“APPRISE research informs and enables preparedness and response to infectious disease threats and emergencies in a timely manner to protect and promote human health.”* The goal for APPRISE is to *“Generate new knowledge that informs infectious disease response nationally and globally.”*

The APPRISE CRE has four long-term outcomes in the themes of **platforms**, **partnerships**, **people** and **sustainability** (Figure 1). For each long-term outcome, short-term outcomes and activities that would contribute towards achieving these outcomes were identified. Each activity identified was colour coded according to funding requirement.

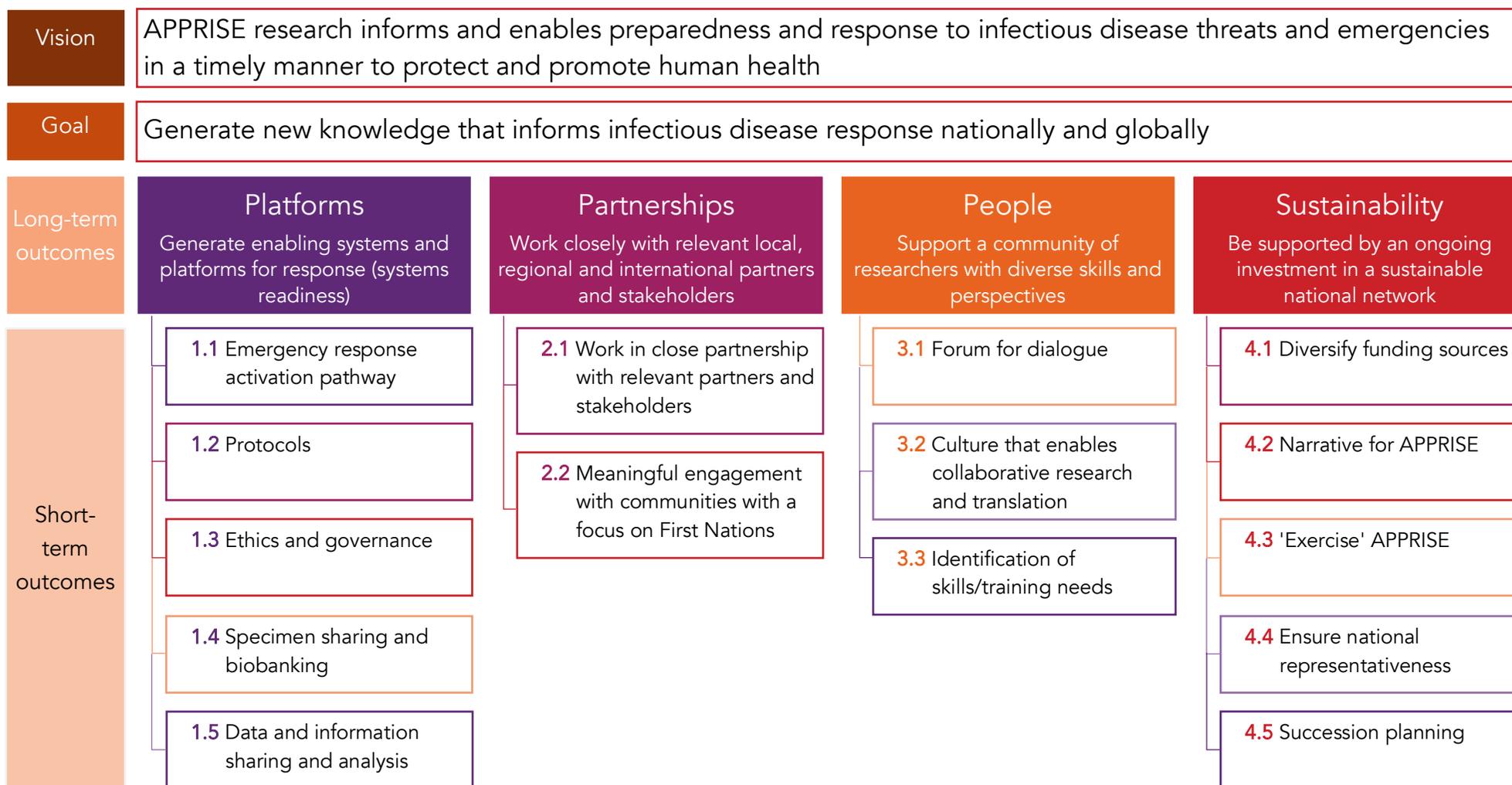


Figure 1: APPRISE CRE vision, goal and outcomes

Outcome 1: Platforms

Generate enabling systems and platforms for response (systems readiness)

In order to provide timely research response capacity for infectious disease events, a number of processes, systems and platforms need to be developed before events occur, ready for quick activation (Figure 2). Firstly, a process for how APPRISE works with government needs to be defined (1.1.2), as well as a framework for identifying research gaps that can be used for any event (1.1.1). Secondly, pre-approved research protocols need to be developed for quick activation during an event (1.2). These protocols will involve use of biobanks (1.4) and data collection and analysis (1.5). All protocols will involve consideration of ethical requirements and governance within and between state and territories and the national level (1.3).

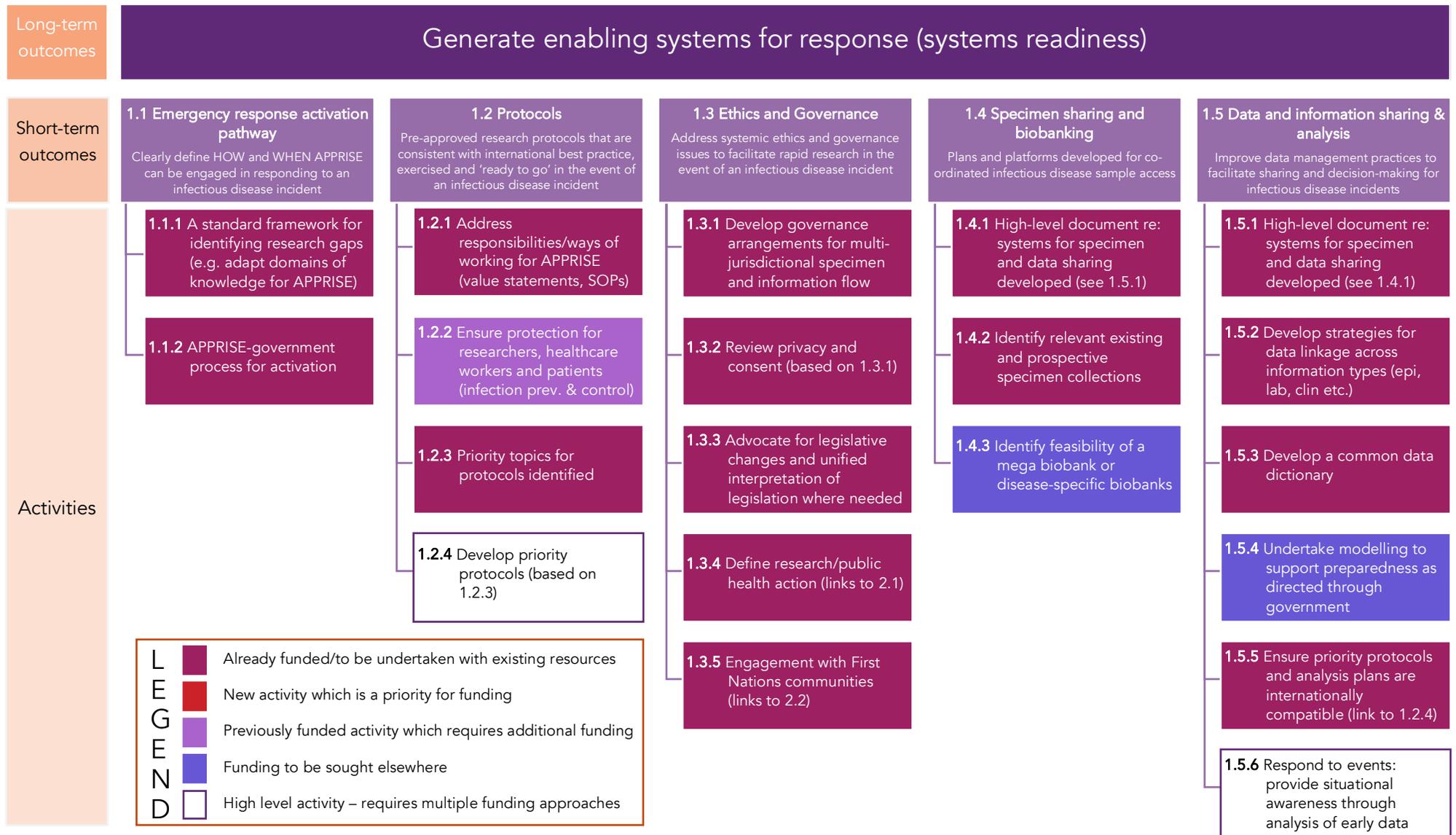


Figure 2: Outcome 1: Platforms - Generate enabling systems and platforms for response (systems readiness)

Outcome 2: Partnerships

Work in close partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders (local, regional and international)

For APPRISE to reach the goal of generating new knowledge that informs infectious disease response nationally and globally, this knowledge must be relevant and feasible for stakeholders. Therefore, APPRISE must work in close partnership with partners and stakeholders. The key activities to achieve this close partnership are to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement strategy (2.1.1) and to develop and implement a strategy for networks (2.1.2).

Importantly, the research of APPRISE must be undertaken in partnership *with* communities. This requires meaningful engagement with these communities. Improving engagement with First Nation communities in particular was identified as a priority for APPRISE. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of a comprehensive community engagement strategy to guide APPRISE researchers (2.2.2).

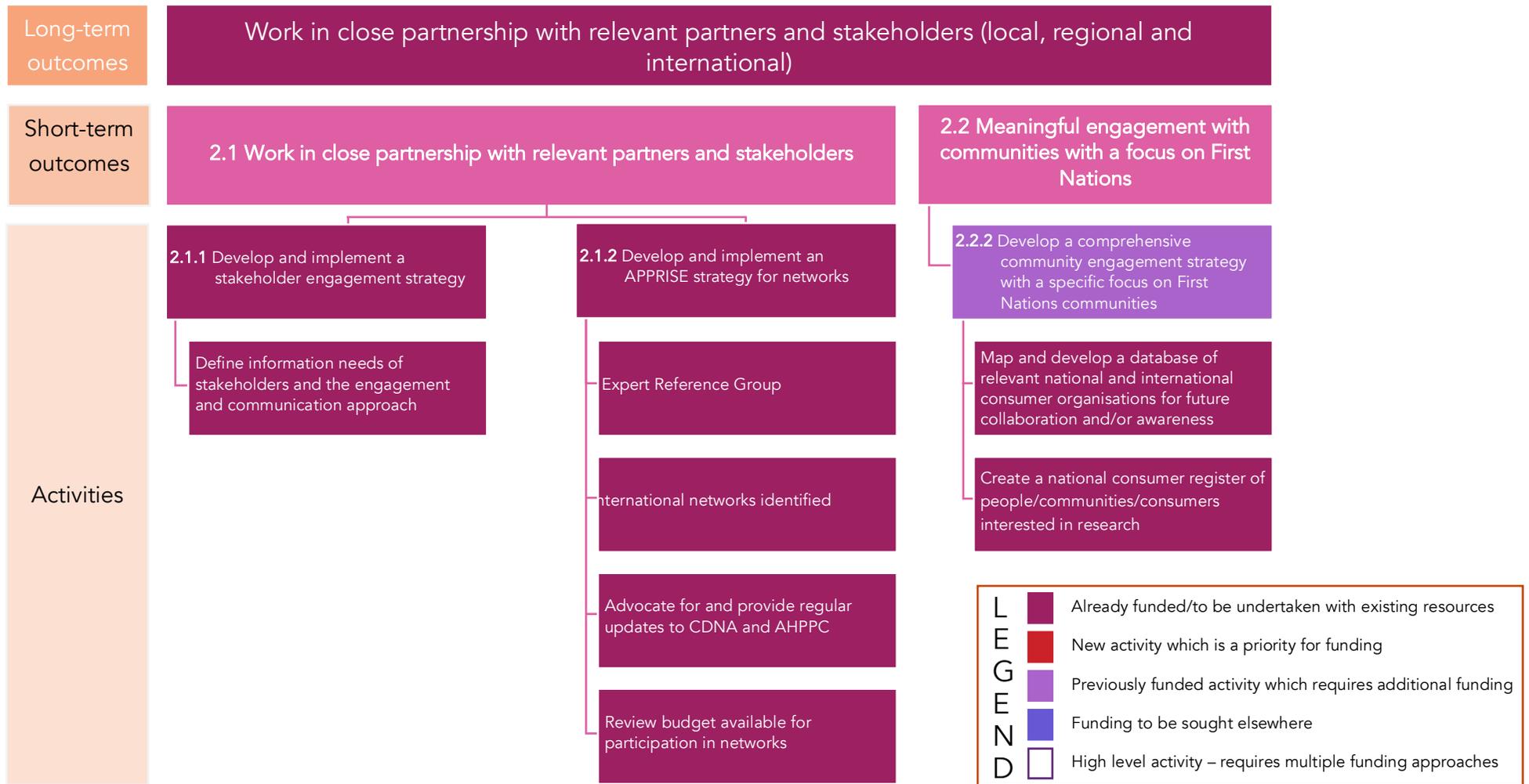


Figure 3: Outcome 2: Partnerships - Work in close partnership with relevant partners and stakeholders

Outcome 3: People

Support a community of researchers with diverse skills and perspectives

The response to infectious disease events requires a diverse community of responders, as so does the research response. A key benefit of APPRISE is the cross-disciplinary nature of the CRE. To maximise the benefits from APPRISE, a forum for dialogue needs to be maintained both within APPRISE and between APPRISE and stakeholders. This will be achieved through Annual APPRISE Meetings (3.1.1) and seeking representation for APPRISE in key networks such as CDNA and PHLN (3.1.2). The APPRISE network and stakeholders will also need to be aware of research being undertaken by the network (3.1.3) as well as linking in with other sources of information on infectious disease events such as GOARN email alerts (3.1.4). Finally, there are a number of CREs that have synergies with APPRISE (CREID, ISER, PRISM, HOT North, ACREME). All of these CREs include early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). The Joint CRE EMCR Academy, with membership from EMCRs from each of these CREs, will be strengthened to serve as a forum for dialogue for supporting emerging researchers (3.1.5).

APPRISE will work to develop and maintain a culture that enables collaborative research and translation (3.2). This culture will be enabled through close and ongoing partnership with key stakeholders including the Federal Department of Health and the AHPPC (2.1). Development of processes for responding to emerging infectious disease threats (3.2.1 and 3.2.2) will facilitate collective and collaborative research.

To ensure researchers have the required skills and knowledge for the preparedness and response research for infectious disease events (3.3.1), APPRISE will support opportunities for EMCRs to travel for conferences and education (3.3.2); observerships with CDNA, PHLN and other relevant organisations (3.3.3); identify other education and training opportunities for APPRISE Investigators and EMCRs (3.3.4); embed PhD projects within APPRISE projects (3.3.5); and continue to roll out the Minya Cultural Respect Education for APPRISE researchers (3.3.6).

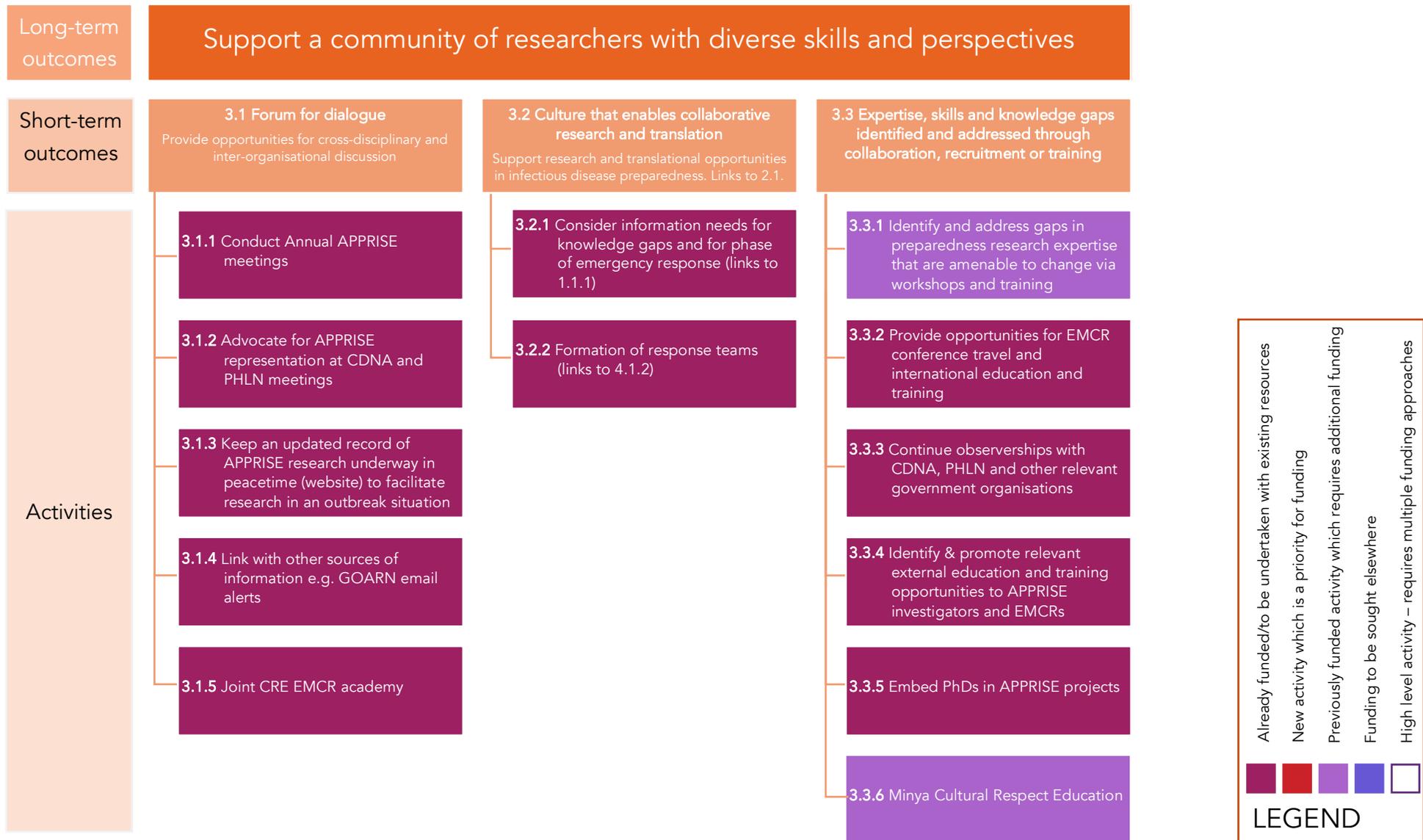


Figure 4. Outcome 3: People - Support a community of researchers with diverse skills and perspectives

Outcome 4: Sustainability

Be supported by an ongoing investment in a sustainable national network

The APPRISE CRE aims to establish a number of platforms (Outcome 1: Platforms), engagement with stakeholders (Outcome 2: Partnerships) and a community of researchers (Outcome 3: People) for research responses to infectious disease events. The investment in establishing these platforms, partnerships and people needs to be maintained. APPRISE requires two funding streams: funding for the ongoing APPRISE network (4.1.1) and funding for responses to infectious disease events (4.1.2). In order to secure both response and ongoing funding, potential funding bodies need to understand the purpose and benefit of APPRISE. This understanding will be achieved through developing a clear narrative for APPRISE, articulating what is different because of APPRISE. This narrative will be developed through developing an accessible research report for stakeholders (4.2.1), publication of case studies from APPRISE projects (4.2.2), and then communicating this narrative to key stakeholders (4.2.3).

APPRISE is a responsive research network that aims to inform action to infectious disease events. There is a need to 'exercise' the involvement of APPRISE in responses to infectious disease events to test this capacity to ensure APPRISE can effectively respond for real events. This exercising will include exercising of priority protocols (4.3.2) and seeking involvement with national desktop simulation exercises (4.3.3). These activities will be done in partnership with stakeholders (2.1).

For APPRISE to remain sustainable, the network must be nationally representative and must maintain representation from key populations. The networks, protocols and collaborative relationships fostered by APPRISE should not be reliant on specific individuals but should be formalised and enable the development of leaders who can take on senior decision-making roles when necessary. A succession plan will be developed (4.5.1) to ensure the APPRISE network remains sustainable.



Figure 5: Outcome 4: Sustainability - Be supported by an ongoing investment in a sustainable national network