



Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
Canada



SAFETY, RESPECT
AND DIGNITY
FOR ALL

LA SÉCURITÉ,
LA DIGNITÉ
ET LE RESPECT
POUR TOUS

2015 International Survey of Correctional Services

Summary of Results

Background

Correctional organizations around the world are facing significant challenges and need to adapt to changing circumstances. Issues such as national or international legislative agendas, social or economic turmoil, and the complex, evolving nature of offender populations all have a potential impact on the daily operations of correctional organizations and their long term sustainability. A scan of the literature reveals common themes that challenge our roles as correctional administrators today, including: resources, infrastructure, offender health, personnel, offender management, and the social environment¹.

Purpose

To gain a better understanding of the challenges other nations encounter in their correctional organizations as well as their mitigation strategies and action plans that are put in place to address these challenges, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) conducted an international consultation with several nations around the world. The international consultation was conducted in collaboration with CSC's Intergovernmental Relations Division (IGR) and representatives from the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA).

Overview

The following is a summary document of the responses received for the international survey on correctional challenges and mitigation strategies. Survey questions were developed using a risk-based approach and focused on core problematic areas in correctional practices. The survey was organized into five key parts:

- Part I: Organizational information and overall challenges;
- Part II: Offender population (profile information and offender-specific challenges);
- Part III: Correctional infrastructure (infrastructure-specific challenges);
- Part IV: Legislative, economic, and social issues; and
- Part V: Risk management (most significant risk to organizations).

The target sample was approximately 150 correctional organizations of countries affiliated with ICPA. A total of 25 countries responded to the survey; one submission was removed from analyses due to data quality issues. Results are based on a total sample of 24 countries (see Appendix A for a list of participating countries).

¹ For example, see Morgan, N., & Morgan, I. (2014). *Conference report: 34th Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators*. Victoria, Canada.

Results

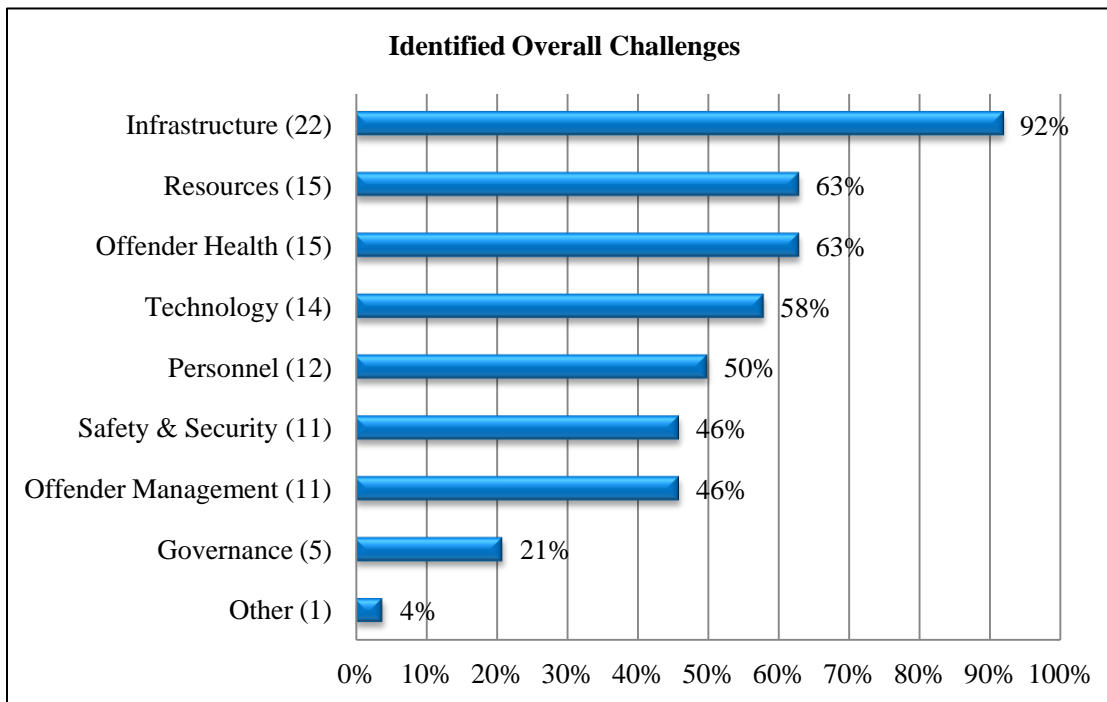
Part I – Organizational Information and Overall Challenges

Organizational Information

Fifty-eight percent ($n = 14$) of survey respondents indicated that their organization oversees both custodial and non-custodial sentences, while 42% ($n = 10$) indicated that they oversee only custodial sentences. The majority of the respondents specified that they function at the federal/national level (79%; $n = 19$).

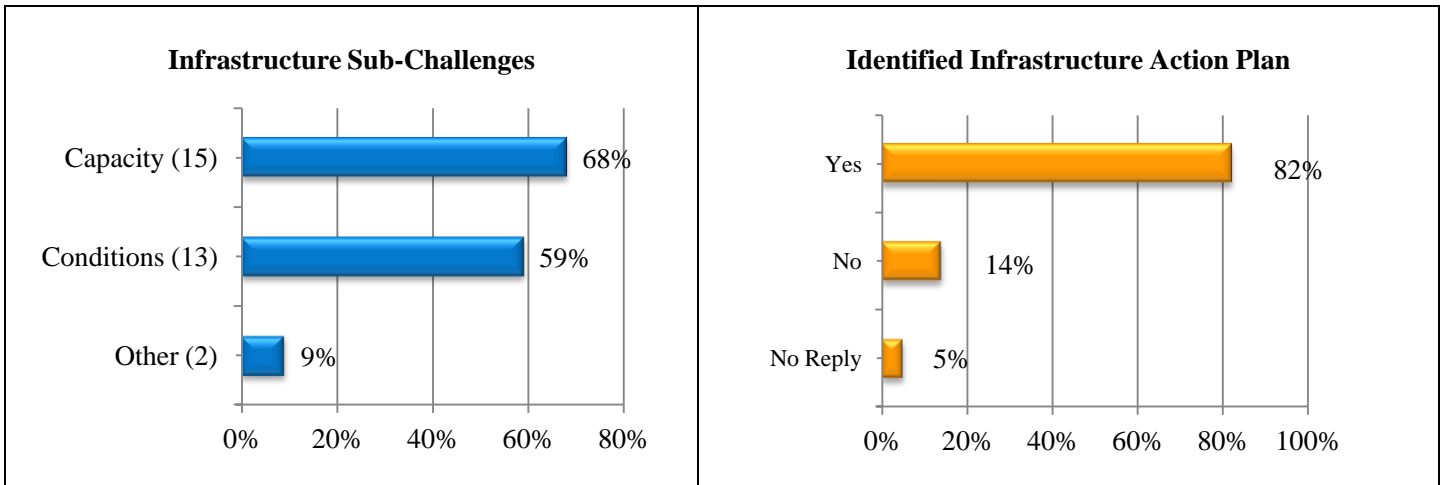
Overall Challenges

Survey respondents were provided a list of challenges and asked to identify which ‘overarching’ issues have been identified by their organization as challenges. The most commonly identified challenge was infrastructure, with a 92% selection rate. Just over 60% of participants identified resources and offender health as challenges, while 50% or more noted technology and personnel as organizational challenges. Safety and security, offender management, governance, and other challenges were selected by less than 50% of survey respondents.

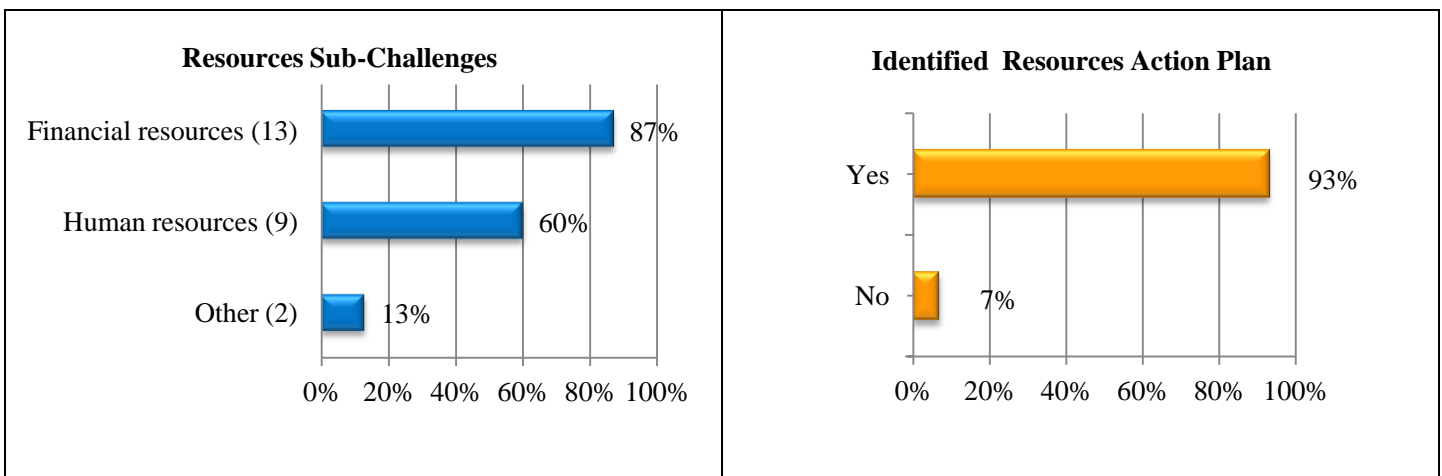


Survey respondents were also asked to identify subcategories related to each overall challenge. Frequencies of responses are presented in the figures below. Percentages were calculated out of the total number of respondents who selected the overall challenge. Only the sub-challenges for infrastructure, resources, offender health, technology, and personnel are presented as at least 50% of survey respondents noted these areas as overall challenges.

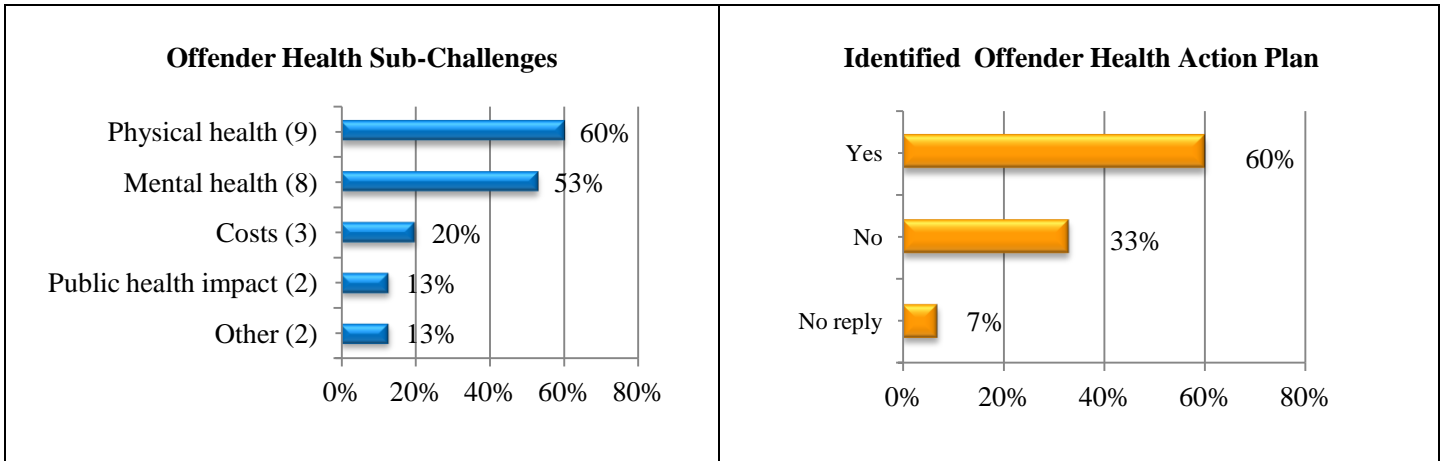
Of those respondents who selected infrastructure, the majority indicated that their organization had sub-challenges regarding both capacity and the conditions of their facilities. The majority also indicated that their organization had identified infrastructure action plans. Themes that emerged included improving forecasting and long-term planning practices (e.g., planning for the long-term impact of a growing offender population and addressing the issue in advance), the clustering and restructuring of institutions (e.g., closing down some institutions and regrouping, expanding on current institutions, restructuring to allow for double-bunking), and conducting renovations to improve living conditions and/or the building of new facilities.



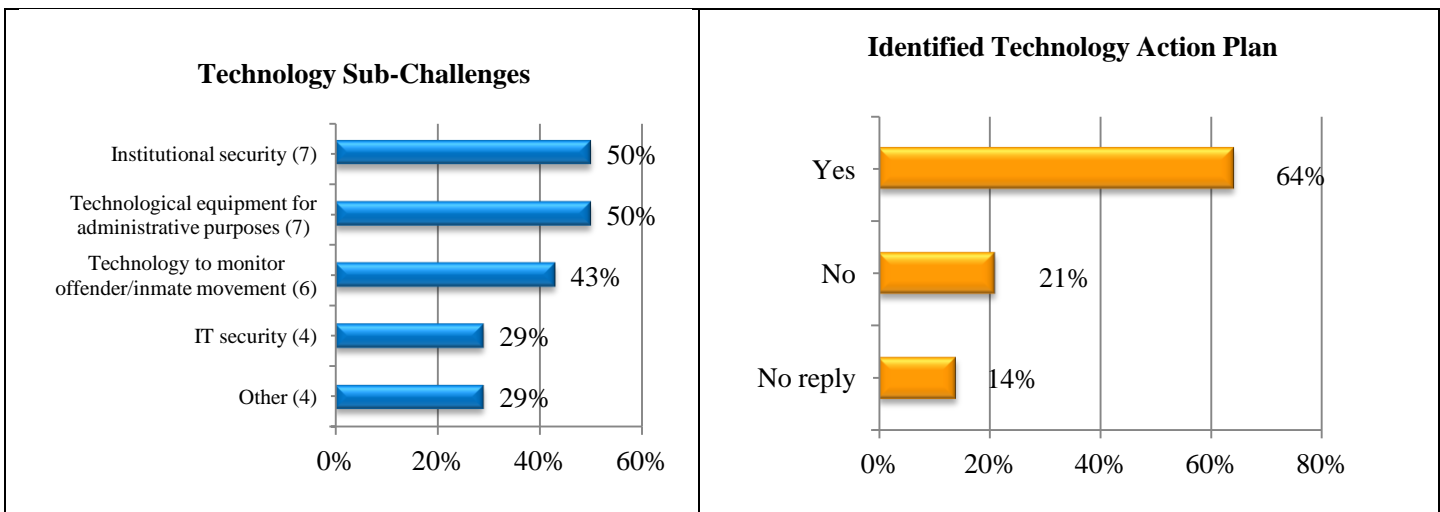
With regard to resources, 87% noted the sub-challenge of financial resources and 60% noted the sub-challenge of human resources. The majority of respondents also noted that their organization had identified an action plan to address the overall issue of resources. Themes included: the creation of programs for revenue and for internal resources (e.g., the creation of internal jobs for inmates), engaging external partners and organizations for funding or more cost-effective provision of services, improved human resources planning and recruitment, and more staff training and career development to ensure the most qualified staff members.



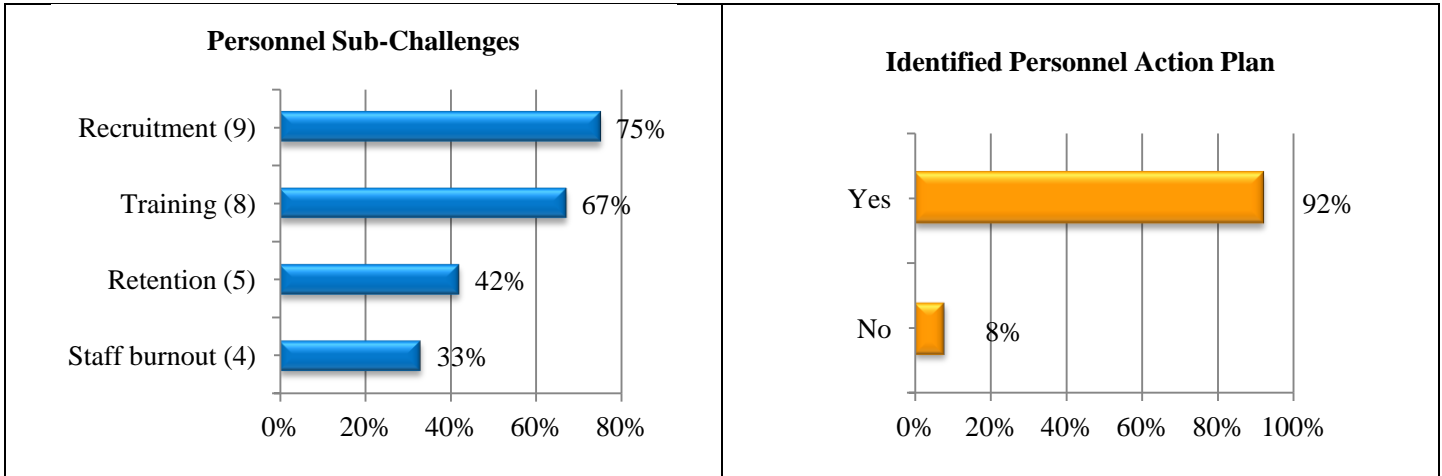
Of the respondents who selected offender health as an overall challenge, 60% noted physical health and 53% noted mental health as sub-challenges. Furthermore, 60% indicated that their organization had identified action plans to help address the overall challenge of offender health. Action plans included improved physical and mental health assessments, improved accommodations and infrastructure for physical needs (e.g., related to an aging offender population), enhanced training of staff, and increased medical staff.



In terms of the issue of technology, half of respondents indicated that institutional security and technological equipment for administrative purposes were sub-challenges. Just over 60% also noted that their organization had an identified action plan to address the challenge. Action plans primarily included the modernization of technology and improved offender access to technology. Several respondents cited outdated technology that requires modernization for security purposes and records management. There was also the reoccurring theme of providing offenders with greater access to technology in order to reflect changing times and to help better prepare them for reintegration into a highly technological society.



Of those respondents who selected personnel as an overall challenge, the majority noted recruitment and training as sub-challenges. Identified action plans to address the overall challenge of personnel included better recruitment and hiring practices (e.g., affiliation with universities, targeting of qualified and educated individuals), improved staff training and development of skills for longer-term careers, and the prevention of burnout of staff members.



Part II - Offender Population

Population Profile Information

This section of the survey asked respondents to provide information on their organization's offender population profile. The information was aggregated to show the average proportion of offenders across the organizations who fell into each group/characteristic.

The average number of offenders currently being supervised by the responding countries' organizations was 13,293 ($SD = 11,809$). Of those organizations who indicated only supervising custodial sentences (i.e., 42% of all survey respondents), the average proportion of offenders incarcerated was 75%, and this was followed by 26% on remand, 12% other, and 8% temporarily detained. Of those organizations who indicated supervising both custodial and non-custodial sentences (i.e., 58% of all survey respondents), the average proportion of offenders incarcerated was 46%, and this was followed by 44% under community supervision, 10% on remand, 5% other, and 4% temporarily detained.

Overall, the majority of the offender populations consisted primarily of males, with an average representation of 91%. On average, approximately 27% of the offender populations were diagnosed with a mental health disorder, and 26% consisted of gang-affiliated offenders (including suspected and confirmed combined).

Offenders	Number of Replies (n/24)	Average % of Offenders	Standard Deviation %	Median %	Minimum %	Maximum %
Men	22	91	9	94	60	99
Women	22	10	10	6	1	50
Diagnosed with a mental health disorder	17	27	30	12	0	80
Suspected gang-affiliated offenders	13	17	21	13	0	67
Confirmed gang-affiliated offenders	11	9	12	10	0	40
Foreign offenders	17	16	18	11	1	60
Suspected radicalized offenders	8	3	7	0	0	20
Confirmed radicalized offenders	9	2	7	0	0	20

In terms of age, the majority of the offender populations fell within the 18-50 year old age range, with the highest average representation at 28% for the 31-40 year old age group.

Age	Number of Replies (n/24)	Average % of Offenders	Standard Deviation %	Median %	Minimum %	Maximum %
Under 18 years	21	2	4	1	0	20
18-25 years	20	18	8	16	5	40
26-30 years	20	19	8	18	5	45
31-40 years	20	28	6	30	15	36
41-50 years	20	20	7	20	7	40
51-60 years	20	9	4	9	2	21
Above 60 years	20	4	2	3	1	10

On average, 20% of the offender populations were convicted for theft-related offences, 19% were convicted for other non-violent offences, and 18% were convicted for drug-related offences.

Offences	Number of Replies (n/24)	Average % of Offenders	Standard Deviation %	Median %	Minimum %	Maximum %
Homicide-related offences (including attempted)	19	13	12	11	1	50
Assault and battery offences	20	14	8	15	2	34
Sexual offences	20	11	16	6	2	61
Terrorism-related offences	12	3	9	0	0	30
Robbery offences	19	13	14	10	3	63
Theft-related offences	19	20	19	15	1	79
Drug-related offences	20	18	14	14	2	50
Other types of non-violent offences	17	19	12	21	0	44
Other types of violent offences	14	5	5	5	0	15

Offenders classified as medium security were the most common security-level group among the organizations. Those respondents who indicated ‘other’ included different offender classification systems (e.g., open and closed regime, forensic classification).

Security level	Number of Replies (n/24)	Average % of Offenders	Standard Deviation %	Median %	Minimum %	Maximum %
Minimum security	15	24	20	20	1	65
Medium security	16	41	24	38	1	86
Maximum security	16	31	30	20	3	100
Admax, Supermax, High-maximum security	5	8	14	1	0	33
Other security classifications	10	21	26	8	0	67

On average, sentences of 2-5 years and 5-10 years had the highest representation among the organizations.

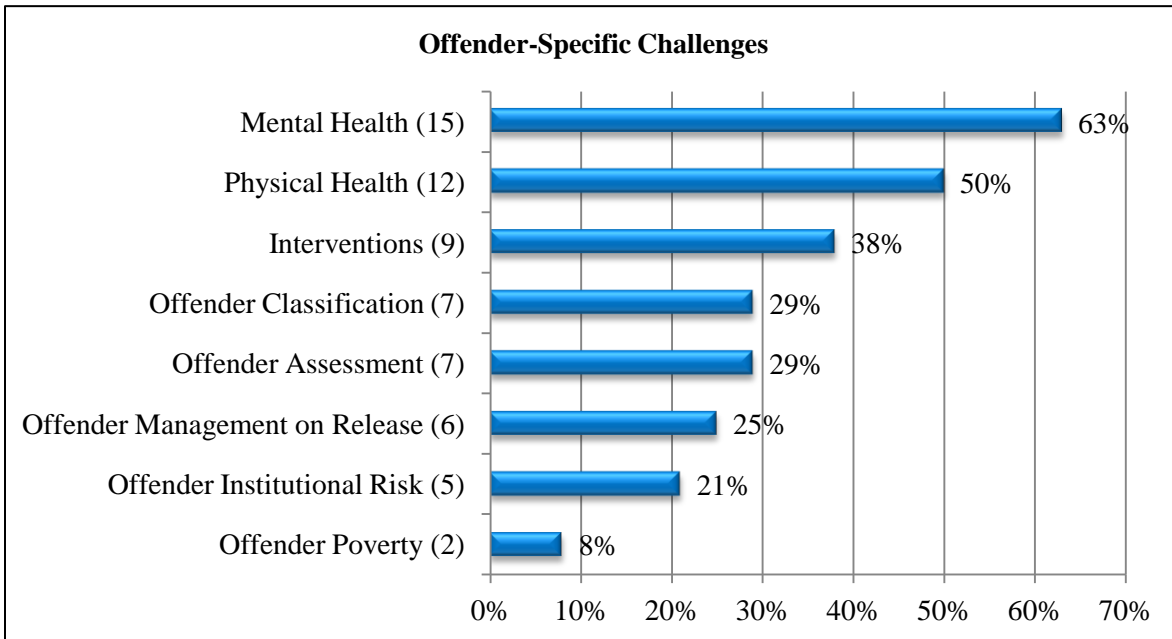
Sentence	Number of Replies (n/24)	Average % of Offenders	Standard Deviation %	Median %	Minimum %	Maximum %
1 month to less than 3 months	22	6	9	1	0	30
3 months to less than 6 months	22	4	4	4	0	13
6 months to less than 1 year	22	12	14	9	0	70
1 year to less than 2 years	22	14	9	13	1	36
2 years to less than 5 years	22	24	14	22	2	60
5 years to less than 10 years	22	20	12	19	5	62
10 years or more (not including indeterminate/life sentences)	22	11	8	8	1	35
Indeterminate (life sentence)	20	4	6	2	0	23

As selected by survey respondents, the most common types of rehabilitation/correctional programs available in their institutions are educational, employment, and reintegration programs. The majority of respondents also indicated that their organizations provide substance abuse and sex offender programs. Less than half of the respondents indicated that their organizations deliver disengagement/disaffiliation and Indigenous/Aboriginal-specific programming.

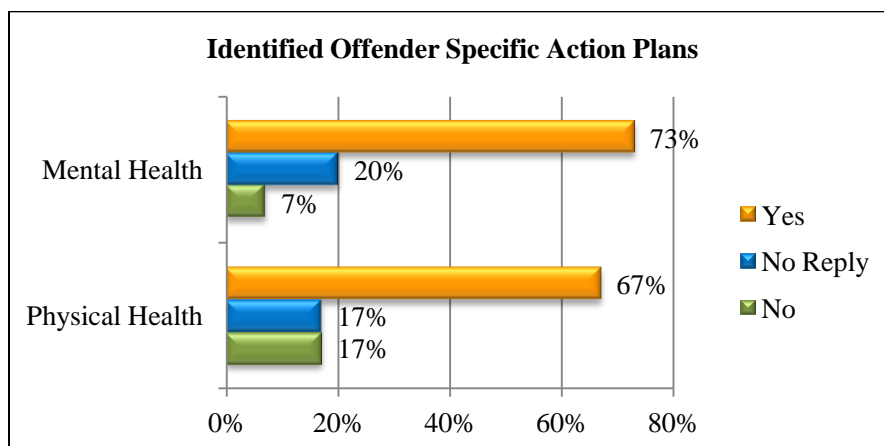
Program Type	Institution		Community	
	<i>n/24</i>	%	<i>n/14</i>	%
Education programs	22	92	6	43
Employment programs	21	88	8	57
Reintegration programs	20	83	9	64
Substance Abuse programs	19	79	9	64
Sex Offender programs	19	79	9	64
Violent Offender programs	16	67	9	64
Programs specific to women offenders	16	67	5	36
Domestic Abuse programs	12	50	8	57
Other Programs	10	42	8	57
Disengagement/Disaffiliation programs	8	33	2	14
Programs specific to Indigenous offenders	7	29	2	14

Offender-Specific Challenges

This section of the survey provided a list of challenges that were specific to the offender population. Although there was some overlap with some of the overarching categories, the goal here was to identify more specific and detailed information regarding offender-related challenges. As can be seen in the figure below, the mental and physical health of offenders once again emerged as the most frequently selected challenges by survey respondents.



Specific to the challenges of the mental and physical health of offenders, the majority of respondents noted that their organizations had identified action plans to help manage the challenges. Themes of the noted action plans included more mental health programs, a program that targets institutional adjustment in order to avoid the negative impact that incarceration can have on mental health, more specialized medical staff, and improved health assessments to identify offender needs and improve medical services (for both mental and physical health).



Part III - Infrastructure

Infrastructure Information

In considering all of the correctional facilities (not including community facilities) in their organization, respondents were asked to indicate at what capacity their organization is working. Of those whose organization only oversees custodial sentences, the greatest proportion reported that their organization is working at capacity (40%), whereas of those whose organization oversees both custodial and non-custodial sentences, the greatest proportion reported that their organization is working under capacity (43%).

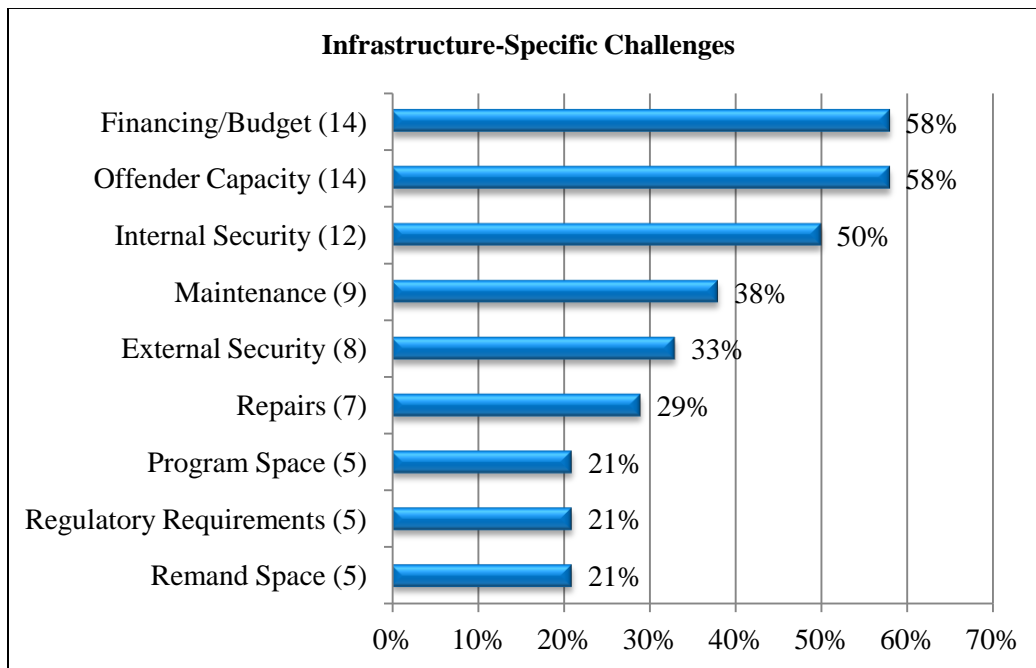
Capacity Level	Only Custodial Organizations		Custodial and Non-Custodial Organizations	
	%	n/10	%	n/14
Under Capacity	20	2	43	6
At Capacity	40	4	29	4
Over Capacity	30	3	21	3
No Reply	10	1	7	1

In terms of the types of living units within the correctional facilities, the double-bunking of offenders or shared accommodations were more common in minimum and medium security levels, whereas in maximum and supermax security levels, single occupancy of cells was more common.

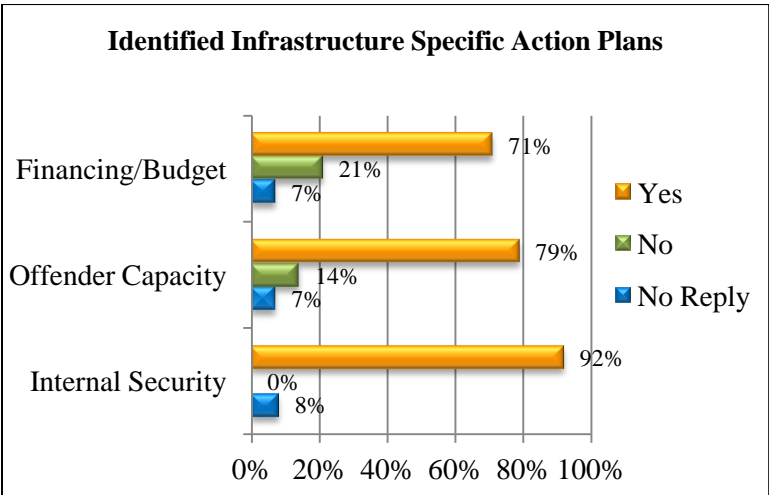
Living Unit	Minimum Security		Medium Security		Maximum Security		Supermax Security		Other	
	%	n/24	%	n/24	%	n/24	%	n/24	%	n/24
Single (one offender per cell)	33	8	38	9	79	19	25	6	21	5
Double (two offenders per cell)	42	10	54	13	38	9	8	2	21	5
Shared accommodations (3-5 offenders per cell)	38	9	33	8	21	5	8	2	8	2
Dormitory accommodations (more than 5 offenders per cell)	42	10	38	9	21	5	8	2	13	3

Infrastructure-Specific Challenges

This section of the survey provided a list of challenges that were specific to infrastructure. Similar to the offender population section, although there was some overlap with the overarching category of infrastructure, the goal here was to identify more specific and detailed information regarding infrastructure-specific challenges. As can be seen in the figure below, the most common infrastructure-specific challenges identified by survey respondents included financing/budget, offender capacity, and internal security.

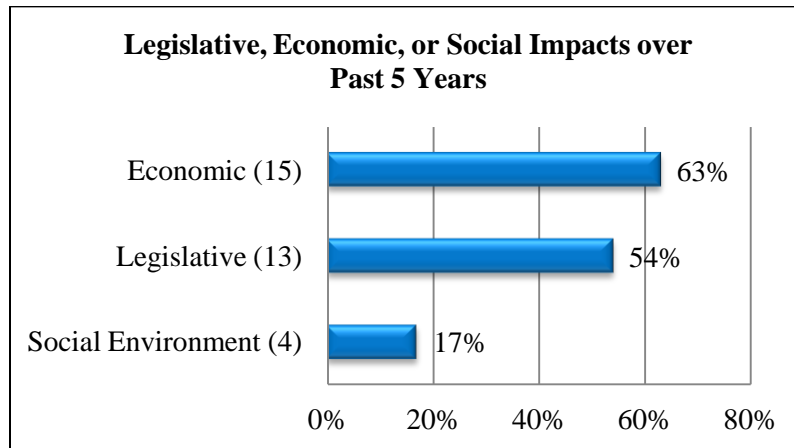


The majority of respondents noted that their organizations have identified infrastructure specific action plans in place. In terms of financial challenges, themes included the development of accommodation plans for more efficient spending and the closing of dated infrastructures that no longer provide cost-benefit. To address offender capacity, actions plans included new and restructured facilities and improved accommodations for the physical needs of offenders as a result of an aging offender population. Finally, in terms of internal security, a noted theme was more static security upon entry to institutions (e.g., scanning, detecting).



Part IV - Legislation, Economy, and Social Environment

Participants were asked if their organization had experienced any impacts due to legislative, economic, and/or social issues over the past five years (2010-2015). The majority indicated that they had experienced both economic and legislative issues, while only a small proportion indicated social environment impacts.



Examples of economic impacts included budget reductions, staffing reductions, and having to do more with fewer resources. Legislative examples included changes in sentencing (e.g., implementation of mandatory conditions), changes to parole practices (e.g., implementation of mandatory conditions), and new penal codes and correctional acts.

Participants were also asked whether their organization has developed action plans to address these issues and to elaborate on the key points of the action plans. Eighty percent of those who identified economic impacts stated that their organization has an identified action plan, and commonly identified themes included the creation of programs for revenue and internal resources (e.g., create internal jobs for inmates), and a change in management plans (e.g., develop plans in order to address cutbacks, adjust priorities, streamline services). Ninety-two percent of those who identified legislative impacts stated a known action plan; themes included to revise and update policies, adjust the capacity to deal with an increased number of offenders, and to enhance training for staff members (e.g., to adjust to new policies, to deal with more conditions in the parole system). Just 50% of the small number of respondents who identified social environment impacts identified an action plan; the primary theme of which was to engage external partners for resources.

Part V - Risk Management

Participants were asked, from a global perspective, what has been the most significant risk to their organization in the past five years (2010-2015). Financial and budgetary risks were the most commonly identified significant risks. Other significant risks primarily dealt with the challenge of an evolving and changing offender population (e.g., growing numbers, increased number of foreign offenders, a growing concern regarding radicalism and extremism, gang issues, trafficking and drug offenders, and addressing diverse needs).

Just over 60% of all respondents identified long-term action plans to address this risk. A common theme was to increase security measures and separation/sub-classification of prisons and offender populations, as well as enhance accommodation plans. There was also an emphasis placed on hiring more qualified staff members and training them to deal with a changing offender population and to work with fewer resources. Another message that came across was that there needs to be more effective interventions and programming to help reduce the likelihood of recidivism; therefore, reducing the strain being placed on the current system due to identified risks.

Overall Summary

Several reoccurring themes emerged regarding the challenges that the surveyed correctional organizations are presently facing.

- The most cited challenge overall was infrastructure, which included the capacity to accommodate current prison populations and the need to address physical conditions such as the age of prisons.
- Resources were noted as a significant overall challenge by many of the respondents. Indeed, a lack of resources was considered a root cause of several of the other challenges and was also noted as one of the most significant organizational risks faced over the past five years.
- Both mental and physical health emerged as challenges. On average, respondents noted that approximately 27% of their offender populations were diagnosed with a mental health disorder. There appears to be a need for improved assessments, more targeted programming, and more specialized staff.
- Technology was also commonly identified as a challenge for the correctional organizations; most of whom identified the need to modernize outdated technology in the institutions. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the need to allow offenders more access to technology in order to equip them with skills that better reflect today's technological climate.
- Although institutional security did not initially emerge as one of the top overall challenges, it was consistently raised when discussing technology and the issue of outdated security technology that could possibly put the institution and staff members at risk. Institutional security also emerged in relation to risk management and the ability to cope with a growing and changing offender population.
- Throughout the survey, respondents stressed the importance of qualified staff members and the need to improve recruitment and training efforts.

Appendix A – List of Participating Countries

Afghanistan
Andorra (Departament d'Institucions Penitenciàries)
Australia (New South Wales Corrective Services)
Bahamas (Bahamas Department of Correctional Services)
Belgium (Federal Public Service of Justice)
Canada (Correctional Service of Canada)
China (Correctional Services Department of Hong Kong SAR Government)
Country and organization not identified
Czech Republic (Prison Service of the Czech Republic)
Denmark (Department of Prisons and Probation)
Dominica (Dominica Prison Service)
Finland (Criminal Sanctions Agency)
Ireland (Irish Prison Service)
Latvia (Latvian Prison Administration)
Lithuania (Prison Department under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania)
Malaysia (Jabatan Penjara Malaysia)
Netherlands (Custodial Institutions Agency)
New Zealand (Department of Corrections)
Norway (Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service)
Romania (National Administration of Penitentiaries)
Slovenia (Prison Administration of Republic of Slovenia)
South Sudan (Direction Administration Pénitentiaire)
Sweden (Swedish Prison and Probation Service)
USA (Colorado Department of Corrections)
Vanuatu (Department of Correctional Services)