

Capacity Self-Assessment Methodology for Local Government Training Institutions

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The draft version of the methodology was developed by Mirek Warowiki, on behalf of UN-Habitat, and it is based on the UNDP Capacity Assessment Framework (UNDP, 2010), the McKinsey Capacity Framework (McKinsey & Company, 2001) and the ECDPM Analytical Framework (European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2008). It has been adapted for use by training institutions and similar organizations providing training for local governments on urban issues. Hanna Hasselqvist has revised the draft and edited the final version of the methodology. The development of the methodology has also benefitted from the input and engagement of Claudio Acioly, Joe Hooper and Cynthia Radert.

GLOSSARY

Capacity: The ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully (OECD/DAC, 2006).

Capacity development: The process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time (OECD/DAC, 2006).

Capacity self-assessment: In a capacity self-assessment the organization identifies their own capacity on three levels: individual, organizational and relational (enabling environment).

Enabling environment: The external factors that affect the training institution, such as relationships between stakeholders in system where the training institution operates, the power relations of the stakeholders, and the context around the system.

Local government training institution: An institution providing training – anything from short courses to long-term programmes – to elected or unelected staff of local governments.

Transfer of Learning: The application of learning to the workplace.

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1. INTRODUCTION TO CAPACITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

1.1. What is capacity self-assessment?

Capacity self-assessment is a way for training institutions to assess and develop the capacities needed for their own development and for the provision of high quality training services. Self-assessment refers to a participatory process driven by the training institutions themselves rather than external actors. This methodology is specifically adapted to training institutions and similar organizations providing training for local governments on urban issues. It focuses on capacity within four areas: resources (physical and human), organization and management, training, and relational capacities (enabling environment).

The methodology comes with a set of 24 pre-defined self-assessment tables and the possibility to create new tables. Each table covers a component of one of the above mentioned capacity areas and the current capacity level is determined by the participants in the capacity self-assessment exercise.

1.2. Why conduct a capacity self-assessment?

Training institutions need to constantly assess and develop capacities to keep up with the ever-changing reality of local governments and the challenges cities are facing. In order to provide relevant services not only the training programmes have to be assessed, but all capacities of the institutes related to how they function and perform. Furthermore, some training institutions have begun to shift towards becoming *learning* institutions. This requires development of new capacities both on individual and organizational level, as well as with regards to enabling environment and networks. By making capacity self-assessment a regular activity, conducted yearly or once every second year, training institutions can ensure continuous internal capacity development that is in line with the institute's priorities and contributes to better service provision.

1.3. How to use this methodology?

The proposed process for capacity self-assessment is divided into six steps: preparation, self-assessment exercise, analysis & capacity prioritization, option generation & prioritization of actions, action plan development, and monitoring & evaluation. It is recommended that a small group of staff is in charge of the process and a bigger group, from different units and with various roles, are involved in the assessment, option generation, prioritization, and action planning exercises. These exercises are preferably carried out in a workshop format, although other options are possible as well.

The methodology should be adapted to the specific institutional context to be truly effective. That includes whom to involve in the process, the format of the exercises, and what capacities to assess (i.e. what self-assessment tables to use). For big institutes it may be easier to start with a small scale self-assessment, such as on department level, and gradually scale up. No matter what the extent of the capacity self-assessment is, it is important to involve people who have the mandate to decide on actions and supervise the capacity development process following the assessment.

This page may be useful to share with managers and other stakeholders in the capacity self-assessment process to provide a quick overview of the methodology.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Urban development trends

Currently more than half of the world's population is living in urban areas and the United Nations predicts that virtually all population growth for the foreseeable future will occur in urban areas. By 2050 it is expected that the 70% of the world's population – 86% of the developed regions and 67% of the less developed regions – will be urban. (UN-Habitat, 2008)

The most important difference between urbanization today and during the first half of the 20th century is that urbanization then mainly was limited to the countries with the highest levels of per capita income. In recent decades the most visible changes in urbanization have occurred, and will continue to occur, in middle and low-income countries (Cohen, 2004). It is not the primary cities that will have the highest growth rates but the smaller secondary cities and towns where poverty rates are higher, and where existing coverage of basic public services is far from comprehensive (National Research Council, 2003).

In industrial countries the urbanization took many decades and occurred relatively slowly in comparison with the urban transformation that now can be seen in developing countries. In today's developing countries the pace of population growth is higher, income levels are lower, and the opportunities to relieve domestic population pressures through migration are limited (Renaud, 2007).

The challenge in the coming years will be to take full advantage of the potential benefits of urbanization in an inclusive way, while lessening the obvious potential negative consequences. How well local authorities are able to respond to this challenge will shape regional and national development, as well as the social and political stability of many countries.

2.2. The role of training institutions

By having the capacity to support capacity development, both of national and local authorities, training institutions play a key role in promoting and fostering sustainable urban development.

Training institutions for local governments can include:

- » Government-owned and government-managed institutions (primarily providing non-degree programs)
- » Autonomous institutions training both government and private sector personnel
- » University-affiliated institutes, which offer educational programs leading to a degree or diploma
- » Business schools, originally set up to provide training in private management but which have diversified into training personnel in the public sector

The role of the training institution as capacity development service provider should not only be of knowledge or skills transfer, but also to facilitate locally owned learning and change processes as an agent of change. Some training institutions have already begun to take on this new role and started a shift towards becoming learning institutions. The shift and its implications was discussed in a Expert Group Meeting with training institutions, in March 2011 (UN-Habitat, 2011). In order to be effective in this change process, the status of the training institution as an agent of change and its relationship with others need to be strengthened.

The new emerging role of the training institution as a facilitator of organizational learning and change requires a different perspective from the traditional approach to capacity assessment. It means, in practice, that in addition to delivering training courses addressing technical and social skills the new role consists of facilitation, empowering relationships, engagement of stakeholders at the institutional level, and, supporting learning rather than providing training in

the traditional way. This goes beyond knowledge and skills transfer at the individual level to consider organizations, institutions, networks and the system in which they are embedded.

Three important factors considering this new role have been incorporated in the capacity self-assessment methodology:

1. Training delivery has moved from being event focused to incorporate follow-up as a matter of training. There is a focus on how to support *transfer of learning* – the application of what the participants learned to their workplace.
2. There is a focus on enabling environment factors which requires the incorporation of facilitation, engagement of stakeholders and important institutional actors; such relational-social capacities have not been counted as related to training before.
3. Monitoring and evaluation now focuses more on learning results in terms of changing behaviours and procedures in the workplace, than on trainee reactions and perceptions. There is a need for training institutions to adopt evaluation methods which are participatory and involve trainers, members of the training institution, participants of training courses and representatives of all stakeholders.

3. WHAT IS THIS METHODOLOGY?

3.1. Assessing own capacities

Capacity assessment facilitates the creation of a new organizational knowledge by bringing together the knowledge held by diverse participants. By looking at different components of capacity, an assessment can change the perception about the organization itself and set directions for how the organization can achieve its mission and goals. Assessments can also create a focus on organizational priorities and change what people inside the organization and stakeholders see as the priorities.

Capacity assessment is primarily a diagnostic and learning tool; it is one aspect of capacity development and can be an integrated approach to examining all aspects of operation and performance. Assessment is referred to here as self-assessment since it is driven by the training institution itself and advocates the involvement of participants, members of the training institution and its stakeholders, who collect the information and assess the current state of the institution. Using a participatory approach supports the process of creating convergence, or a shared sense of the critical issues and priorities facing the training institution.

Assessing capacity through a diagnostic process can help participants:

- » Arrive at a shared understanding of their capacity challenge
- » Agree on aspects of capacity that need attention
- » Take account of factors that may promote or inhibit change

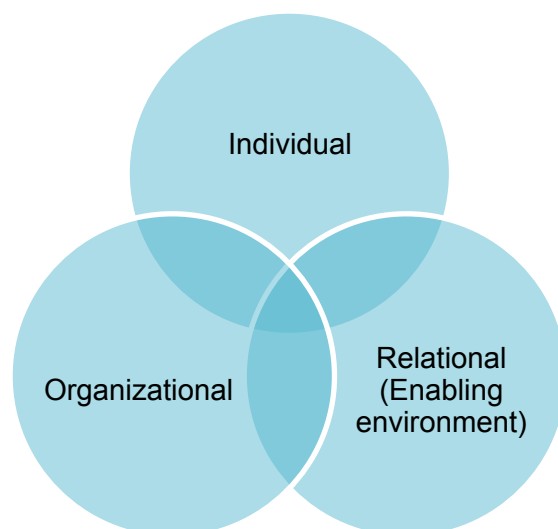
3.2. The concept of capacity development

Capacity development can be seen as strengthening the “ability to perform”. Capacity is an attribute of people, individual organizations, and groups of organizations. Capacity development involves much more than enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals. Capacity and capacity development grows from within, often with support from outside. Although **capacity development** is often used interchangeably with **capacity building**, there is a difference in meaning between these two concepts. The concept of capacity building emphasizes that capacity is something that can be built from outside, for example by a team of experts from another country. It focuses on the initial stages of building or creating capacity, assuming that there are no or little existing capacities. The concept of capacity

development emphasizes that capacity is something that must grow from the inside, and it cannot be developed by outsiders.

3.3. Three levels of capacity and assessment

Capacity resides on three levels: the individual, the organizational and the relational (enabling environment).



Each of these levels can be identified as the point of entry for a capacity assessment (UNDP, 2010). This implies that capacities exist at different scales or levels within an organization: individuals can have capacities, teams have a capacity to do what they do, training institutions as organizations have a capacity to deliver services such as training and follow-up, and networks of institutional actors or partnerships between institutions have relational capacities which create an enabling environment. In this methodology capacity within all three levels is evaluated.

Examples of capacity within the three levels:

Capacities of individuals in the training institution

Trainers: adequate professional knowledge and experience in designing, conducting and evaluating training on several topics.

Administration staff: fully professional and accountable using modern ICT technologies with professional IT support.

Senior management: very professionally provides direction, coaches and supports staff; encourages open communication, involves people's input in relation to difficult issues from different perspectives; encourages innovation and new ideas.

Capacities of the training institution (organizational level)

Is able to conduct different training courses simultaneously.

Is able to develop a new training course or training services in a very short time, approximately in one week.

Organizational structure creates conditions for team work and project management across units.

Organizational structure is sufficiently flexible to enable organizational learning and effective response to external shifts.

Relational capacities to create an enabling environment

Regulations and policy instruments foster formal and informal relationships between various public and private institutions, and educational and training institutions.

Creation of a network of institutions and organizations. Working with other organizations through sharing information, providing complementary services, joint work, and influencing change.

Involvement of stakeholders in addressing new, challenging issues related to internal capacities and external environment related to current trends and tendencies in local government.

Local government and other public institutions, and stakeholders at regional and local level, actively support the training institution by their policy actions.

3.4. Capacity self-assessment process

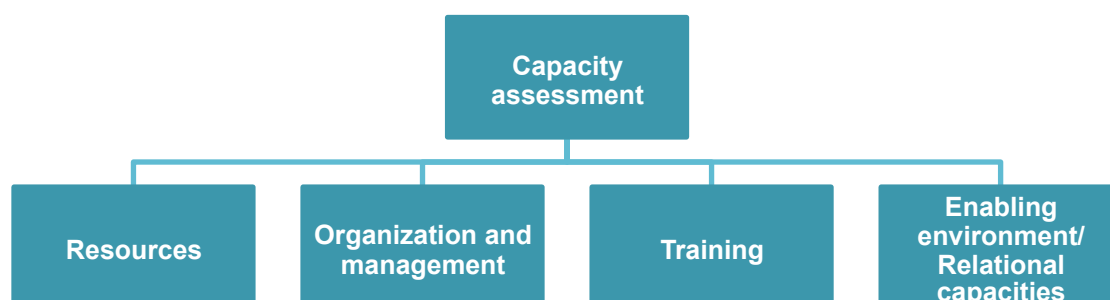
The capacity self-assessment process spans from assessment and analysis to action plan development and evaluation. It is recommended that a small working group is in charge of planning and managing the process while a bigger group is taking part in the different exercises of assessing capacity, prioritize focus areas for action and creating the action plan.

Tables describing levels of capacity within different areas are available to guide the assessment and discussion for the initial self-assessment exercise. The exercise can be conducted using a number of different approaches, such as forms filled in individually by the participants, interviews, work in small groups, or workshops. For all of the exercises this methodology recommends the workshop format, since it is the most interactive approach.

For the workshops an external or internal facilitator conducts the sessions, assisting the group in developing the current picture of the training institution concerning status and availability of resources, skills and competencies, and reviewing selected strategic issues such as mission, vision, goals, capacity challenges, management practices, processes, and products.

3.5. Capacity self-assessment tables

The self-assessment tables are designed for guiding discussions and encouraging dialogue between participants on key challenges related to current capacity and capacity development. The tables include descriptions of four areas of organizational capacity and their components: **(A) resources, (B) organization and management, (C) training, (D) relational capacities/enabling environment.**



Examples of components of capacity within the four areas:

Resources	Physical (infrastructure and modern information and communication technology (ICT)), human, and financial.
Organization and management	Human resource management, institutional arrangements, organizational structure, leadership, planning, strategy/strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, communication and culture, organization flexibility and adaptation, and information and knowledge.
Training	Technical capacities related to local government, reform implementation, decentralization and training methodology capacities (need analysis, design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, transfer of learning and follow-up), and supplementary training services.
Relational capacities/ Enabling environment	Regulation, policies, power, networking, empowering relationships, stakeholder engagement, adaptation, and positive social and political climate.

For each of the capacity components a description of four different levels of capacity is provided, from low to high capacity, which corresponds to a score from 1 to 4. The participants are also asked to make comments after assessing each of the capacity components by very briefly adding information, such as facts, examples, stories and anecdotes. The purpose of this is to provide the context and an opportunity to give a more precise picture of the current level of capacity.

A very important element of the self-assessment process is to encourage the participants to be involved in generating new components of capacity based on their own experience and understanding of the specific contextual factors of their training institution. These new components of capacity can be added to the self-assessment tables and used in the exercises.

All the capacity self-assessment tables, including templates to add new capacity components, can be found in a separate document.

4. WHY IS CAPACITY SELF-ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

4.1. Improving performance in traditional and new role

Organizations usually conduct self-assessments to better understand their own performance and to improve their performance in future. Capacity assessment is an essential first stage in a capacity development process. It can also be used as a way to engage in dialogue with stakeholders or other important actors.

Taking into account both the traditional role of training institutions as a training provider and the shift to a new role as a facilitator of organizational learning and change, it seems worthwhile to use capacity self-assessment for two purposes. First, for training institutions to ensure they have the capacity to deliver high quality training. Second, for the institutes to identify components of capacity that they need to strengthen in order to perform in their new role.

4.2. Expected results from the assessment

The results from the self-assessment will help members of the training institutions deepen their understanding of the current capacity at different levels (individual, organizational and relational/enabling environment), identify and prioritize actions to strengthen the capacity, and track their growth in capacity over time.

The capacity self-assessment is designed to help key members of the training institution:

- » Analyze the sequence of main training functions (needs analysis, design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and follow-up)
- » Better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the organization's leadership
- » Measure the organization's ability to monitor, assess and respond to internal and external changes
- » Measure the ability of the organization to utilize resources effectively
- » Better understand how well the organization is able to implement key organizational and programmatic functions
- » Better understand how to promote learning and change, to understand the way power relations influence the capacity of training institutions
- » Better understand how to empower relationships between institutional actors by networking and partnerships
- » Better understand individual strengths and weaknesses in terms of training competencies

4.3. Why participatory self-assessment?

Self-assessment means that the members of a training institution carry out the capacity assessment by themselves and for themselves, using the self-assessment tables and adding reflections and comments. A participatory process is important to encourage ownership of the results and a commitment to addressing the priority issues that emerge across the training institution.

The participatory approach is intended to provide a comprehensive inside perspective with input from staff from different departments and with various roles. The participants' experience, knowledge, insights, and inputs are key in assessing capacities.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE METHODOLOGY

5.1. Adapting the methodology to the specific context

To make the most out of this methodology it has to be adapted by the users to the specific context of their training institutions. Aspects that should be considered include:

The extent of the capacity self-assessment. For big training institutions, such as universities, it may not be feasible to carry out the assessment throughout the whole organization the very first time it is conducted. An alternative is a gradual scale-up from unit or department level to eventually include the entire institution.

Participants. The number of participants and which departments and roles should be represented depends on both the size and type of the institute as well as the resources available for the assessment.

Format for the exercises. Although a workshop format is suggested in this methodology, other ways of using the capacity self-assessment tables for collecting information on the current capacity may be more practical in some cases. Organizing a workshop and engaging a facilitator may not be feasible if resources are scarce or if key staff are not able to attend the workshops. Alternatives include: tables sent out and being filled in individually by the participants or in small groups, and individual interviews with staff. The assessment analysis,

prioritization of actions and action plan development can be done by a small group instead of during workshops with bigger groups.

Capacities to assess. Which capacities to assess depends on the mission and services of the training institution. Feel free to add or remove tables for the self-assessment exercise and/or adapt the scoring system.

5.2. Involving stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement is an important contributor to effective capacity development, especially in terms of developing relational capacities. Stakeholders are those individuals, groups of individuals or organisations that affect and/or could be affected by the activities, products or services of the training institution.

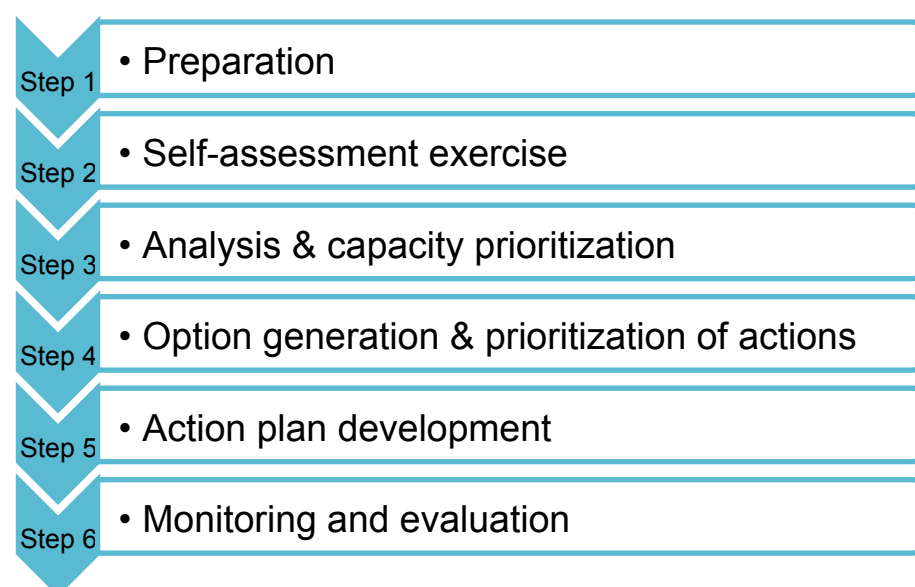
Before conducting the capacity self-assessment it is useful to identify people, groups and structures that can provide support to achieve any actions identified through the process. Stakeholder engagement can vary from simple communication with stakeholders and stakeholder consultation about important issues, to joint decision-making and actions implemented by the stakeholders.

It is important to involve stakeholders in the capacity self-assessment process for two reasons: Firstly, their involvement in the assessment significantly increases the chances of success by building in their feedback. Secondly, involving stakeholders in a capacity assessment builds confidence in the results of the assessment.

5.3. The six-step capacity self-assessment process

Before starting the implementation it is recommended to establish a working group consisting of 3-4 people who are responsible for managing the whole process, including adaptation of the methodology, selection of facilitator, initial stakeholder analysis, selection of participants, and documenting the results throughout the process.

The suggested main steps for the process are:



Step 2-5 are recommended to conduct as two or more workshops with a mixed group of 8-15 participants, including the above mentioned working group. During the self-assessment exercise (step 2) the self-assessment tables are used. Additional tools are provided for prioritization of actions (step 4) and action planning (step 5).

STEP 1: PREPARATION

A planning session to prepare for the process should take place well in advance of the first workshop. The purpose of the planning session is for the working group to ensure that

objectives, agenda, written materials, selection of participants, selection of facilitator, and workshop venue have been discussed and prepared.

The content of the workshop sessions should be discussed in terms of the amount of time required for each phase of the assessment process. Approximately two weeks is needed for preparation, including adaptation of the methodology. The first sessions on the *self-assessment exercise* and *analysis & capacity prioritization* (step 2 and 3) can be carried out during one day. The later sessions on *option generation & prioritization of actions* and *action plan development* (step 4 and 5) also take approximately one day. The *monitoring & evaluation* (step 6) should also be planned during the preparation sessions. About half a day can be set aside for an evaluation session to be carried out in the very end of the process.

The external or internal facilitator is selected during the preparation stage, as well as the participants. The number of participants for the workshops depends on factors such as the size of the training institution and the venue available for the sessions. Ideally, the group consists of 8-15 participants. Participants may include staff from each unit (trainers and administrative staff), managers, board members, and stakeholders. Larger groups can be addressed by ensuring a sufficient number of facilitators and appropriate venue size.

In the invitation to the workshop participants it may be useful to include the “*Introduction to capacity-self assessment*”, which can be found in the beginning of this document.

STEP 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The self-assessment exercise is the first session of the workshops. Start with a short introduction on the objectives of the exercise, the structure of the assessment process, the key concepts, the capacity areas to be assessed (resources, organization and management, training, and relational), and what will follow during the next sessions. Before moving on to the actual assessment, take some time to discuss in the group which of the 24 self-assessment tables are relevant to include in the assessment and if there are any important areas that are not covered by the provided tables. If necessary, create new tables with descriptions of levels of capacity following the same structure and scoring system as the provided tables.

Next the participants individually fill in the selected self-assessment tables by deciding on the level and score for each capacity component (each table) that they think describe the current capacity of the institution best. It may be that for some capacities the current level is between two levels, for example between level 2 and 3; in that case the score can be set to 2.5. If there are capacities the individual participants do not feel they know enough about to rate, the table can be marked “N/K”. Comments can be added below each table to further explain the situation or justify the chosen score.

Once all participants have completed the tables the facilitator manages the process of summarizing the scores and deciding on, by consensus or majority, a final score for each capacity component. Everyone is encouraged to share their comments, including facts, stories, and anecdotes, reflecting the chosen level of capacity for each table.

If there is a large number of participants, or if it is reasonable to separate some of them into smaller groups to foster more open discussion and dialogue, it might be more useful to carry out the assessment with specific groups at different times.

STEP 3: ANALYSIS & CAPACITY PRIORITIZATION

The next session, which can be carried out the same day as the self-assessment exercise, is on analyzing the results and prioritizing capacities. During the analysis the aim is to better understand the results. If there, in the previous step, were disagreements on any of the scores it can be discussed why people from for example different units have different opinions on the level of capacity. It is also useful to look at the overall result of the assessment. Which areas are strong and why are they strong? Which areas are not as strong and what is the reason for that?

At this stage it is time for a first prioritization on what capacities to focus on in the rest of the process. Look at the capacities that are most important to improve for the training institution to function effectively, as well as strengths that can be further built on in the institution's capacity development process. It is important that the areas selected are in line with, and supporting, the mission and goals of the training institution.

STEP 4: OPTION GENERATION & PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS

It is good to leave this step at least till the day after the first workshop (step 2 and 3) for the participants to have a chance to process the discussions and reflect on the results.

During the session on option generation and prioritization of actions, the group's energy is first directed toward the creation of a list of potential actions related to capacity development of the institutions. The actions should address the focus areas and capacities decided on in step 3. When a list with many options have been created the actions can be sorted in a matrix according to if they are inward looking (mainly requiring internal involvement) or outward looking (depending on external factors) and long- or short-term interventions.

	Short-term	Long-term
Inward looking		
Outward looking		

The group then establishes prioritization criteria and begins to analyse the options. Actions that are decided to be of high priority can be circled or highlighted in the matrix.

Recommended factors to consider for the prioritization:

- » Potential impact on capacity and performance of the training institution
- » Urgency
- » Anticipated level of stakeholder support
- » Financial feasibility
- » Resources and time required

Try to find "quick wins". If there are actions requiring little resources and time, but that are likely to have a great impact, those should be of high priority.

At the conclusion of this step, participants should have reached agreement on recommendations in terms of activities to be included in the action plan.

STEP 5: ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The action planning enables participants to set a plan for how they will address the weak and the strong areas they have prioritized. A key aspect of this is establishing who takes

responsibility for making sure what happens and when. An action plan for a selected capacity area ought to describe the point of departure, identify the needs and justify specific activities, include an analysis of available resources, list planned activities with an initial timetable, describe the expected results, identify monitoring and evaluation methods, and articulate proposed stakeholder participation. It is also useful to discuss drivers and constraints, which are sometimes difficult to describe but are important in explaining present performance and how to achieve desired performance.

The action plan is developed during a session following the option generation and prioritization of actions. In both these sessions (step 4 and 5) it is crucial with participation of managers or other staff who have the mandate to formally decide on what actions to take and who will be responsible.

Action Plan Template:

	Capacity area/factor	Planned activities	Expected results	Timeframe	Monitoring & evaluation methods	Who will be responsible for implementation?	Proposed stakeholder participation
1							
2							
3							
4							

STEP 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of the capacity self-assessment process are related to each other; however, initially it is worth separating their scopes.

Monitoring consists of the regular gathering of information about progress in task implementation, i.e. gathering data on whether the activities have been carried out in accordance with the plan. Continuous monitoring of the process also gives the opportunity to adjust the process if needed.

Examples of what to monitor:

- » Is the implementation of the steps in accordance with the plan (time, content of sessions, resources used etc.)?
- » What are the participants' reactions and responses, and how engaged are they in the process?
- » Are the objectives of each step met?
- » Are there any new factors affecting the process that have to be taken into account?
- » Are any adjustments of the implementation of the process necessary?

While monitoring is an ongoing process, evaluation takes place over a shorter period of time after the capacity self-assessment process is completed. The purpose of the evaluation is to look at the implementation of the process to see how it can be improved for future self-assessments.

The recommended evaluation approach is to focus on all processes, from preparation of the self-assessment (step 1) through collecting data, facilitating group discussion, summarizing individual perceptions and comments, generation and prioritization of potential activities related to capacity development, and up to action plan development (step 5).

In practice, an assessment team may organize a learning-oriented evaluation session, or sessions if needed, to engage participants of the process, including stakeholders, in a

participatory exercise. Identifying opportunities for learning, continuous improvement in action, and applying lessons learned leads to better ways of carrying out capacity self-assessments in the future.

An evaluation of the capacity self-assessment process can address the following questions:

- » What have we learnt from each step in the process?
- » How can the capacity self-assessment process be improved?
- » What changes should we make in future capacity self-assessments and action plan development?
- » How can support for capacity development be improved?
- » How can we improve involvement of stakeholders in the process?

5.4. The role of the facilitator

If a workshop format is used for the capacity self-assessment, an experienced facilitator is required to conduct sessions, develop the group process and to be involved in preparation, logistics and reporting. The facilitator may be from the training institution or from outside. An internal facilitator is likely to be more knowledgeable about the training institution than an external facilitator, whereas an external facilitator is likely to have a more objective approach.

The role of the facilitator is based on one hand on flexibility and accommodation to the needs of the group members, and on the other hand on clear goals to be achieved related to the accomplishment of the capacity assessment. This means, in practice, that the facilitator combines the roles of capacity assessment tool guide, active listener, supporter, catalyst, coach, timekeeper, and action planner. The facilitator does not provide solutions but asks the right questions to stimulate reflection, learning and empowerment of all group members.

The role of the facilitator in the capacity self-assessment is crucial in clarifying, asking additional questions, paraphrasing and summarising. The skilled facilitator can help in a substantive way from preparation to the end of the capacity self-assessment process and ensure that the process is easier and more effective.

5.5. Guidelines for implementation

Stakeholder engagement. Defining the desired results of stakeholder engagement is a part of preparation, as it helps to select the most appropriate stakeholders with common interests and potential influence, and methods for informing and consulting, building relationships and coalitions, and undertaking joint action.

Encouraging dialogue. The self-assessment tables are designed for guiding discussion, and encouraging dialogue between participants on key challenges related to capacity development. The four descriptive stages proposed in each category serve to improve the understanding of the institution's capacities and for guiding the process of "reading the organization".

Being realistic. One of the most important criteria is to be realistic about how much time, involvement, and support, and what resources, are needed to get results.

Scale of reference. The capacity self-assessment may be used on a large scale, with reference to a long-term program in which training is only one method of learning and intervention, and on a small-scale, selecting one concrete, short-term training course recently conducted. These two different perspectives regarding the scale of reference will permit enabling and constraining factors, mechanisms and causal connections to be determined for *training* in the traditional role, and as *facilitator of learning and change* in the emerging role.

Time of reference. Another option for self-assessment analysis is the comparison of capacity development at two different points in time, for example now and four years ago. Then participants, after reading the descriptions in the tables and deciding which is the most suitable for the point of time, write on the right side in the table the dates: four years ago (4ya)

and now. These two marked points in time provide information about changes, or lack of change, in reference to a particular capacity factor.

Participatory workshop format. The components of the workshop are intended to provoke active participation and critical thinking, and develop understanding about capacity development, capacity self-assessment and action plan preparation in a concrete context. Therefore, when planning self-assessment implementation (all steps), it is necessary to emphasize the importance of participation through interactive activities.

Participant selection. For a successful participatory workshop the selection of participants is a major factor. To ensure the right combination and proportion of participants from different units and levels of management it is necessary to make a list and check the availability of potential participants some time before the self-assessment. All participants are regarded as experts on an equal basis, with knowledge and individual experience.

Organisational logistics. The workshop format requires significant practical arrangements, especially in terms of a suitable venue with access to a photocopier; the time needed for each activity in the agenda; access to visual aids; and additional space for small group work. It is useful to have a check list prepared before the workshop for this purpose.

Be prepared. Before a workshop is conducted for the first time, have someone who is experienced as a group facilitator review the planned sequence, agenda, steps, divisions between sessions, materials, and logistics.

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