



DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

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CRITERIA FOR DONOR AGENCIES' SELF-ASSESSMENT IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This document replaces document DCD/DAC(97)31. It has been updated to integrate a number of additional criteria relating in particular to the impact of capacity development interventions. DAC Members are encouraged to use the self-assessment, particularly in the context of implementing the partnership approach.

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CRITERIA FOR DONOR AGENCIES' SELF-ASSESSMENT IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

I. Introduction

1. The DAC Informal Network on Institutional and Capacity Development (I/CD Network) has developed a practical tool which assists donor agencies to make a "self-assessment" of their progress in implementing partnership and capacity development principles. The self-assessment is aimed at reform-minded agencies and staff concerned with integrating capacity development into their day-to-day operations and improving their performance in this field.

2. The self-assessment makes a link between, on the one hand, agencies' internal policies and practices and, on the other, the impact of these in the field. As far as possible, impact may be disaggregated along the lines of social groupings, gender and geographic areas. Users are encouraged to adapt the self assessment as and where necessary. Questions may be reworded, expanded, or omitted. Users may also provide brief illustrations (examples, cases)

3. Five major questions are asked:

1. Does the aid agency have a clear **strategy** to promote and integrate capacity development into day-to-day operations?
2. To what extent has the agency adapted its **interventions** and **processes** to fit with the requirements of capacity development?
3. To what extent has the agency adapted its administrative **procedures** to fit the requirements of capacity development?
4. What **incentives for change** have been introduced to promote and integrate capacity development into day-to-day operations?
5. To what extent has the agency developed mechanisms to measure **impact**, and what **results** have been recorded?

II. Criteria

A. Strategy

1. What is your agency's understanding of the concept of capacity development?
2. To what extent has this concept been accepted in your agency?
3. How does your agency orient its staff regarding capacity development?

4. To what extent is capacity development an integral part of your agency's operations, and how is it translated into, e.g. country-specific strategies for capacity development, sectoral/thematic strategies, and projects and programmes?
5. What resources and what types of resources (e.g. funds, number of staff, specific projects), are devoted to capacity development within your agency?
6. In which ways has your agency changed its modes of delivery?

B. Process

1. What mechanisms does your agency apply to make realistic assessments of local conditions and capacities, e.g. contextual and/or capacity analyses:
 - Is this institutionalised through external appraisal?
 - Does your agency have facilities for counterpart organisations to undertake a self-assessment?
 - Do you include in this analysis the existing national development programmes and the programmes of other donor agencies?
2. In which ways are stakeholders involved in shaping the design and implementing a programme and agreeing upon the contribution of all actors concerned?
3. What facilities does your agency apply to allow adjustments in the course of the implementation of a co-operation agreement? For example:
 - flexible funding arrangements;
 - delegated authority;
 - monitoring in place;
 - long-term commitment;
 - ability to accept set-backs.

C. Procedures

1. Is capacity development a vital element in your agency's appraisal (decision-making and evaluation, etc.) procedures?
2. To what extent have the responsibilities on your Head Office been delegated in line with capacity development requirements in developing countries? For example, what types of decisions can be made at recipient country level?
3. To what extent is there flexibility within the annual budget cycle of your organisation, and what options does your agency have for long-term financial commitments?

D. Incentives to Change

1. What changes have taken place in your agency's human resources policies to include capacity development requirements:
 - recruitment policies and criteria;
 - job descriptions (including profile for staff dealing with capacity development) and evaluations;
 - promotion policies;
 - adequate training opportunities.
2. In what specific ways does your agency promote co-operation between its various disciplines and departments?
3. Does your agency provide tools/instruments to deal with capacity development to:
 - counterpart organisations (e.g. self assessments);
 - own staff;
 - contracted consultants.
4. To what extent are these tools/instruments adequate and user-friendly?
5. What methods do you apply to strengthen the institutional memory of your agency?
 - collecting best practices;
 - network of professionals within your organisation;
 - making resources available for briefing and debriefing, etc.

E. Impact Assessment of Capacity Development Interventions

1. What kind of mechanisms does your agency apply to measure the impact of your capacity development interventions, and do these operate both at the central and field office/embassy level?
2. What kind of indicators are used to measure capacity development processes and outcomes (e.g. internal measurement of organisational efficiency versus external measurement of effectiveness and impact)? To what extent do these indicators allow for disaggregation of impact along the lines of social groupings, gender, geographic areas and administrative levels (central/local government, NGOs)?
3. What impact have you actually made in the field of capacity development and do you record this impact (e.g. at the project/programme, sectoral or system wide-level)?

4. To what extent do the results of impact assessment feed back into your policies and practices (e.g. have they resulted in/contributed to changes in the organisational set up of your agency, or to the introduction of new modes of co-operation)?