

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

Part I introduces you to the guidelines and describes important basic definitions and concepts. You are encouraged to refer to the Annexes which contain supporting information. **Part I** is sub-divided into three chapters:

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1.1 THE CONTEXT

For several years now, there has been much debate on the efficacy of technical cooperation. For many countries as well as donors, the achievement of development goals dealing with better policy making, better economic management or better programme/project delivery has been elusive. The reasons for this are many. First and foremost among these is that non-achievement is very often a function of insufficient sustainable capacities within those organisations charged with implementing programmes.

As a seeming sweeping statement, this does not tell us much. Research that has dug a bit deeper into trying to understand this problem reveals that insufficient capacity cannot be defined simply in terms of gaps in local human resources, financial resources or training. The problem in fact is more a function of a combination of: limited sense of local ownership of the developmental processes; excessive dependency on external resources and technical assistance; inadequate considerations of broader environmental or systems factors; and/or poor integration and coordination of multiple development/programme initiatives.

It is not the intent of these guidelines to cover the same ground that so much of this research has already covered. The objective of these guidelines, rather, is to define capacity in a comprehensive and integrated manner which goes to the heart of the fundamental problem: to develop **sustainable capacities** at whichever level developmental goals are being articulated and for which programmes and projects are being formulated and implemented to achieve these goals. These guidelines show clearly how capacity assessments might be undertaken in different situations, and how programmes and projects might be better designed to ensure ownership, sustainability and ultimately success.

However, before this can be done, we must first develop a common understanding of capacity, its definition, and the underlying methodological framework upon which these guidelines are based. Other preliminary but important questions are also addressed.

As no two situations will be alike, these guidelines require common sense and flexibility, as well as a good understanding of the particular context. These guidelines provide a logical framework that can be tailored to meet different situations. Further reading is listed in Annex 1.

1.2 INTENDED USERS OF THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to help governments, civil society organisations, private sector institutions and other organisations assess and develop the capacities needed for sustainable **change**, for the achievement of **development objectives**, for the achievement of a **mission/**

vision, or similar thrust. When done through capacity initiatives³, and if done right, they manifest ownership, incorporate strategic thinking and produce sustainable results. There is no escaping the fact that a “core” group of individuals (or at least one individual in smaller programme situations) will need to have a solid grounding in methodologies, approaches and tools. Hence, more detailed guides, manuals plus training may be needed to supplement these guidelines.

[1] Project/Programme Managers and Experts

These professionals would **lead, manage or facilitate** (as methodological and process advisors) a capacity initiative. They are seen as serious practitioners and as such would be responsible for the management of the capacity initiative. Such individuals must be competent and experienced managers, with sufficient qualifications and/or skills in project and programme management, strategic and change management, and capacity initiatives. They will need **more** than just these guidelines in order to successfully manage a capacity initiative.

[2] Team Participants

These individuals would **participate on a team** that is tackling a capacity initiative. They may be drawn from the key organisation and other stakeholder groups. They would not need to have a detailed knowledge of or experience in programme management and related areas, but they should have a reasonable grounding and experience in capacity initiatives. These guidelines may be too detailed for some, and yet adequate for others. A **simplified version** of these guidelines will be prepared to “orient” team participants to methods and approaches to capacity assessment/development initiatives in a strategic management context.

[3] Broader Stakeholder Community

Many other individuals within an entity and/or within the broader stakeholder community may participate in one or more ways in a capacity initiative. They could come from all walks of life. These guidelines may be of interest to some stakeholders, but more likely a simplified version will suffice for most. High level descriptions of the guidelines will be developed and, in a few pages, convey the purpose and expected outcomes of such a process. Such a high level treatment could point the more-than-casually-interested reader or participant to more detailed documents for reference.

1.3 APPLYING THE GUIDELINES

In introducing these guidelines, it is useful to address the primary question: **capacity assessment and development for what?** In these guidelines, as well as for most similar methodologies, the fundamental “what” is a special type of management challenge: to solve a problem, to achieve or sustain a mission, to reach a set of objectives, make a major change.

³Such initiatives are usually referred to as programmes or projects. Hereinafter, the term **capacity initiative** will be used, but the guidelines could apply to programmes as well as to small or larger projects.

Challenges may be macro-economic development in nature, they may be objectives specific to a programme or project, or they may be specific to a very localized situation.

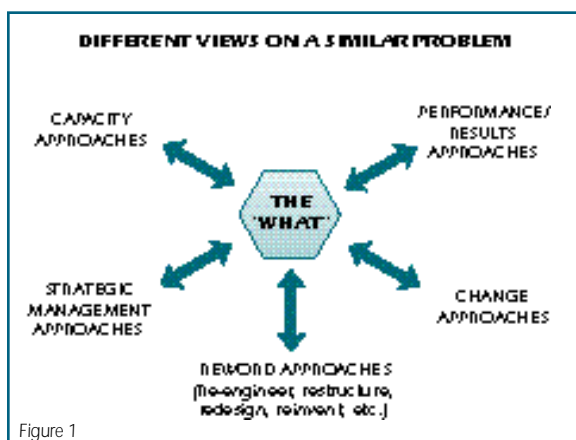


Figure 1

Figure 1 graphically illustrates that there are different approaches available to managers and others to address a fundamental “what.” The selection of a methodology will be a function of the nature of the “what” to be addressed, of the available tools and resources, and of management style. There is no right or wrong way. For example, some organisations have embraced “performance,” “results-based” management or “learning organisation” methodologies as their management approach. Others apply more traditional methodologies of strategic management and planning. In some sectors, “re-

engineering” and “restructuring” have been the preferred approaches. This is not to say that these are mutually exclusive. Indeed, most employ a common set of underlying principles and techniques. What may differ is the specific organisational context and the emphasis to be made.

The capacity approach gives emphasis to issues of capacity and sustainability at various levels, in a comprehensive and integrative manner. However, capacity questions cannot be tackled outside of a strategic or programme planning context. The following subsections situate capacity assessment and development within a broader strategic management framework. Finally, these guidelines can be adapted by practitioners to carry out capacity assessment and development in a wide variety of applications (a different view of the “what”): e.g.

- ▲ micro-level: (e.g., a community, Non-Governmental Organisation/ NGO, academic institution, a government ministry or agency, parastatal entity, etc.).
- ▲ meso-level: (e.g., sectoral initiatives such as health, industrial development, credit development; or regional/local initiatives such as local governance, municipal management).
- ▲ macro-level: (e.g., national or cross-sectoral development programmes such as environment, poverty alleviation, private sector development, governance and public administration reform).