

5 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

5.1 WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BE?

Defining a future situation involves a lot more than star-gazing or looking into a crystal ball. In fact, defining future situations in the context of a development programme lies somewhere between art and science. Most organisations have gone through planning activities which try to point to the future. In the past, planning for the longer term or the distant future (beyond 5 years) was very much guesswork and speculation. Today, however, there exists a good body of methodology, technique and practice which gives planning for the longer term a stabler and more realistic footing.

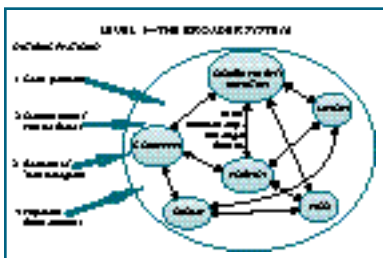


A special type of capacity assessment can concentrate on defining future directions and future needs, allowing practitioners to better measure capacity gaps. Assessments at this stage correspond to the second stage of the strategic management life cycle. The intent is to develop a reasonable definition of the “future” as envisaged by a capacity initiative (e.g., in the context of a development programme) and to secure all the necessary decisions and approvals to proceed to implementation. Capacity assessments at this stage are not quite so critical to the overall process since the primary supporting activities are planning in nature.

It is at this stage of the strategic management life cycle that more precise capacity assessments can be made and where a programme might begin to be formulated. This stage represents the beginning of serious implementation planning, where political commitment will most likely be made to go ahead with a capacity development initiative.

THIS CHAPTER presents some approaches that might be taken to determine future situations at the systems, entity and individual levels. Clearer understandings of future situations will allow you to determine capacity needs. When these are then compared to existing capacities, the capacity gaps can be more precisely identified and measured. This information supports the decisionmaking processes, and helps move an overall capacity development process towards implementation.

5.2 FUTURE AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL



The future enabling environment or system situation can be defined in terms of longer term objectives/ goals, outcomes in terms of what the situation will eventually be like, and some sort of “vision.” There will be new and different ways to measure performance. A planning assessment of the

“future” would generate detailed information for each of the five dimensions, as follows:

- ▲ **Vision** of the future system that the capacity initiative, if successfully implemented, will cause. This would be a high level narrative description embodying the longer term **objectives** and **policy framework** of the system and its priorities.
- ▲ Detailed description of the enabling **legal/regulatory** environment within which the capacities would be developed and sustainable (new/reformed rules of the system).
- ▲ Specification of the **management/accountability framework** (new/different entities or stakeholders responsible for aspects of management) e.g., initiative design, management and implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation—plus other key stakeholders and their roles, and the nature of inter-relationships and interdependencies.
- ▲ Firmer estimate of the **resources** (human, financial, information) that are available or may be available within the system to implement the capacity initiative, and where they come from.

As noted in **Part I**, systems can have a purpose and operate according to rules and processes. There exist some differences of opinion as to whether objectives can be set for the system per se. To be sure, objectives can be set for a capacity initiative at the systems level and for the entities within the system. It is at the entity level—and individuals within the entity—where objectives, implementation plans, change and capacity development are targeted. The cumulative effect of planned and managed change at the entity level effects positive changes in capacities at the system level, rendering the system more functional according to its purpose, its rules, its processes and overall “entropy.”

In attempting to describe a future system, some initial key considerations need to be made. First, the need to get some sense of the future depends very much on the nature of the envisaged capacity initiative itself and whether it involves a gradual or **incremental** change from the present situation or whether it points to a **transformational** change. If the future is one resulting from gradual change then the future could be defined basically in the same terms as the present or of improvements to capacities in the current situation—things won’t be so much different as they will be better. However, if the direction is toward a transformational change, then things in the future will be very much different from the way they are now and also, presumably, much better.

Second, defining the future depends on the time-scales involved. For example, an initiative of incremental capacity development and change may be implemented and readily measurable usually over a relatively short time period—say, 5 to 10 years. As illustrated in Figure 8, a capacity development initiative of cross-sectorial and transformational changes in capacities involving many entities on the other hand usually takes much longer—typically a generation or two (in excess of 15–20 years). A major error in many capacity initiatives which embody transformational change is to implement according to short and unrealistic timeframes (often linked to the funding, budgeting or lending cycles of governments

and/or funding agencies!). Their overall objectives may be sound, but the time to achieve them is unrealistic.

We can use the same model that we used in the preceding chapter (see Figure 10-b). Here, detailed assessments of the future will generate better information on possible future capacities (column 2), which then can be

used to better assess the capacity gaps (column 3). In terms of analytical technique, future changes in capacities to be brought about can best be described in the form of scenarios. Two or more scenarios may be described and evaluated (relative advantages and disadvantages, against a pre-set list of criteria), allowing decision makers to review options. This is a common and popular means of describing in simple, lay-person terms what the end result of a capacity development initiative might be—not the outputs produced, but rather the ultimate outcomes in the form of positive changes to the system as a whole: its performance, the new or different entities within the system and their inter-relationships; the net result on sustainable human development; the net result in human rights and standards of living.

Systems level capacities in the future scenario should first be related to or cast in the context of a socioeconomic or development plan and strategy. It must be consistent with and supportive of the longer term directions of the country. The country's longer term directions may be articulated in the five year development plan, the development platform of the ruling government party, or some other source. Whatever the case may be, there would normally exist some longer-term set of objectives for the country as a whole which would constitute the longer-term policy framework. If no such formal statement or document exists, then the longer-term priorities of the country can usually be gleaned, inferred and deduced from various sources. And if this can't be done, some longer-term planning assumptions might be cast.

DIMENSION OF CAPACITY	1	2	3	4
	EXISTING CAPACITY	FUTURE CAPACITY	CAPACITY GAP	POSSIBLE STRATEGIES
1 POLICY FRAMEWORK	✓	✓	✓	
2 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	✓	✓	✓	
3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK	✓	✓	✓	
4 SYSTEMS LEVEL RESOURCES	✓	✓	✓	
5 PROCESSES AND RELATIONSHIPS	✓	✓	✓	

Figure 10-b

Capacities Needed at the Systems Level

- ▲ Capacities for Strategic Planning (e.g., capacity assessments, market analysis, demand analysis, strategic and programme planning, implementation and fall-back planning, policy research and analysis, policy development)
- ▲ Capacities for Strategic Management (e.g., change management, leadership, team-building, decisionmaking and decision support, consensus building, monitoring and evaluation, education and awareness, communications and public relations)
- ▲ Capacities to Coordinate (e.g., of structural inter-relationships within the system, coordinate with other major programmes, with external funding agencies)

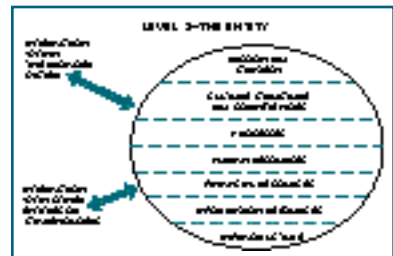
Once this context is known or assumed, then one important way to describe a future situation resulting from the initiative is to develop a set of higher level “outcomes” and these can be set as higher level performance indicators. Longer term objectives can be developed in an implementation to focus on the creation of these outcomes. The key outcomes define the major directions of capacity development efforts. While these are somewhat general, the key indicators are used to put more specificity to them—to give them more meaning. The set of outcomes and indicators can be presented in a narrative form as well.

The future scenario would then be related back to the assessment of capacities in the current situation—its major deficiencies, dysfunctions, problems, risks, opportunities and so on (please refer to Figure 9). Here, the objective is to link the future with the present—to show that the future scenario will have had in fact addressed the existing prevailing concerns and opportunities, insofar as the scope and parameters of the existing capacities are concerned.

Finally, at this stage of the analysis, the possible strategies for filling the gaps (column 4 in Figure 10-b) can be further refined. Such strategies may take the form of the hierarchy of objectives presented in the preceding chapter, but now containing more detail and more accuracy. Such future scenarios can be then further detailed and described to satisfy questions or concerns that may be raised. However, one cannot answer many questions about the future until one gets there! This then points to the need to answer the question “How to get there?” This is answered through implementation planning, which is covered in the next chapter.

5.3 FUTURE AT THE ENTITY LEVEL

It may be decided that certain entities within the system will exist in the future, to continue to have a valid, if different role and function. Initial decisions may be made which indicate that other entities will be dissolved, privatised or otherwise removed from the system as a result of implementation. New entities may be introduced.



At the entity level, a vision/mission statement and high level strategy may be developed for the entity as a whole, for each major dimension of capacity/change within the entity, for each organisational subunit within the entity, and/or for each major subprogramme (e.g., service or product line). Objectives of each of the internal subunits would of necessity be linked to and supportive of the objectives of the entity as a whole.

The future of a continuing entity can be described along much the same lines as scenario analysis for the system. We can also use the same model which we used for the entity in the last chapter (see Figure 11-b). Here, however, the focus is on the individual entity—whether formal or informal—and the major dimensions of change within it. Assessing the future situation and related capacity needs for the entity for each dimension would include:

DIMENSION OF CAPACITY	1	2	3	4
	CURRENT CAPACITY	FUTURE CAPACITY	CAPACITY GAP	POSSIBLE STRATEGIES
1 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	✓	✓	✓	
2 CULTURE/STRUCTURE	✓	✓	✓	
3 PROCESSES	✓	✓	✓	
4 HUMAN RESOURCES	✓	✓	✓	
5 FINANCIAL RESOURCES	✓	✓	✓	
6 INFORMATION RESOURCES	✓	✓	✓	
7 INFRASTRUCTURE	✓	✓	✓	
8 INTER-RELATIONSHIPS	✓	✓	✓	

Figure 11-b

- ▲ New **mission**, which would define or redefine its role and mandate, and the source of its authority (e.g., new charter or piece of legislation, a regulation); and the longer term objectives of the entity, directly related to and supportive of the programme/ systems level objectives.
- ▲ Indication of the **outcomes** of the entity and new measures of **performance**.
- ▲ Statement of operational and performance **priorities** over the short, medium and long term.
- ▲ Possibly an indication of re-**structur - ing** options in terms of organisational situation and design, possible size and resourcing, and possible new relationships with other entities.

Essential Capacities Needed for Informal Organisations and Groups

- ▲ **Organisation** (participatory, inclusive)
- ▲ **Planning** (assessment, visioning, priorities and strategies)
- ▲ **Processes** (self-management, conflict resolution, consensus building)
- ▲ **Human Resources** (e.g., task assignments, resource mobilisation, volunteers)
- ▲ **Financial Resources** (e.g., budgeting and accounting)
- ▲ **Self Monitoring/Evaluation**

- ▲ Indication of financing or funding arrangements, optional sources of revenues.
- ▲ Any other key piece of information about the entity that would help the decisionmaking process in approving the entity's future direction.

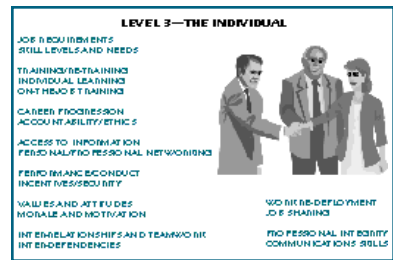
Describing possible future scenarios in this way is especially important for those that are envisaged to undergo **transformational** change. The more that these changes can be put in a positive light, the better. As much as possible, descriptions of the future should focus on win-win scenarios.

Where there are bound to be losers in some change situations (e.g., massive lay-offs), then some assurances must be built into the “systems” descriptions as to how the negative consequences will be minimised, or the hard landings made softer. These issues are addressed more directly during the implementation planning and implementation stages, but any advance information on these issues will help the decision making processes.

Informal organisations or groups may require a special set of capacities, as noted in the box. These may be reflected in a different manner where the formal organisation is not quite so critical. UNDP and other potential inputs to support capacity initiatives may be marginal, where the entity relies mostly on local inputs.

5.4 FUTURE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

As noted above, considerations of the individual “in the future” are made at the systems and entity level, as well as at the individual level. At the individual level, the thrust is to examine the possible future situations the individual will likely benefit from (since the ultimate objective of such capacity development initiatives should be to improve the lives of individuals).



For individuals that are likely to continue to be with the entity that will also continue to exist in the future, and will be part of that entity's change, separate career and development plans can be made for or in collaboration with these individuals, as part of overall human resources plans for the entity. For individuals that are **not** likely to continue with the entity into the future, then separate plans can also be made (workforce adjustment, retraining, redeployment, early retirement).

The important thing here is to put the individual into all planning and discussions of the future scenarios. Success depends on each person being aware, understanding and eventually accepting/buying into the future change.