

Scoring Innovation Capacities



Tool factsheet

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON FRAMEWORK ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (CD) FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS (AIS)

This factsheet is one of several useful resources that can be used in the preparation and roll out of capacity development projects for agricultural innovation systems (AIS). The tools described in these pages are designed with a view to the practical implementation of the principles of the Common Framework of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), a G20 initiative. They have been applied in the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project, funded by the EU and jointly implemented by Agrinatura and FAO in collaboration with national partners in Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Laos and Rwanda.

Capacity development interventions that support agricultural innovation are most effective when based on a comprehensive self-assessment both of the skills and of the capacity gaps that exist at an individual, organizational level and within the enabling environment. With this in mind, the CDAIS project developed and implemented a scoring tool to assess innovation capacities, identify strengths and weaknesses and monitor capacity changes over time.

Purpose of the tool

The scoring tool makes it clear which functional capacities are going to be needed to promote, lead or successfully participate in innovation processes. The capacities can be measured against 21 indicators, and build on the key innovation capacities identified in the TAP Common Framework. Firmly rooted in FAO's good CD practice, the scoring tool is a useful way of measuring both functional and technical skills in all three dimensions of CD.

The scoring tool divides **capacities into six headings or topics:**

KEY INNOVATION CAPACITIES (SOFT SKILLS)	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1) Capacity to navigate complexities (9 indicators)	5) Technical skills (1 indicator)
2) Capacity to collaborate (3 indicators)	
3) Capacity to learn and reflect (4 indicators)	6) Enabling environment (2 indicators)
4) Capacity to engage in strategic and political processes (5 indicators)	

Source: TAP Common Framework (TAP 2016).



The tool evaluates capacities on the basis of **24 indicators**, each of which is graded on a scale from 0 (low capacity) to 3 (high capacity).

The usefulness of the indicators depends on the context. Capacity assessment and capacity development projects may refer to distinct levels of intervention. For instance, they may refer to:

- Local-level innovation partnerships (stakeholder groups); or,
- National-level key organizations.

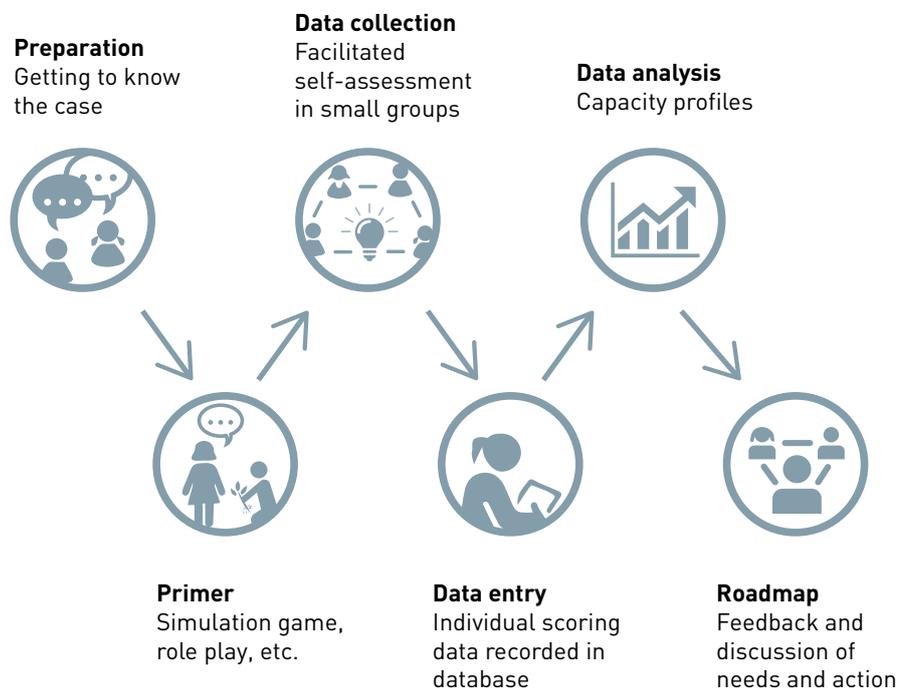
How to use the tool

A questionnaire is used to collect and collate data. Rather than measuring individual capacities, the participants assign scores to a partnership or organization. The questions accompanying each of the 24 indicators are arranged hierarchically. The first questions look at basic issues (skills available, experience considered important, etc.). The following questions address more complex issues (skills applied, experience used, etc.).

The data may also be gathered from facilitated self-assessment sessions with small groups. To marshal the data into meaningful form, the scores under each of the 24 indicators are averaged out, which yields a numerical result for each indicator. Score weighting can be used, if justified.

The basic steps of the process are shown in the figure below. The questions often touch upon abstract concepts, and might require explanations and examples for the sake of clarity.

Figure 1: Proposed steps in the assessment process.



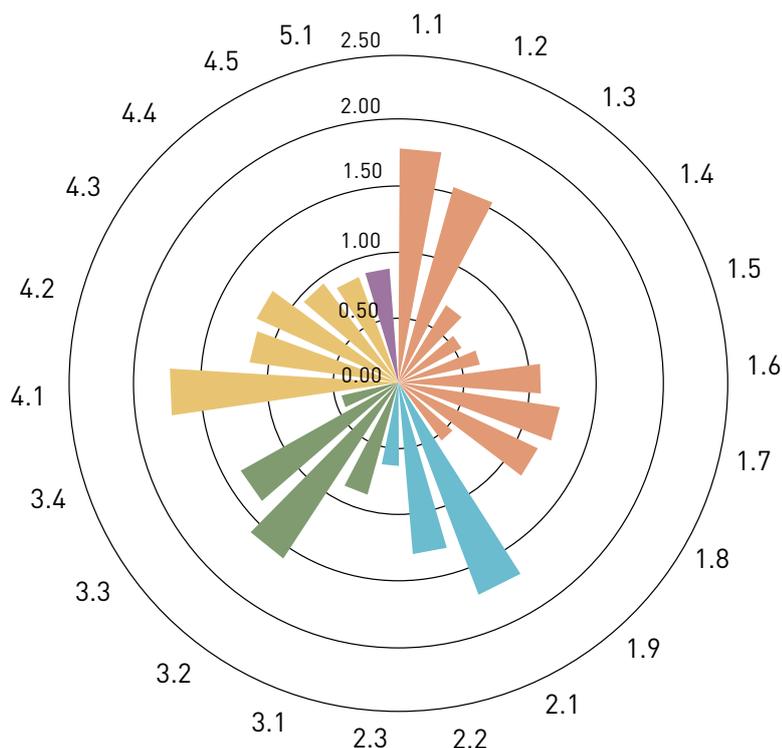
A crucial element of the proposed methodology to increase comprehension and stakeholders ownership is a participatory exercise/game. Through this, participants can develop an intuitive understanding both of the capacities needed for innovation and of the role of the enabling environment. (The “[Simulation Game](#)” factsheet offers one such example of a participatory simulation game). For a step-by-step guide on how to implement the process outlined above and an example of the assessment questionnaire please refer to the FAO occasional paper on family farming “[Assessment of Innovation Capacities – A Scoring Tool](#)”.



Graph 1 shows the outcome of a scoring session performed during a CDAIS workshop involving around 25 participants to assess an innovation partnership in one of the target countries. The results show the capacity levels as measured by the 24 indicators of the scoring tool.

To get the best from the tool, the questions should be calibrated to the local context. This might involve tweaking individual questions, or it might involve broadening the indicators, especially those relating to the enabling environment (governance, policies, collaboration among researchers and extension agents, etc.).

Graph 1: Example of a Capacity Profile



CAPACITY TO NAVIGATE COMPLEXITY

- 1.1 Skills to understand and solve problems;
- 1.2 Management skills;
- 1.3 Access to and mobilization of resources;
- 1.4 Sharing of information within the group;
- 1.6 Utilization of local knowledge;
- 1.7 Informed decision-making;
- 1.8 Idea where the group wants to be in the future;
- 1.9 Strategy plan to achieve idea for the future;

CAPACITY TO COLLABORATE

- 2.1 Cooperation among actors in the group;
- 2.2 Representation of stakeholders in group coordination;
- 2.3 Incentives for networking and partnering;

CAPACITY TO REFLECT AND LEARN

- 3.1 Joint learning and experimentation;
- 3.2 Training covering multi-stakeholder innovation processes;
- 3.3 Understanding of knowledge flows;
- 3.4 Documentation and monitoring processes;

CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

- 4.1 Role and responsibilities of leader;
- 4.2 Awareness of agricultural development issues;
- 4.3 Awareness of opportunities for policy change;
- 4.4 Influence on decision-making processes;
- 4.5 Effectiveness of communication channels;

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- 5.1 Technical skills.



Useful Resources

Assessment of Innovation Capacities – A Scoring Tool, Christian Grovermann (Research and Extension Unit, FAO, 2017)

Monitoring Guidelines of Capacity Development in GEF Operations (GEF, 2010)

FAO's corporate approach and strategy to capacity Development (FAO, 2010)

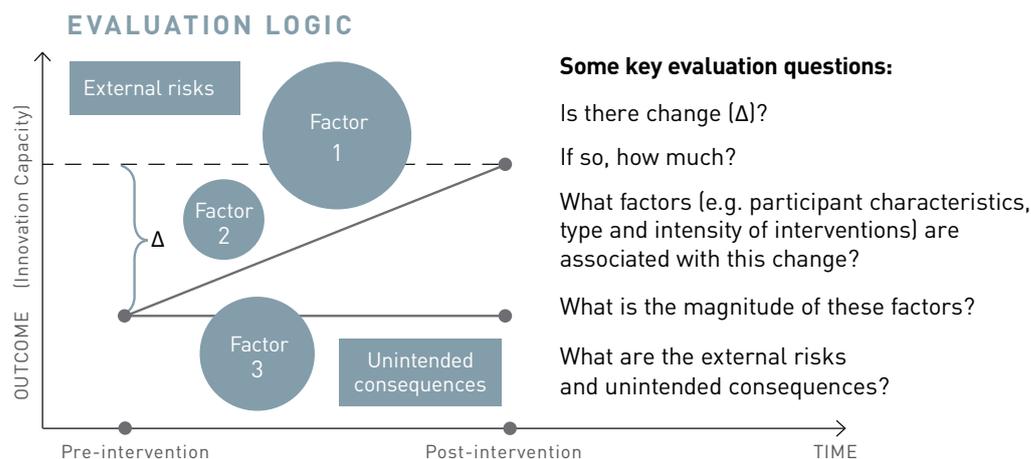
For more information on the different CNA Tools and Approaches, see www.tapipedia.org and the *Trainer's Manual: Facilitating Capacity Needs Assessment*.



How to assess capacity changes

Reliable and straightforward baseline data that include information on existing capacities is indispensable for gauging the effectiveness of capacity development work. Scoring data collected at various stages can be used to quantify changes that have taken place in the course of an ongoing project and beyond. The semi-quantitative scoring data can complement qualitative information on process and outcomes.

Used properly, this method evidences change and measures performance. It offers insight into the extent to which available capacities are being put to use. This is an important data point to have when working out the capacity development needs of innovation partnerships and/or organizations. Information about capacity gaps, strengths and weaknesses is vital when deciding on how and where to direct project interventions.



For further information

Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP):

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/tropical-agriculture-platform/en>

Email: Tropagplatform@fao.org

TAPipedia: <http://tapipedia.org>

Email: info@tapipedia.org

Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation

Systems Project (CDAIS): <http://cdais.net>

Email: info@cdais.net

Common Framework products:



Conceptual Background



Guidance Note on Operationalization



Synthesis Document

The implementation of the TAP Action Plan is supported by the EU-funded project Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS).

The Common Framework documents are also available in French and Spanish on the Common Framework pages of TAPipedia.



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