

1.1 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE CORE OF FAO'S WORK

LOOKING AHEAD, THE UN SYSTEM'S PURELY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT BUT SMALL. MEMBER STATES CLEARLY VIEW CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AS A COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.
(UNDG DECEMBER 2007)

FAO'S VISION IS OF A WORLD FREE OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION WHERE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF ALL, ESPECIALLY THE POOREST, IN AN ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE MANNER.
(FAO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2010 – 2019)

Since its foundation, FAO has been supporting partner countries in finding effective paths for ending hunger.

FAO supports international efforts to defeat hunger by helping developing countries and countries in transition to modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition and food security for all.

Since 1945, we have paid special attention to developing rural areas, home to 70 percent of the world's poor and hungry people. Ever since then, we have been continuously engaged in increasing the potential of our partners at various levels. Our interventions have involved, implicitly or explicitly, aspects of Capacity Development (CD). CD is intertwined with the ongoing technical work of FAO as shown in **Figure 1**.



[FIG 1] The technical and CD dimension of FAO's work

Capacity Development is at the core of FAO's work:

- > If a community needs new techniques and skills to increase crop yields, FAO provides the knowledge and expertise to help them introduce sustainable techniques so that they can raise better crops, conserve water, combat pests and diseases, and improve food quality.
- > When a drought or other natural disaster pushes already vulnerable groups to the point of famine, FAO supports national actors in becoming more prepared for and resilient to future disasters.
- > When a country faces challenges with emerging issues in food and agriculture, FAO provides mentoring support so that the country can develop its capacities to formulate appropriate and adequate policies and legislation.

Yet, defining CD has always been a challenging task. In the words of an FAO staff member:
"I cannot define what CD is as a concept, but I can recognize it when I see it."

CD has more to do with the quality of engagement with national and local actors than with the quantity of outputs being produced; with integrated long-term interventions, than stand-alone training; and, in general, with promoting learning and change “from within”, than providing inputs from “outside”.

When national and regional actors develop the capacity to find their own way to solve problems and adapt to change, FAO’s work has produced a lasting impact.

“UNTIL RECENTLY, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WAS VIEWED MAINLY AS A TECHNICAL PROCESS, INVOLVING THE SIMPLE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE OR ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS FROM NORTH TO SOUTH.”
OECD, 2006

1.2 INTRODUCING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The case story of the Kenya Plant Health Inspection Services (KEPHIS)¹ provides a good introduction to the concept of CD. KEPHIS is a self-sustaining government organization with a mandate to protect Kenya’s agriculture from pests and diseases.

KEPHIS’s capacities have evolved considerably over the last several years, when FAO first started to provide Train-the-Trainers programmes and assistance with developing training material. Over time, KEPHIS developed a critical mass of trained individuals who had strong links with Ministries in the country and with other organizations across the region.

As FAO continued to support the organization through ongoing mentoring, KEPHIS’s role became influential in the revision of the country’s legislation on plant safety. Over time, KEPHIS’s capacities increased in scope and degree, including the capacity to conduct research, provide guidance to the national debate on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and serve as a reference point across the region.

FAO’s support was particularly helpful to **link** the organization with other comparable bodies within the region, to **facilitate funding** for priority research, to **train** personnel in keeping abreast of bio-safety measures and regulations, and to **equip** a laboratory to test for the presence of genetically modified organisms in imported commodities.

Through an FAO focal point, KEPHIS scientists have been able to source direct assistance and advice. KEPHIS is now able to monitor pesticide residues and set standards where these do not exist, providing services to both private and public sectors throughout the entire region.

KEPHIS’s success story exemplifies the concept of CD as a long-term process that builds gradually and incrementally across dimensions, and that requires continued follow-up and well-crafted external support.

1.3 A DEFINITION OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

A widely accepted definition of **capacity** is “the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.”² This includes the ability to create, understand, analyse, develop, plan, achieve set targets, reflect on outcomes of actions, move towards a vision, change and transform.

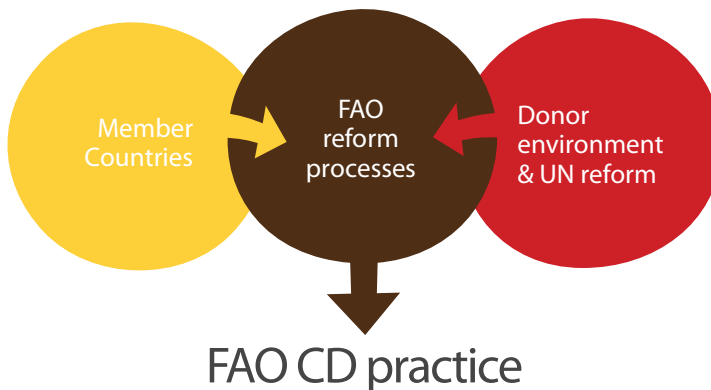
The definition of **Capacity Development** adopted in the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development³ is “the process whereby individuals, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.”⁴

CD is primarily an endogenous process led by national actors and agencies, which is only supported by FAO. Most importantly, it involves social and political aspects and not only technical ones. KEPHIS’s CD did not only involve strengthening technical competencies in plant safety; it involved the overall capacity of the organization to build ties, gain political legitimacy and be recognized as an important national and regional actor.

1.4 THE NEED FOR CHANGE – EVOLUTION OF FAO’S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ROLE

FAO’s role in CD has evolved substantially since its foundation, and especially in the last decade. The following factors have been the driving force behind such an evolution:

- (a) Changing needs and demands from Member Countries
- (b) FAO’s reform processes
- (c) Driving forces from within the global environment – including the UN and the donor environment



[FIG 2] Three driving forces of FAO’s practice in Capacity Development

¹This success story is taken from the Kenya Country Report, Annex of the Evaluation of FAO CD Activities in Africa, p. 8.

²OECD/DAC GOV NET “The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice”

³FAO’s Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development was approved by the Director General on 4 August 2010 after a long process of internal and external consultation

⁴The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards good practice, OECD 2006. The same definition was adopted by several other international development agencies.

Changing needs and demands from Member Countries

Agricultural knowledge in the areas of the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) sector has become more and more available at national and regional levels, and the capacity base of countries has increased considerably in this sector.

At the same time, new challenges are surfacing in relation to global issues – such as climate change, global financial and economic pressures, price instability, and the food crisis. These complex challenges call for innovative solutions involving multiple stakeholders within and across countries.

Non-technical needs have also come to the fore, encompassing the need to improve the capacities to lead, manage, adapt and sustain change.

The result is a shifting role of FAO, which is increasingly called upon to play a facilitative role, connecting sources of knowledge among governments, non-governmental organizations, farmers and the private sector.

In addition, there is an increased demand for FAO's support in functional areas, such as strengthening the capacity of Member Countries to:

- > put in place relevant policies, strategies, legislation and regulatory frameworks
- > access, use and share information
- > relate externally, network, advocate for the interests of the country/the institution in regional and global fora and attract resources and investments
- > plan and implement developmental processes through modern management techniques including CD processes and
- > learn continuously, adapt to and be resilient to unexpected crises.

FAO's reform processes

CD has been an integral part of FAO's reform processes, which seek to transform the Organization into a more modern development agency. The questions driving such processes are – how can FAO's development activities have more impact? And what needs to change internally for this to take place?

The Independent External Evaluation (IEE) in 2007, and the External Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa (2010), examined the relevance and the impact of FAO's CD work. While both evaluations highlighted areas for improvement in the overall approach, the latter provocatively pointed to FAO's CD activities as mostly *“unsustainable[...]”*, with *“too much emphasis on immediate outputs rather than longer-term efforts for institutionalizing changes and building the political will to sustain them”*.⁵

The evaluations triggered an important process of reflection in FAO, which produced a corporate consensus on ***the role of CD as a core function*** of the Organization. As such, improving the effectiveness of FAO's CD work has come to be paramount.

CD is inextricably linked with a broader reform of FAO's systems, which include:

- > adopting Results Based Management/Managing for Results approaches
- > improving FAO's programming practices and approach to results measurement – with an increased focus on outcome assessment, as opposed to output assessment, and emphasis on process
- > reviewing Country Programming processes
- > emphasizing partnership with regional and national actors
- > advancing the decentralization process.

Driving forces from within the global environment – including the UN and the donor environment

Since the beginning of the millennium, FAO has been harmonizing its practices with the UN system. In line with the UN reform, FAO is actively contributing to a collective approach to CD, which is understood as the only way to maximize individual agencies' strengths at country level. As such, FAO is increasingly being called upon to participate in UN-wide country approaches to CD, and to plan and coordinate CD under multi-donor mechanisms.

At the same time, profound changes in the global aid environment are affecting the way FAO traditionally positions itself as a player on the international development market, including:

- > countries increasingly leading their own development programmes and managing the allocation of resources, with several implications for the role that FAO plays at country level
- > an increasing availability of other sources of expertise in the ARD sector, with FAO no longer being the only global expert in its domain.

These changes call for new approaches and skills to attract resources, develop partnerships, and relate to national and regional actors

⁵Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa, Executive Summary, Core findings and conclusions, paragraph X.

1.5 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS WHAT WE DO

The combination of the three factors described above creates an unprecedented opportunity to embrace the right approaches and competences so that FAO can continue to play a key role in strengthening the ARD capacities of Member Countries.

Our objective should be to transform what are now isolated good CD practices into an institutionalized **corporate set of practices** in which CD is firmly integrated within the workflow of the Organization. This will improve our performance and effectiveness, bring increased visibility to our successes, and create new opportunities for resource mobilization.

“Capacity Development is all we do” is a typical statement of FAO staff, which shows that we identify ourselves as a CD organization. This places upon us a collective responsibility to ensure that the passion and motivation that drive the efforts of individual staff members are channelled and supported by the appropriate corporate practices.

The gains will be for everyone to see: what better satisfaction for FAO individual staff and units than an intervention that achieves lasting effects? What better way of seeing our collective work valued?

WHAT WE NEED TO DEVELOP IS PEOPLE, NOT THINGS,
AND PEOPLE CAN ONLY DEVELOP THEMSELVES...
ARUSHA DECLARATION 1967

KEY POINTS FOR CHAPTER 1

- > CD is a long-term process that builds gradually and incrementally across dimensions, and that requires continued follow-up and well-crafted external support.
- > CD has been at the heart of FAO’s work since 1945. However, FAO must enhance its CD approach to have more sustainable impact, and keep abreast with evolving practices in the international development community and the changing needs of Member Countries.



2 UNDERSTANDING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- 2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN FAO
- 2.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FAO'S TRADITIONAL AND ENHANCED CD APPROACH
- 2.3 HOW TO BEST SUPPORT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES?

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- > REFLECT ON HOW KEY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES APPLY TO YOUR OWN WORK AREAS
- > REVIEW EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FAO
- > CONSIDER EXAMPLES OF MODALITIES TO SUPPORT NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES



2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN FAO

The concept of CD is underpinned by a series of principles inspired by the international debate on aid effectiveness, which is grounded in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. (Appendix A describes these two agreements, along with other key milestones that contributed to form the current international consensus on CD.)

FAO has subscribed to the following principles in its Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development:

BOX1: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1 - Country ownership and leadership – Partner countries own and manage their development processes. Therefore, national actors should be able to commit to and engage in development activities, articulate clear CD targets within sector plans and define strategies – from the initial idea guiding the intervention, and continuing with responsibility for the process, execution through national actors, systems and processes, control over resources, and commitment to outcomes.

2 - Alignment with national needs and priorities – National needs and priorities, rather than agency priorities, should guide CD interventions. In the context of increased policy dialogue between Member Countries and agencies, needs, gaps and obstacles to CD need to be better defined; and existing assets, capacities as well as the vision of national actors for the development of capacities in their own country need to be discussed.

3 - Use of national systems and local expertise – Setting up separate operational units to manage and implement CD interventions, importing technical inputs from external sources in the form of foreign consultants, developing special incentive schemes for national actors working on CD projects, using parallel systems and procedures for auditing and procurement – all these cannot only be serious obstacles to the development of capacities, but also can undermine existing capacities. Use of country systems – at whatever stage of development they are – is itself a contribution to strengthening Member Countries' capacities.

4 - No 'one size fits all' approach – There are no blueprints for CD. Customized responses responding to the needs of a specific development context are key. Contextual factors at country, regional and local levels (including historical pathways and evolution, governance, politics and social texture among others) have been found to have clear operational implications on CD interventions.

5 - Multiple-level approach – CD implies an endogenous strengthening of existing capacities and assets, which takes place across three overlapping and interdependent levels: individual, organizational and enabling environment. A multiple-level approach takes the relationships between these dimensions into account and allows for the possibility that the root cause of weak capacity at one level may be found at a different level.

6 - Mutual accountability – Both donors and national governments are accountable to the ultimate beneficiaries for development results. Transparency is the foremost instrument of public accountability with respect to financial resources, institutional management practices, planning and service delivery. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), as primary tools for learning and adjusting to evolving conditions, are also essential for accountability systems. The capacity for M&E must be allowed to emerge from within national institutions and not be created in the form of parallel reporting systems.

7 - Harmonization of action and partnership – Many development actors from the UN, middle-income countries, global funds, the private sector and civil society organizations have been increasing their contributions and bringing valuable experience to CD. More effective harmonization and inclusive partnerships are desirable so that efforts have greater impact on reducing poverty.

FAO is undertaking to adopt these principles in all of its programmes and projects, as shown in the examples that follow (**Boxes 2 and 3**).

BOX 2: FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

In the programme Legal support for the implementation of Mozambique's 'Land Law' and 'Forestry and Wildlife Law', strong leadership of the Government of Mozambique was key to enable the country set its own national priorities and define jointly with FAO the type of support required to meet the country's objectives. FAO helped strengthen national ownership by providing an appropriate type of support: instead of focusing on "getting things done quickly" by deploying international consultants, FAO focused on developing national capacities to draft, implement and oversee implementation of its laws, which led to strong sustainability of the programme's results.

Legal support for the implementation of Mozambique's 'Land Law' and 'Forestry and Wildlife Law'

Summary of the case

The Government of Mozambique has been proactive since the 1990s in regulating access to and use of land and natural resources. At the request of the Government, FAO supported the development of policies and the drafting of implementing legislation, followed by support to implementing the legislation and raising awareness among public sector agencies and wider society. FAO's support has focused on developing the oversight capacity of the formal judiciary, and the legal empowerment of local people through a paralegal programme. The continuous dialogue and collaboration between FAO, the Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária (CFJJ) and a wide range of local government and civil society partners has led to the mainstreaming of capacity-building interventions into the CFJJ core programme. The programme has had a discernible immediate impact on the day-to-day approach to governance and the administration of justice at local level, and is seeding new ideas and capacities among a new generation of judicial and other actors. The CFJJ – FAO programme has gained a solid reputation, and its integration into the CFJJ core programme activities should guarantee its longer-term institutional sustainability.

The full case can be found on the FAO CD Portal at <http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/good-practices/en/>

2.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FAO'S TRADITIONAL AND ENHANCED CD APPROACH

In the past, development assistance has often missed a critical condition for enhancing and empowering national systems, structures and institutions: having recipient countries in the lead to choose their own development path, and ensuring that the design and sequencing of CD activities fit country circumstances and national development plans/strategies. In practice, too much focus was put on technical cooperation and assistance (i.e. inputs from outside) disconnected from activities geared towards facilitating learning and change management (i.e. change and transformation from within).

In the current approach, more consideration is given to the fact that enhanced national capacities require individual and organizational capacities to manage and sustain change. It is understood that this aspect cannot be taken for granted but should be deliberately addressed in designing projects and programmes that are more holistic and long-term.

Table 1 summarizes the main differences between FAO's traditional and enhanced approach to CD.

	TRADITIONAL CD APPROACH	ENHANCED CD APPROACH	WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?
PROJECT/ PROGRAMME DESIGN	Project focus is on outputs and immediate results, lacking clear long-term vision	Projects focus on outcomes and sustainability from the design phase, with participatory approaches that build ownership and partnership	Focus on CD outcomes during design and implementation phases increases sustainability of changes and likelihood of achieving impact
	CD projects are designed as stand-alone interventions with short timeframes and little attention to context	CD is perceived as a process that is best addressed through a combination of interventions anchored in existing systems and procedures, with longer timeframes or iterative approaches (series of short projects over many years)	Provides stability and paves the way for sustainability and scaling-up. It provides the time for people, organizations and society to absorb and institutionalize change
	Focus is on the technical dimension of problems, which are addressed through technical solutions	Focus is on both the technical and functional dimension of problems. The modalities of engagement and the process are as important as the technical aspects of the solution.	Functional capacities (soft skills, managerial skills) facilitate the uptake and scaling up of new technical knowledge
MODALITIES	CD is equated with training, which is delivered as a stand-alone activity	Training is one modality in a wider portfolio of CD instruments (SEE FIGURE 3)	When integrated in broader CD interventions, training can enhance organizational performance, not only individual skills and knowledge
ROLE OF NATIONAL ACTORS	CD activities are delivered mainly by international consultants	CD activities are joint efforts by national and international actors, with coaching/support when needed but with a clear objective of strengthening national capacities	Endogenous capacity and national ownership are strengthened
	National/local actors are perceived as clients and Implementers – no investment is made on them beyond the project	National /local actors are agents of change and potential champions – should be invested in and considered as partners	As partners in the development process, national/local actors catalyse change and become resources for their countries
ROLE OF FAO AS A PARTNER	FAO is a direct implementer of CD	FAO supports CD in partnership with others to meet new capacity demands	FAO remains in the CD market in the areas of comparative advantage, and seeks collaboration with other agencies
M&E	CD work is not always visible within FAO	CD is more easily tracked and accounted for in the new RBM framework	Visibility of CD outcomes attracts new funding, motivates staff and builds corporate CD pride

[TABLE 1] Differences between FAO's traditional and enhanced Capacity Development approach

BOX 3: FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

USING NATIONAL SYSTEMS AND LOCAL EXPERTISE

Using national systems and local expertise in CD has been a building block of FAO's multifaceted intervention Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Control and Prevention in Viet Nam. Since the outset of the disease, the Organization has been supporting the Government in its efforts to control the disease by upgrading existing individual capacities and improving the functioning of local reporting and surveillance systems. Massive human and technical resources were deployed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. By helping to set up a National Steering Committee (still convening on a weekly basis) and district Steering Committees, the Organization made a clear commitment to work within existing national structures and their expertise.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Control and Prevention: multifaceted intervention for Capacity Development in Viet Nam

Summary of the case

The outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in several South-East Asian countries have raised serious economic and public health concerns. In Viet Nam, the first outbreak was reported in December 2003 in Ha Tay Province. By the end of February 2004, the disease had spread to 64 provinces. The Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam requested FAO's support to control the outbreak and prevent human transmission. Several donors and UN agencies including FAO have been supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in this ambitious endeavour through focused CD interventions. As a result, there has been an improvement in: the epidemiology capacities of key veterinary staff; information flow and reporting systems; surveillance of large farms; and development of contingency plans. The effort is continuing under the 'Integrated National Operational Programme for Avian & Human Influenza 2006-2010'.

The full case can be found on the FAO CD Portal at <http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/good-practices/en/>

2.3 HOW TO BEST SUPPORT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

To craft the appropriate type of CD support, it is important to understand patterns by which national CD processes unfold, i.e. *how* national actors in member countries unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.

How do national capacities form?

It is critical to remember that there is often neither linearity nor predictability in the unfolding of CD processes, because capacity development emerges from the interplay of several factors and their interaction with the context. Against this backdrop, national capacity development can be seen as an evolutionary process in which the strengthening of individual and organizational capacities influence one another and the enabling environment in a self-reinforcing loop.

Successful CD practices suggest the following “evidence” of capacity development, which can be found at the individual and organizational levels and in the enabling environment:

- > Individuals working within organizations in Member Countries strengthen their competencies and skills by engaging in learning and practicing on the job.
- > Individuals link with other national and international peers, and start to carry out more complex tasks at increasing scales.
- > Individual knowledge gradually becomes internalized and institutionalized in the organizations as individuals are put in the position to use the newly acquired knowledge/experience on the job, to share it both internally and externally, and can benefit from the right incentives and support.
- > Organizations gradually open up, form/join networks, gain internal and external legitimacy and deal with a greater level of complexity including engaging and influencing the enabling environment.
- > Incentive structures are reviewed, national policies and legislations are formulated or improved and mechanisms for implementing them are established so that organizations can function effectively.
- > Country actors commit and engage more actively in development activities, articulate objectives, prioritize and define national strategies.
- > Individuals working within organizations are further encouraged and motivated to keep up to date with emerging new issues and to deepen participation in global networks; a critical mass of motivated people is formed, helping bringing about and sustaining changes at country level.

What modalities can best support national CD processes?

FAO and other external actors can contribute greatly to fostering national CD processes, provided the support is planned and sequenced strategically.

This means that CD is planned upfront and considers:

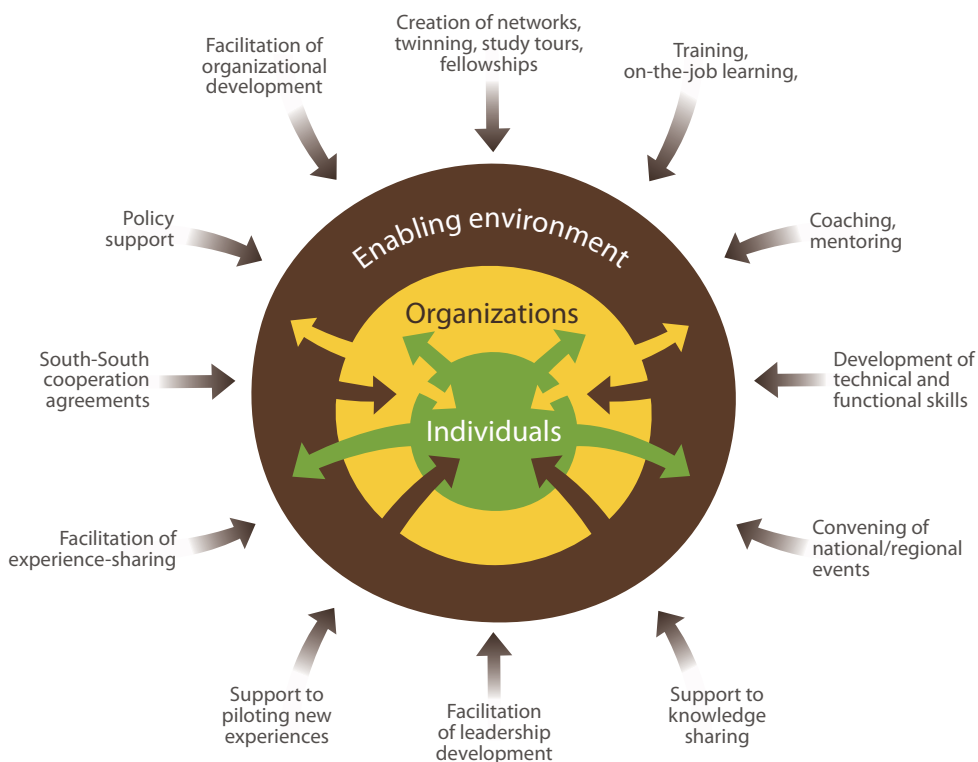
- > the three dimensions (“the big picture”)
- > appropriate entry points
- > appropriate timing, duration and modalities of the support
- > partners who may be called in to address aspects that are not within FAO’s comparative advantages.

FAO can provide its CD support selecting from an ample choice of modalities targeting one or multiple entry points.

For example, delivering training and on-the-job learning solutions is one of the most common modalities that FAO employs to improve competencies and skills at the individual level.⁶ However, for training to trigger and help institutionalize change processes within organizations (and in turn to increase national capacities to influence the global agenda), it has to be used in conjunction with other CD modalities which can further support the gradual uptake of changes across the dimensions. These may include advocacy measures, support to policy review, knowledge sharing, or support to pilot experiences.

Some examples of modalities addressing one or more of the three dimensions are provided in **Figure 3**.

⁶A Reference Manual on Good Training Practices for Effective Capacity Development will be available for FAO staff in 2011.



[FIG 3] Some modalities to support national capacity development processes

FAO's efforts to facilitate the participation of Africans at regional and international fora, workshops and other exchanges to strengthen their knowledge and build their confidence have been important to sustaining capacity. Many beneficiaries underscored the lasting benefits of opportunities provided by FAO to develop their confidence, enhance their communication and negotiation skills and exchange ideas. Such exposure helped some individuals influence the informal enabling environment.

Evaluation of FAO's activities on CD in Africa, main report, paragraph 145

KEY POINTS FOR CHAPTER 2

- > In its Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development, FAO has subscribed to a number of Guiding Principles on CD, which form the basis of its involvement. Among these principles, Member Countries own and manage their development processes.
- > With Member Countries in the lead, FAO ensures that the design and sequencing of CD activities fit country circumstances and national development plans/strategies.
- > FAO can provide its CD support selecting from an ample choice of modalities targeting one or multiple entry points simultaneously. Training is only one modality and should be used in conjunction with other CD modalities for more sustainable impact.



3 A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

WHAT'S INSIDE:

3.1 FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.2 TWO TYPES OF CAPACITIES

3.3 THREE DIMENSIONS

3.4 USING A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL:

- > LEARN ABOUT THE COMPONENTS OF FAO'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
- > REVIEW EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS IN THE THREE DIMENSIONS
- > REFLECT ON HOW A SYSTEMATIC CD APPROACH CAN POSITIVELY INFLUENCE YOUR WORK



3.1 FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

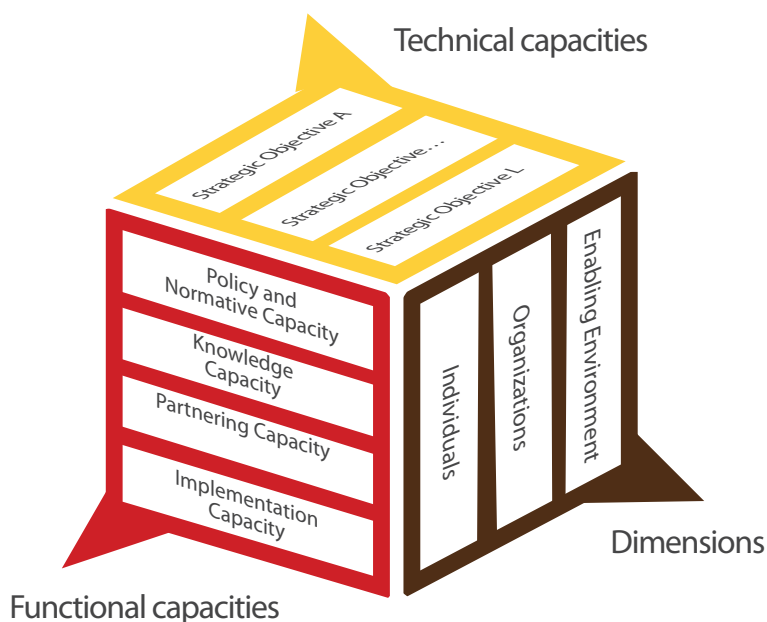
Supporting effective CD of partners in Member Countries requires a **systematic approach** that builds on the concepts and principles illustrated in the previous chapter.

This Chapter suggests a structured framework for identifying CD needs and planning interventions more systematically. Drawing on the UNDP model, the framework considers the specificities of FAO and embeds CD in the Organization's technical work. It is meant to help FAO broaden the scope of its technical CD work by integrating factors that will positively influence the impact and sustainability of such work.

The CD framework, introduced by the Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development, can help identify and analyse the key dimensions and the types of capacities that need strengthening.

The framework contains the following components:

- > Technical capacities
- > Functional capacities
- > Three dimensions of capacity



[FIG 4] The FAO CD Framework

These components are described in the sections that follow.

3.2 TWO TYPES OF CAPACITIES

To make the concept of capacity operational, the FAO framework differentiates two types of capacities: technical and functional.

Successful FAO programmes have demonstrated that both types of capacities are crucial for strengthening Member Countries' capacities in the area of ARD.

Traditionally FAO has focused on strengthening technical capacities of partners; now a shift towards supporting technical and functional capacities is taking place.

BOX 4: EXCERPT FROM THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION ON CD IN AFRICA

"Many interlocutors said it was important for FAO to support the development of soft skills relevant to individual and organizational effectiveness [...] in such areas as ICT, participatory research, policy analysis and strategic planning, budgeting, marketing, along with soft skills related to leadership, creativity, negotiation, advocacy and motivation. In fact, many CD interventions fail because they have not taken into account soft skills. The process and modality of engagement can help to develop these skills, as will partnering to incorporate specialist input where required."

Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa, Main Report, Paragraph 60

Technical capacities

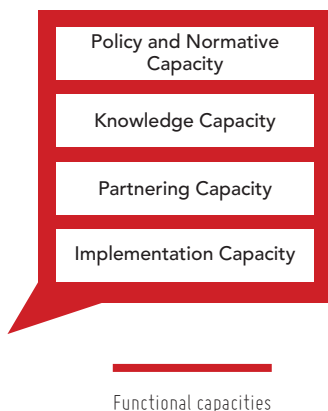


Technical capacities refer to capacities that Member Countries need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These may include the capacity to deal with technical aspects of sustainable natural resource management, integrated pest management, food safety standards, plant and animal diseases, epidemics, biotechnologies and in general all global challenges affecting ARD. Technical capacities correspond to FAO's main areas of work, which are prioritized in its Strategic Objectives (A-L).

FAO's technical expertise is widely acknowledged, valued and respected, and is considered as the main comparative advantage of the Organization. In fact FAO's major strength as a "global expert" was seen in its ability to provide direct advice and assistance on technical aspects. This was perceived as the best way to upgrade the capacities of national organizations in the various ARD domains.

As national or regional organizations become progressively more capable in technical capacity areas and can potentially rely upon other emerging sources of expertise (intergovernmental organizations, institutes, networks), FAO is gradually shifting its focus from being the direct provider of such information to playing a more facilitating role – connecting sources having the required specialized knowledge with governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers and the private sector at field level.

Functional capacities



Functional capacities refer to capacities that Member Countries need to uptake and sustain changes in the ARD sector. In general, these include capacities relevant to individual and organizational effectiveness, such as management, leadership, budgeting, marketing, information and communication technology and strategic planning, in addition to soft skills such as communication and advocacy. These skills are perceived to be a necessary complement to technical CD interventions as they empower the actors to effectively apply the new knowledge/skills and upscale the results of the intervention.

FAO has identified four key areas of functional capacities that are particularly important to address global challenges in the ARD domain:

- > **Policy and Normative:** the capacity to formulate and implement policies and to lead policy and legislative reforms
- > **Knowledge:** the capacity to create, access and exchange information and knowledge
- > **Partnering:** the capacity to initiate and sustain networks, alliances and partnerships
- > **Implementation:** the capacity to manage (planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating) projects and programmes efficiently and effectively

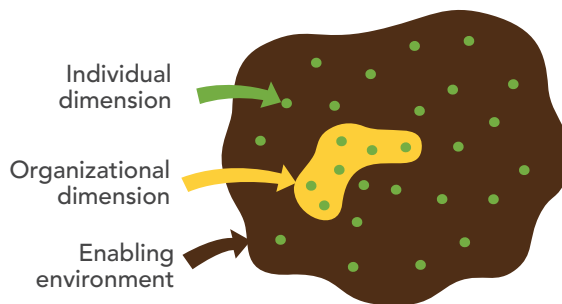
In Ghana, the fishery enterprise had been severely weakened for a long time by the absence of self-reliant fish-farming producer groups. In FAO's project Strengthening Organizational Capacity of Fish Farmer Groups (2002-2004), management and organizational capacities were determined to be among the key factors leading to functional and sustainable producer groups. The project complemented technical training in production technologies with initiatives to strengthen management and organizational capacities of fish farmers – such as record keeping, business management, market-related issues – while facilitating their access to information. This combination of skills enabled farmers to scale up and move beyond subsistence farming. (TCP/GHA/2904)

3.3 THREE DIMENSIONS



As discussed in Chapter 2, a fundamental condition for a country to reach its developmental goals lies in its capacities at individual and organizational levels, and in the enabling environment. Each of these three dimensions – individual, organizational and enabling environment – works interdependently with the others and influences the overall impact of a CD intervention.

Understanding the capacities of a country in the three dimensions, identifying areas for strengthening capacities and designing appropriate interventions require a holistic perspective and an analytical view – in order to see “the forest” (i.e. the interconnections among dimensions and within the context) and the “trees” (i.e. the single dimensions) at the same time. **Figure 5** provides a representation of the three dimensions.



[FIG 5] The three dimensions of CD

Individual dimension

Capacities are developed at the individual dimension to lead to changes in skills, behaviours and attitudes among a wide range of actors in the ARD sector (such as farmers, producers, traders, food inspectors, policy makers, administrations and staff of organizations). Measures may include the strengthening of knowledge, skills, motivation and values. Training is only one modality through which capacities at this dimension are strengthened, together with support to knowledge sharing, networking and twinning, to mention only a few. The specificities of each situation should be considered in designing the appropriate intervention.

Since the beginning of 2007 the UN has been undertaking the “Delivering as One” process as part of the UN Reform in eight countries. In one of the countries, Tanzania, FAO has taken the lead in designing an EC-FAO e-learning course entitled “Food Security Information Systems and Networks”. The tool has helped national actors assess systems in Tanzania and design activities to establish a more coordinated cross-sectoral analysis system in the country.

Additional information on the CD Portal <http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en/>

Organizational dimension

Competent individuals are not sufficient to make a capable organization.

Organizations are defined as “groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives”.⁷ *Organizational capacity* refers to the collective capability of members to achieve their organization’s goals.

Strengthening organizational capacities consists of those measures taken to improve the overall functioning and performance of an organization, and is often noted in changes to organizational mandates, systems, processes or priorities. This may be applied to any type of organization relevant to the ARD sector, such as central and decentralized government agencies and ministries, social protection services, inspectorates, laboratories, national agricultural research systems, global and regional economic commissions, enterprises, cooperatives, chambers of agriculture, consumer groups, producer associations, community-based organizations, NGOs, and formal and non-formal education and training institutes.

Of course the organizational dimension has a tremendous impact on how individuals develop their competencies and how they can make use of their capabilities within the organization. Issues such as motivation, incentives, career prospects and the quality of managerial practices are important aspects to retain qualified staff.

In the late 1980s Syria started moving away from a centrally planned into a more market-oriented economic system. In this new environment, the need emerged for developing new, flexible and sustainable technical and institutional capacities in agricultural policy making. As part of an integrated intervention, the Policy Support group of FAO established and supported a **National Agricultural Policy Centre (NAPC)**, which has been self-sustaining since 2007. Assistance was directed towards: enabling the centre to function effectively with appropriate equipment and staff, and effective working and management practices; providing intensive on-the-job training, study tours, basic courses in agricultural economics and statistics as well as post-graduate studies abroad; promoting the production by international and national staff of studies on issues of relevance for agricultural policies; establishing NAPC as an important reference point in Syria for data and information on agriculture by creating a data base and library; and enabling NAPC to become a forum for national policy dialogue.

Source: technical Cooperation Department, Policy Assistance and Resource Mobilization, http://www.fao.org/tc/tca/capacity_en.asp

⁷Douglas North (1990), *New Institutional Economics*

Enabling environment

The enabling environment is the context in which individuals and organizations put their capabilities into action, and where capacity development processes take place. It includes the institutional set-up of a country, its implicit and explicit rules, its power structures and the policy and legal environment in which individuals and organizations function.

Changes to the enabling environment influence how organizations and individuals behave and progress. Such changes may involve policy reform in agriculture sectors or related areas,⁸ changes to legislation, strategic exercises in country planning and prioritization, changes to incentive systems, or culture changes.

Since 2005 the EC/FAO programme has supported national and international efforts to create a more **conducive policy framework for food security** in Sudan through guidelines, institutional mapping, food security analysis, and technical guidance to national task forces. The major achievements of this project have been: the initiation of a process of reform of the institutional set-up for food security; a gradual inclusion of food security-related benchmarking to monitor sectoral policy performances; and an overall increase of ownership of and control over food security issues by national institutions.

Additional information on the CD Portal, <http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en>

3.4 USING A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

A systematic CD approach can add value to FAO's work in the following ways:

- > It provides a common framework for bringing capacity development issues to national policy dialogue.
- > It ensures coherent approaches to CD in the context of country programming.
- > It offers a common ground for assessing capacities in a specific sector and designing appropriate capacity development projects/programmes.
- > It provides a common language for presenting FAO's CD role/strategy to partner organizations and governments.

⁸Examples of policy domains in the agriculture sector that need attention in capacity development interventions include: policies for managing natural resources; trade policies for regional and multilateral trade negotiations; rural development policies for increasing incomes and human capital through investments in physical and social infrastructure; and institutional reform policies related to decentralization of agricultural services through the public sector and privatization or transfer to non-governmental organizations.

BOX 5: FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

CD AND COUNTRY PLANNING

Clara is Senior Policy Officer in Zubonia Regional Office, West Africa. Four countries in her region are embarking on country programming (CP) processes at the same time. Draft CP documents have been produced that contain long shopping lists of potential needs in the ARD sector for FAO to address. Capacity development is mentioned in the 95 percent of the lists, without much consistency or rationale. She is requested by the Regional Coordinator to provide advice.

- Q Drawing on FAO's conceptual framework for CD, what type of advice could Clara provide?**
- A** She can encourage a more in-depth situational analysis for each of the relevant sectors that take into account the three dimensions of CD – the individual, organizational and policy environment dimensions - and the inter-linkages among them.
 - A** She can support a thorough reflection on the nature of the capacity problems identified in the CP documents, encouraging actors to identify the type of functional capacities that would help make their technical capacities more sustainable.
 - A** She can promote a consolidation and prioritization of CD needs around logical clusters consistent with FAO's comparative advantages – including envisioning the type of modality/intervention required to address the needs.

CD AND PROJECT PROPOSALS

Laszlo is a Forestry Officer in FAO HQ. He has been requested to prepare a proposal for a CD project in Ximania, Central Africa to support strengthening of national preparedness in the Ministry of Forestry to respond to the consequences of seasonal floods.

- Q How can Laszlo draw on FAO's conceptual framework for CD to prepare the project?**
- A** He can convene an initial workshop with key stakeholders/interlocutors and introduce a discussion on existing capacity assets and needs in technical and functional areas at the individual, organizational and policy levels.
 - A** He can bring examples of functional capacities that are particularly important in strengthening the ability of the Ministry of Forestry to react to crisis (such as the ability to identify and design relevant policies, to access early warning information, to participate in and contribute to regional networks, and to manage and lead the early-warning process) and ensure a common understanding and commitment by national actors to improving these capacities.
 - A** He can discuss with stakeholders the most appropriate modalities to address the capacity needs identified, stressing the need for an integrated approach consistent with the CD framework

FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

CD AND ADVOCACY

John is an FAO Representative of Country Paledonia in South-East Asia. He has been requested to assist the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture to identify national priorities in ARD for the near future and to provide advice on the role that FAO can play.

- Q How can John use FAO's conceptual framework for CD to advocate for stronger country commitment to CD?**
- A** He can illustrate FAO's CD guiding principles and explain that CD is part of FAO's core business.
 - A** He can encourage the Ministry of Agriculture to promote a sector-wide assessment of the capacity strengths and weaknesses of the main ARD actors, insisting on the need to review functional as well as technical capacities in the three dimensions.
 - A** He can explain how FAO intends to support national actors in developing their capacities through an integrated approach that puts country ownership and commitment at the core.

CD AND TRAINING

Leila is Technical Officer in FAO's Country Office in Smetonia. The office has been supporting community-based enterprises for several years. Leila is coordinating a pilot project to provide training in enterprise development to local communities.

- Q How can Leila use FAO's CD framework to make the project more sustainable?**
- A** She can encourage relevant actors to undertake a capacity assessment to identify elements from within the "big picture" that may influence the development of capacities, and that may need support. For example, she may look at the needs of individual community members and community associations, and consider whether existing policies might need to be adapted to better support community enterprise development.
 - A** She can consider combining training activities (which address competencies of individuals) with measures to promote changes within the enabling environment such as: advocacy and communication measures to increase government awareness of and political will to address community enterprise development.
 - A** She can facilitate discussions, exchange of experiences and consensus building on the need to adapt policies that facilitate community enterprise development (for example, access to credit).

KEY POINTS FOR CHAPTER 3

- > To make its CD approach more systematic and sustainable, FAO adopted a conceptual framework consisting of two capacities – technical and functional – working across the three dimensions – individuals, organizations and enabling environment.
- > Functional capacities are a necessary complement to technical capacities as they empower national actors to effectively apply the new knowledge/skills and upscale the results of the intervention.
- > Each of the three dimensions – individual, organizational and enabling environment – works interdependently with the others and influences the overall impact of a CD intervention.

