The Capacity Development Resource Guides highlight the key technical areas of expertise needed to effectively influence health policy design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Each guide identifies the specific skills, knowledge, and capacities that individuals and organizations should possess in the area. The standardized indicators listed for each competency and capability map to the accompanying Capacity Indicators Catalog, which helps to generate a tailored tool for assessing and scoring an organization’s capacity level. Each guide also includes a list of useful resources for designing and delivering capacity development assistance.

**Monitoring and Evaluating Policy Implementation to Assess Progress Toward Goals**

**DEFINITION**

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) involves routinely collecting and using data to track progress or change over time, allowing stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of a policy or program and track the efficient use of resources (Frankel, 2007). M&E activities cut across several areas of expertise (e.g., policy monitoring, data analysis and use, and accountability systems).

**RELEVANCE TO POLICY**

M&E frameworks and indicators are useful to measure progress in the implementation and attainment of policy goals, including those in policy, advocacy, governance, and finance. Monitoring and evaluation can track contributions from a given actor over time in a complex process with multiple actors. Appropriate monitoring methodologies can be used to assess the implementation of commitments and services outlined in policy instruments, as well as the impact of policies on program and outcome indicators. Special evaluative studies further illuminate the effects of polices and related implementation approaches. Taken together, M&E results can be useful in understanding which policies are effective and why and can inform the development of future policies. The data gathered from M&E frameworks can be used for evidence-based policy formation and continually provide feedback to guide advancements.
Stakeholders need skills to identify policy goals and develop objective indicators to measure progress toward those goals. Effective monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs requires frameworks with relevant indicators and a systematic means of collecting, analyzing, and using data. It also requires prior planning to evaluate the impact of an intervention.

**High capacity for monitoring and evaluation includes being able to**

- Design activities, including efforts to develop effective health policies, with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives and related indicators to measure progress
- Include routine data collection systems to track performance (monitoring) and evaluations to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention (evaluation) (a particular emphasis for policy-related activities is to develop a framework and indicators to link policy work with health outcomes)
- Systematically analyze and review available data for quality, relevance to implementation, and information gaps
- Share findings from internal M&E results and use them in conjunction with external data sources (e.g., population surveys, service delivery statistics, etc.) to further improve program design

**In the ideal, the following would exist:**

- Policies and plans at the national and subnational levels that include M&E components
- A national strategic and operational plan for M&E included in the health sector strategy (reflecting different disease areas and operational needs, including cost, at national and subnational levels), with defined indicators and clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Clear M&E regulatory frameworks to protect individuals’ rights (i.e., the confidentiality of individuals’ health records and health status)
- Systematic policy monitoring incorporated at the central Ministry of Health level to track the implementation and outcomes of policy initiatives
- Public dissemination of health-related M&E data to support accountability
- A national research agenda that reflects stakeholder research priorities and supports use of the research findings
INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCIES

KNOWLEDGE OF

- M&E fundamentals
  - ME1, ME2, ME3
- Indicators and methods used to monitor and evaluate complex processes within the particular program of interest, such as policy, advocacy, governance, and finance
  - ME4
- The impact of evidence-based advocacy and policy on advancing health outcomes
  - ME5

SKILLS TO BE ABLE TO

- Develop a conceptual framework and logic model for any given policy-related project, intervention, or activity
  - ME11
- Establish and implement routine data collection systems, including a program monitoring plan, indicators, and data storage mechanisms
  - ME12
- Analyze and use data from primary and secondary sources to support strong programs
  - ME6
- Explain findings and results of data analysis with knowledge of current program and needs; link previous findings/results to current needs/trends
  - ME7, ME8
- Present data in various ways to reach multiple audiences
  - ME9
- Engage stakeholders in the policy process and potential target audiences or users of the M&E information produced
  - ME10
- Design and implement process and outcome evaluations and/or operations research studies
  - ME13
- Listen, negotiate, train, and influence others to participate in M&E functions (e.g., developing SMART objectives, collecting high-quality data, and using M&E data for decisions)
  - ME14
- Liaise between program implementers (data collectors) and data users to ensure M&E meets the needs of all stakeholders
  - ME15

ATTITUDES/VALUES/ATTRIBUTES

- Can work methodically, with attention to detail
  - ME16
- Values working in collaboration
  - ME17
- Can inspire and influence others to understand and value M&E
  - ME18
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

TECHNICAL ABILITY TO

Integrate M&E throughout the program cycle

Strengthen the linkages between program and M&E staff to provide high-quality data on program design, implementation, and evaluation

Regularly use and promote program M&E data to communicate program performance

Evaluate national and subnational health policies or advocate for and monitor the evaluation of national and subnational health policies, showing their impact on health outcomes

Consistently evaluate the outcomes of major programs or activities, and produce public reports (e.g., annual or semi-annual reports) on progress toward achieving stated goals and objectives

Access and contribute to M&E systems outside of the organization (e.g., national health systems, M&E of service delivery systems, etc.)

Provide technical assistance in M&E to other organizations (training, mentoring, etc.)

RELATIONAL ABILITY TO

Ensure that program managers and decisionmakers within the organization are knowledgeable and competent in M&E fundamentals and in strengthening data demand and use

Lead or engage in working groups/committees external to the organization to strengthen the overall M&E system and share information and approaches

Engage internal and external partners on strategies to use policy and advocacy data to advance health systems and improve outcomes

ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT TO SUPPORT

The allocation of adequate resources (e.g., time, staff, money) to M&E activities, including keeping abreast of innovation and global best practices

The M&E unit within the organization with specific responsibility and authority to provide assistance to policy and programmatic teams and collect data from these teams to document the organization’s work

An M&E framework and system for monitoring and evaluating its work, including a plan that identifies the indicators to track and describes what approaches and tools will be used; systems to collect, analyze, and synthesize data; and routine staff meetings that include specific time for review and discussion of M&E systems and data
ILLUSTRATIVE CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

- Conduct M&E training for staff or beneficiaries on data collection, analysis, interpretation, and/or use
- Undertake M&E coaching or mentoring of new or recent M&E staff within an organization
- Provide remote assistance (question and answer support) with routine data collection, use, and reporting
- Partner to conduct an audit/assessment of an M&E system and information needs of an organization, and support development of an M&E system operational plan
- Promote the institutionalizing of M&E tools/approaches/systems that reflect international best practices

RESOURCES


ISBN: 978-1-59560-031-8

This resource guide is part of an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) suite of tools. The USAID-funded Health Policy Project developed the suite to help organizations assess and strengthen their capacity to contribute to improved health systems and health outcomes. The tools include an overview of the OCA approach, a facilitator guide, a series of capacity development resource guides, and a Capacity Indicators Catalog. The suite is available at www.healthpolicyproject.com.

The Health Policy Project is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-10-00067, beginning September 30, 2010. It is implemented by Futures Group, in collaboration with Plan International USA, Futures Institute, Partners in Population and Development, Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), RTI International, and the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRA).

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