

Research and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool and Resource Package

User Guide

June 2022



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Contents

- Acronyms 1
- Introduction 2
 - Background 2
 - Definitions 3
 - Purpose 3
 - Audience 4
 - RECAP Components 4
- Assessment Tool 5
 - Assessment Approach 5
 - Assessment Framework 5
 - Assessment Scoring 7
 - Identifying where an organization may need to allocate additional resources 7
 - Assessment Timing 8
 - Steps to Implementing the Assessment 11
 - Important Considerations 12
- Planning for Institutional Strengthening 12
 - Planning Approach 12
 - Steps to Developing an Institutional Strengthening Plan 13
 - Institutional Strengthening Plan 14
- Facilitator’s Guide 16
 - Facilitator Selection 16
 - Facilitation Process 16
 - Considerations for Facilitators 17
 - Using and Adapting the Facilitation PowerPoint 17
- Workshop Closing 18

Acronyms

D4I	Data for Impact
ECS	Evaluation Capacity Strengthening
LCD	Local Capacity Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEval	MEASURE Evaluation Phase IV
NUPAS	Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
RECAP	Research and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool and Resource Package
UNC	The University of North Carolina
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

Background

There is increasing demand for accountability and rigorous research and evaluations of health programs. This has increased the pressure on national and regional organizations to conduct high-quality research and evaluations (Watson-Grant & Hart, 2018). The Research and Evaluation Capacity Assessment Tool and Resource Package (RECAP) has been

designed to support local organizations to rapidly assess their technical and management capacity for conducting research and evaluations. RECAP supports users in creating actionable plans for institutional strengthening, with the goal of improving country and organizational capacity to address local health information gaps and have the capacity to receive direct awards from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other funders.

The package was developed by Data for Impact (D4I), an Associate Award of MEASURE Evaluation Phase IV (MEval), the long-running flagship monitoring and evaluation (M&E) project of USAID. D4I expands upon one of MEval goals to strengthen the technical and organizational capacity of local partners to collect, analyze, and use data to improve programs and policies. RECAP will be used by D4I internally to monitor, evaluate, and learn from project capacity strengthening activities and can also be used by local implementers to assess their capacity to conduct research and evaluations and track their progress in their institutional strengthening work.

RECAP builds upon previous tools and resources designed to support evaluation capacity assessment and strengthening. Chiefly, it expands upon the work done under MEval to develop an Evaluation Capacity Strengthening (ECS) Framework (Watson-Grant & Hart, 2018). The ECS Framework's objective is to contribute to the global understanding of capacity strengthening for rigorous evaluation employing a "learning-by-doing" model for working with implementing partners. The framework was developed following a literature review (Escudero, 2015) of evaluation capacity literature and identification of relevant frameworks.

The development of this package included a review of additional relevant tools to support capacity strengthening, including USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) and Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) tools, and consultation meetings with evaluation experts from local institutions and organizations in Ghana and Nepal, USAID, and D4I partners. The stakeholders reached the consensus that an evaluation assessment tool needs to be clear, comprehensive, and easy to use; identify gaps and training needs; be flexible enough to take the organization's context into account; and have some sort of rating alongside a qualitative component. In addition, with USAID's focus on direct funding to local organizations, there is a need for more clearly defined organizational management competencies.

The full list of the relevant tools reviewed for the development of this package is available in the RECAP Institutional Strengthening Resource Guide. This list provides a brief overview of the purpose and audience of each tool.



Definitions

For the purposes of this package, we define research and evaluation as follows:

Research

The systematic and creative activities undertaken to increase the knowledge base, including understanding of humankind, culture, environment, and society, and the application of this knowledge base to devise new interventions. This includes experiments; observational studies; implementation research, including pilot studies; qualitative studies; population-based surveys; and product development activities. However, this package is not intended for assessment of clinical research activities (USAID Scientific Research Policy, 2014).

Evaluation

The systematic collection and analysis of information to improve program effectiveness and inform decisions about current and future programming. This includes research activities focused on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research.

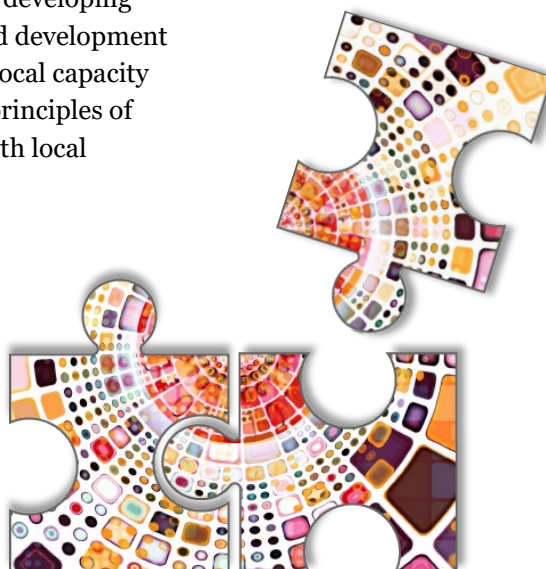
Purpose

The purpose of RECAP is to enable organizations to assess critical elements for implementing effective research and evaluation activities, identify areas that need strengthening or further development, and design actionable plans for institutional strengthening. In addition, it is a foundational activity for D4I and will be used for our own M&E and learning.

The RECAP user guide is a practical reference that provides step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing the capacity assessment and for developing an institutional strengthening plan.

How RECAP supports the Local Capacity Development Policy

USAID's Local Capacity Development Policy recognizes that developing local capacity is critical in achieving locally led and sustained development outcomes. Part of achieving a "best fit" approach is to align local capacity development with local partner context and priorities. The principles of the LCD policy center around the local system, alignment with local priorities, recognizing and building on existing capacities, and measuring change in performance over time. RECAP identifies and sets standards for core competencies in research and evaluation. The RECAP assessment tool enables organizations to assess gaps and identify priorities to improve research and evaluation capacity, and provides a standard for benchmarking and - tracking change over time.¹



¹ USAID, Local Capacity Development Policy. August 2021/Version 8. Accessed here: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/LCD_Policy_-_FORMATTED_508_01-11.pdf

Audience

RECAP is designed for research and evaluation organizations seeking to assess their current capacity, plan for institutional strengthening, and review progress over time. Organizations can include private research firms, university offices, government ministry research departments, non-governmental organizations, and others that conduct evaluations of health programs and interventions using either or both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The resource package can be implemented by an organization's full staff or by a team of the organization's management and technical leaders. It is essential that the appropriate staff are present. For example, human resources and finance officers must be present, at least for the organizational capacity domain. However, having both management and technical staff present for all domains can serve as an important learning activity and increase awareness of how the organization functions together.



The user guide is designed for anyone planning, leading, or participating in this assessment and planning process. Users may include the leadership and staff of a research and evaluation organization wishing to assess their organizational capacity or facilitators such as academics or staff of projects or organizations with a mandate to support capacity strengthening of other organizations.

RECAP Components

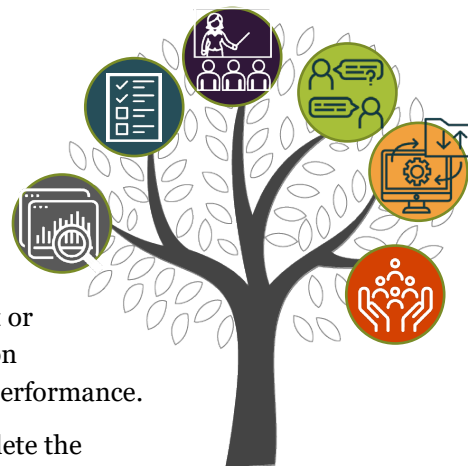
The package consists of this user guide plus three assessment and institutional strengthening resources that are designed to be implemented comprehensively.

Resource	Description
User Guide	Provides step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing the capacity assessment and for developing an institutional strengthening plan
Assessment Tool	Describes domains relevant to research and evaluation, subdomains, and core competencies, with defined performance ideals for each
Excel Workbook	Supports data entry and visualization and includes suggested discussion questions and probes for each subdomain and a template for planning action steps that map to gaps identified in the assessment
Facilitation PowerPoint	Provides a template for the facilitator and should be adapted to the context.
Institutional Strengthening Resource Guide	Provides a list of free and low-cost resources mapped to domain. Users should add additional resources specific to their context.

Assessment Tool

Assessment Approach

The assessment tool is designed to enable institutions to identify gaps in their capacity to implement effective research and evaluation activities and articulate priorities for further development or strengthening. The tool provides research and evaluation organization leadership and staff with a systematic approach to assess their own performance.



As a facilitated self-assessment, staff from an organization will complete the assessment with the assistance of a designated facilitator. Ideally, the facilitator will be neutral and external to the organization. The assessment tool is intended to encourage reflective self-assessment and learning within an organization. It is important for an organization’s staff to have ownership of the assessment process and results; the facilitator is to guide the discussion and not to determine an organization’s “score” in any domain. We recommend engaging a facilitator to maximize objectivity in the discussion. In addition to the facilitator, we strongly recommend having a designated notetaker, who can come from within or be external to an organization.

The assessment tool is designed to be adaptable. An organization may choose to implement some or all domains and/or subdomains (see description below). Subdomains and core competencies may be modified depending on the organization’s needs, with the exception of gender core competencies. Gender is an integral theme to the entire tool and is a feature of all interventions, whether they address malaria, HIV, maternal, child and newborn health, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene, or other health topics. In addition, evaluation processes themselves are influenced by gender, ranging from interviewees of one gender not feeling comfortable being interviewed by someone of another, to women living in conservative areas needing approval from husbands to participate in studies, to gender roles affecting participants’ schedules and, hence, study availability.

Assessment Framework

The RECAP tool is organized by six domains aligned to what is needed at an organizational level to undertake an evaluation or other research activity. Each domain has two to three subdomains, and each subdomain has multiple core competencies.

Domain 1: Research and evaluation design	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
1.1 Overall Development	Needs Identification, Evaluation Questions, Methods Selection, Gender Integration, Research and Evaluation Ethics, Protocol Writing
1.2 Sampling	Quantitative: Sites and Participants, Quantitative: Sites and Participants
1.3 Tools	Quantitative and/or Qualitative

Domain 2: Fieldwork 	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
2.1 Team Mobilization	Recruitment, Training, Pilot, Relationships, Planning
2.2 Interviewing Techniques	Quantitative: Individual Interviews, Group Facilitation, Gender Integration
2.3 Data Collection Management	Gender Integration, Safety, Procedures, Supervision, Quality Assurance
Domain 3: Data Management 	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
3.1 Primary Quantitative	Set-Up, Security and Quality, IT Support, Data Entry and Transfer, Analysis Files
3.2 Secondary Quantitative	Quality, Comparability, Data Structure
3.3 Qualitative	Technology, Naming Conventions, Data Storage and Security, Datasets
Domain 4: Data Analysis 	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
4.1 Primary Quantitative	Analysis Plan, Gender Integration
4.2 Secondary Quantitative	Analytic Insightfulness, Analysis Plan, Gender Integration
4.3 Qualitative	Organization, Integration, Output, Gender Integration
Domain 5: Information Sharing 	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
5.1 Translation	Interpretation, Stakeholder Engagement, Gender Integration
5.2 Dissemination	Strategy, Writing, Visualizations, Production, Facilitation, Action Planning
Domain 6: Organizational Capacity 	
Subdomains	Core Competencies
6.1 Organizational Management	Action and Commitment, Organizational Objectives, Relationships, Adaptation and Self-Renewal
6.2 Human Resources Management	Personnel Policies, Job Descriptions, Staffing Levels and Retention, Performance Management
6.3 Financial Management	Financial Policies and Procedures, Accounting System, Budgeting

Assessment Scoring

The assessment tool includes the following measurement scale that can be used to identify gaps between an organization's current and desired capacity for each subdomain. A performance ideal is defined for each core competency. A score of four indicates that the organization demonstrates advanced skills and experience to meet the performance ideal.



Identifying Where an Organization May Need to Allocate Additional Resources

Scores are designed to set priorities for action planning, not for funders to judge performance or compare organizations. Participants will use the scores to visualize their capacity strengths and gaps and prioritize institutional strengthening activities. Setting priorities and planning for institutional strengthening are the most important part of the assessment process; self-assessment scores are only used to help facilitate that process.

What are RECAP scores used for?

- To provide a snapshot of an organization's technical and management capacity for research and evaluation
- To inform discussion around an organization's research and evaluation capacities
- To visualize capacity gaps and help prioritize institutional strengthening activities
- To identify where an organization may need to allocate additional resources

What are RECAP scores not used for?

- For funders to judge performance or compare organizations
- To measure progress on specific projects or activities

Assessment Timing

The assessment can be completed by an organization at any time, but an ideal time would be when preparing for a strategic planning process, a funding application, or a large research or evaluation activity. The organization should also plan for reassessment to review progress and update the institutional strengthening plan. Though initial assessment and reassessment scores cannot necessarily be directly compared, we recommend implementing the assessment every one to two years to identify remaining gaps between current and desired capacity and to realign priorities moving forward.



The time required to implement the assessment will depend on the scope of the assessment, e.g., whether the organization wishes to cover all domains and subdomains or choose fewer. A full assessment can be conducted with a group of staff during a one-day workshop. An additional half-day will be necessary for developing the institutional strengthening planning. Ideally, planning would immediately follow the assessment to take advantage of the momentum gained and to avoid potential scheduling conflicts.

Steps to Implementing the Assessment

<p>1</p> <p>Form an assessment leadership team</p>	<p>Form a leadership team to guide the assessment and secure support from the organization's management and technical leaders.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Define the assessment scope</p>	<p>Once the leadership team is in place, the team should define the scope of the assessment. The assessment tool was designed to be customizable to each organization's mission. An organization can choose to cover all research and evaluation domains/subdomains or a select set. For example, if a full OCA will be required of an organization by a funder, they may choose not to include the organizational management domain. For any domains/subdomains that will not be included in the assessment, not applicable (N/A) can be preselected in the Excel workbook. For any domains/subdomains that that team chooses to include, assessment participants who can knowledgeable speak to those aspects of the organization should be present.</p>

3

Determine key roles and representatives

Prior to conducting the workshop, the Assessment Leadership Team should identify who will facilitate and take notes, and who from the organization will participate in the assessment. The facilitator does not need to be an expert but should have basic knowledge of the domains being assessed, understand the tool, be skilled in leading group discussions, and have excellent time management. Depending on how the assessment will be conducted, more than one facilitator may be required. Diverse participants should be included in terms of roles within the organization, seniority, and demographics.

- **Assessment Leadership Team**

The team will plan the assessment workshop, identify participants, facilitator, notetaker, and determine which technical areas should be covered. The leadership team should include management and technical area representatives from the organization, including those who will be responsible for implementing the institutional strengthening plan following the assessment workshop.

- **Facilitator**

The facilitator should be a neutral individual, ideally someone external to the organization. The facilitator should possess basic knowledge of the technical areas being assessed—including gender integration—and be able to lead group discussions and elicit participant perspectives.

- **Notetaker**

During the assessment, notes need to capture key aspects of the discussion and scoring process. A designated person will need to record the scores that are decided by the group in the assessment workbook. The notetaker will not be able to participate in the assessment discussion but should be someone knowledgeable about the organization.

- **Assessment Participants**

Assessment participants should be identified in advance by the leadership team. This may include all staff members from an organization or could be a subset of individuals who can knowledgeably speak to all domains. Include both technical and operational staff at junior and senior levels to reflect the composition of the organization including gender, age, and minority groups.

4

Plan the assessment workshop

We recommend holding an in-person assessment workshop whenever possible, however, it is possible to conduct this workshop virtually. Virtual workshops require sufficient technological capacity and a facilitator with experience conducting virtual meetings. Planning for the assessment should commence with sufficient time in advance to ensure the entire assessment team is able to participate, particularly if the facilitator or any staff need to travel to attend it. In most cases, the assessment workshop can take place at the organization's office. However, if the organization does not have meeting space, or the assessment team prefers to hold the workshop off-site, a separate venue will need to be reserved.

1. We recommend 1.5 days to implement the full assessment tool (all domains) and create a plan for institutional strengthening. If your organization chooses to reduce the scope of the assessment, the workshop duration may be shortened.
2. The workshop planning and budget should account for the following:
 - Are there other important meetings or events that the workshop may conflict with?
 - Who will facilitate the workshop? Should a paid facilitator be hired?
 - Where will the workshop be held? Does a space need to be reserved and/or rented?
 - Will participants need to be reimbursed for travel costs? Will they receive per diem?
 - Will refreshments and food be provided?
 - Will the required stationary, pens, markers, and audio-visual equipment be provided?
 - What is the intended output of the assessment?
 - Will there be a stakeholder meeting to share results?
 - Are there costs associated with the output, for example, to produce a report or other mode of sharing findings?

5

Invite Participants

Participants should be notified in advance to be able to plan for any travel or work scheduling. Participants should also be notified of any documentation that could provide evidence to support scoring decisions and prioritization. Documents may include standard operating procedures, templates, training materials, strategy documents, etc. The RECAP assessment workbook provides examples by core competency.

6

Conduct the assessment

Conducting the assessment entails introducing the assessment, reaching consensus, and recording scores, as described below:

- **Introduce the assessment.** At the onset of the assessment, the facilitator should go through the purpose, procedure, and intended outcome of the assessment. The facilitator should also describe each domain of the assessment to help participants understand how the domains are organized.
- **Reach consensus in each of the core competencies.** Using the assessment tool, the facilitator will guide the group toward a consensus on a score for each core competency. Participants should be invited to propose scores and the facilitator should invite discussion to reach consensus. Through the discussion to build consensus, comments should be captured by the notetaker. If consensus cannot be reached, the group should vote on the score by a simple majority. Since this is subjective, notes on how a decision was reached should be captured. Notes can be used to add explanation to an assessment report, refer to in later discussions about action planning, and in future assessments to understand how a score was selected.
 - Alternatively, the assessment participants can be divided into groups by domain. This may work especially well with a larger group of participants (20 or more). Groups could then work to reach consensus for each subdomain within their designated domain. In that case, respective scores should be shared with the full group once the group reconvenes. It is suggested that each domain have a dedicated notetaker in this format.
- **Record scores in the assessment workbook.** All scores should be captured in the assessment workbook, along with any relevant comments directly related to how scores were reached. Ideally, this will be done by the notetaker, however it could be done by another individual in a small setting.

7

Discuss & Plan

This is when participants will discuss action items and create their institutional strengthening plan. Details for this are discussed in the next section.

Important Considerations

There are several important considerations to be mindful of when conducting the assessment:

- Be aware of potential power dynamics among participants. More experienced or senior staff may dominate the conversation, or junior staff may be too intimidated to share their opinions. If this is the case, you can split the participants into small groups for discussion and have them report back to the larger group.
- Consider the “sleeping capacity” which may exist within an organization. For example, individuals may have specific skills and experience, but the organization has not had opportunity to demonstrate the ability in their funded work. It is important to understand the skills of all team members and how they are or are not utilized within the organization.
- Clarify that scores and priorities are not always aligned. An organization may score themselves high in a particular competency but still want to work on additional capacity development in that area. Conversely, an organization may acknowledge a significant gap but not see it as a priority and may choose not to prioritize it in their institutional strengthening plan.
- Gender integration is often misunderstood regardless of skills and experience. The facilitator should orient the group to the basic concepts of gender integration in order to get a more accurate representation of this competency.
- Technical experts may be consultants and not full-time staff. The assessment leadership team can decide to consider consultants in their assessment. If the organization has strong relationships with highly skilled consultants and the capacity to hire, manage, and monitor their quality, they can consider this in their scoring. They may not need experts to be permanent staff; access to experts may be sufficient.



Planning for Institutional Strengthening

Planning Approach

The RECAP assessment process is designed to lead directly into planning for and development of an institutional strengthening plan for building an organization’s capacity to conduct high-quality research and evaluation activities. As with the assessment, it is important that the planning process is participatory, and that the organization has ownership of the resulting institutional strengthening plan. The facilitator still has an important role in guiding the discussion, but the interpretation of the assessment findings into priority actions should be led by the organization’s leadership and staff.

Steps to Developing an Institutional Strengthening Plan

While the development of a plan can occur sometime after the assessment, it is recommended that it be done immediately following to take advantage of the momentum gained during the assessment workshop. It may be difficult to reconvene the same group of people at another time.

<p>1 Review assessment results</p>	<p>Using the RECAP assessment workbook, review your findings. This will vary depending on how the assessment was conducted. If participants split into smaller groups, one spokesperson from each group will present assessment findings to allow for others to provide feedback. If the assessment has been conducted with all participants in one group, the facilitator or a willing participant will summarize the findings.</p>
<p>2 Prioritize capacity needs</p>	<p>Once the results have been shared, the facilitator will lead the participants in prioritizing the identified capacity strengthening needs. There are many factors to consider when prioritizing needs. Depending on their role within the organization, staff will have different ideas about what is important to them and what they need to succeed in their role. Factors to consider include but are not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upcoming activities: Is there a particular activity or activities that your organization has planned that would benefit from or require a capacity strengthening intervention?• Resources: Does the capacity strengthening intervention require additional staffing, materials (e.g., tablets, software), or money and, if so, does your organization have sufficient funds available?• Strategic positioning: What areas, if strengthened, would make your organization more competitive? Would strengthening capacity in a particular area meet the needs of your current or potential funders?• Professional development for staff: Are there areas in which your organization’s staff would like to grow? Would prioritizing these areas improve staff retention?• Feasibility: How many capacity strengthening interventions does your organization want to implement at one time? Is sufficient time available for the intervention(s) to be completed? <p>Prioritization should be decided by consensus. If consensus is impossible to achieve, a decision may be made by vote.</p>
<p>3 Design an institutional strengthening plan</p>	<p>Using the workbook, strategic responses will be defined. The Institutional Strengthening Resource Guide can be used to map responses to the identified needs by domain. An organization may want to review the resources and add those that are specific to their context (e.g., local institutional review board or other ethical approval guidelines). A participatory approach will define the target group, resources needed, roles/responsibilities, timelines, and monitoring plan.</p>

Institutional Strengthening Plan

An institutional strengthening plan is a document that outlines an organization’s capacity needs and priorities; identifies strategies, action steps, timelines, and resource requirements to meet those needs; and includes a plan to monitor institutional strengthening progress.

The breadth and depth of the institutional strengthening plan will depend on the breadth and depth of the assessment (e.g., if the organization choose to cover all domains or a select few), as well as the time and resources available to implement capacity strengthening interventions. Below is a suggested template for an institutional strengthening plan; however, organizations will need to adapt it to their individual needs for detail. In general, an institutional strengthening plan should include the following components:

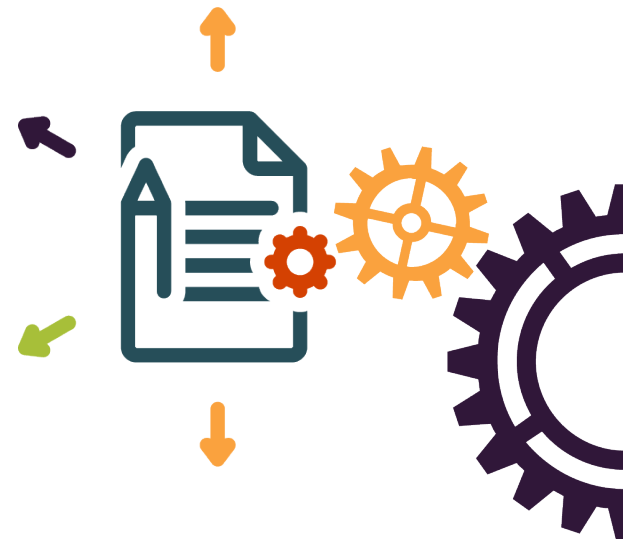
1. Introduction	
This section will provide information on the organization that is relevant to understanding current capacity to conduct research and evaluation activities and future plans to strengthen technical and organization skills to manage activities funded by donors, such as USAID.	
1.1 Background	Provides country context, including political, socio economic, and health status; research and evaluation resources; and a rationale for engaging in this assessment and planning process.
1.2 Organizational Review	Summary of the organization’s mission, vision, core values, objectives, and goals.
1.3 Contextual Factors	Factors that may facilitate or inhibit capacity strengthening activities. These factors may be internal or external to the organization.
2. Current scope of research and evaluation activities	
This section provides an overview of research and evaluation activities that the organization has recently conducted, is currently conducting, or has plans to conduct soon. This may include types of research and evaluation, partners, and funders. This may also include status of any relevant institutional strengthening achievements recently accomplished or currently underway.	
3. Data Management	
The focus of this section is on the results of the assessment. It should include a description of the methodology, participants, and adaptations made to the tool. The dashboard from the RECAP Assessment Workbook can be used to highlight strengths and areas identified for improvement. The comment section of the workbook can be used to provide a more detailed description of the context and reasons behind the scoring.	

4. Institutional Strengthening Plan

This section builds on the results of the assessment and priorities identified during the action planning process. The RECAP assessment workbook includes a template that can be used for this purpose. In some cases, the template alone may be sufficient. In others, it may be more appropriate to explain why certain decisions have been made in greater detail. The template includes the following:

4.1 Domain	The domain that aligns with the identified need (see 4.2)
4.2 Identified Need	The identified need relates to the core competency and may be specific to just part of the core competency ideal.
4.3 Priority Level	As funding for capacity strengthening activities is often quite limited, needs must be prioritized. Other considerations include willingness, time required to implement, and availability of staff. The priority level is determined by group consensus.
4.3 Strategic Responses/Interventions	Strategic responses to address identified needs will be identified in a participatory manner. The RECAP includes an Institutional Strengthening Resource Guide which includes low- or no-cost resources that may be useful. Participants may be aware of other local, regional, international, or virtual resources, which they are encouraged to explore.
4.4 Target Group	The target group refers to the staff who will participate in this intervention (e.g., finance officer, qualitative researchers, senior management, etc.).
4.5 Resources Needed	If funds are needed to implement interventions, participants will consider where they will obtain those funds. Are there scholarships available? Does the organization have a budget line item for staff development? Are there other organizations who can support this or would be able to share resources?
4.6 Roles/Responsibilities	Who is responsible for the implementation and day-to-day management of this intervention? It is important to be specific about who will do what.
4.7 Timeline	Depending on your situation, defining the timeline by quarter may be sufficient. However, for activities that have other deadlines to consider (registration dates, proposal deadlines, workplan deadlines, etc.), it may be useful to prepare a Gantt chart to specify the timeline at a monthly or even weekly level. Consider the timing of any upcoming proposals or reports that this plan could inform or any deadlines that will interfere with completing the plan.
4.8 Monitoring	Describe how you will determine if the intervention has been completed, if it has been successful, and if there were challenges. You may define specific benchmarks or indicators or choose a more open-ended description.

Once the institutional strengthening plan has been developed, it is important for the organization to determine follow-up actions for implementation of the plan. Identify who will finalize and manage the institutional strengthening plan and how and when the organization will review progress against the plan. Commit to reassessing the organization's research and evaluation capacity and determine the timing of the next assessment. It is recommended that these steps be determined at the conclusion of the assessment workshop so that the organization and participating staff have a clear plan for next steps.



Facilitator's Guide

Facilitator Role

Facilitators will, ideally, be a neutral individual from outside the organization. Facilitators should be familiar with the RECAP assessment tool and its content and have previous experience facilitating group discussions. An existing relationship with the organization may be helpful in establishing trust. Facilitators should have sufficient language proficiency, an understanding of the context, be knowledgeable on gender integration, and be excellent time managers.

Facilitation Process

Prior to the workshop, the assessment leadership team should define the scope of the assessment to determine which domains, subdomains, and core competencies will be addressed during the workshop (some may not apply to a specific organization). Facilitators should be aware of which core competencies should be addressed and which can be skipped during facilitation. The assessment leadership team should also determine if the assessment will be completed in plenary or by splitting the participants into groups by each domain. If the assessment is completed in small groups, more than one facilitator may be required, and a notetaker should be established in each group who can keep notes of the conversation and reasons for selection of the score.

At the beginning of the workshop, the facilitator should orient participants to the assessment tool. Participants should be familiar with its domains and subdomains before beginning.

During the workshop, the facilitator will guide the group through the assessment process using the Excel-based workbook to determine a score of one through four for each core competency. If this is done in small groups, the groups should reconvene in plenary to present their determined scores and reasoning with the whole group.

To determine the final score in plenary, the facilitator will guide the group toward a consensus on a score for each question. For example, when participants or small groups share a score in a subdomain, the facilitator should stop and ask, "What does everyone think about that?" or "Are there any other views from the group?" As the discussion continues, a dedicated notetaker should capture all comments and help the team reach consensus. It is crucial that the facilitator be knowledgeable about the organization and able to talk through the group's multiple responses to build consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the group should vote on the score by a simple majority. Text data can be captured in the workbook in the comment column to document how a score was reached. These text notes can be used to guide the development of the institutional strengthening action plan.

This approach will also be used to guide the development of the institutional strengthening plan. The group will reach a consensus on the organization's priorities through the process noted above. Once prioritized, the group will determine appropriate interventions. While the facilitator is helpful to guide the discussion, prioritization and determination of capacity strengthening interventions must be led by the organization.

Considerations for Facilitators

The goal of the facilitated discussion is to **lead participants through a consensus-building process**. Facilitation should be objective and nonjudgmental. The facilitator must be sure that the participants clearly understand the core competencies before scoring.

The probes listed here are meant to help guide discussions and are not meant to be a rigid guide. **It is not necessary to discuss each probe**. Selection of probes and identification of additional probing questions can be identified with the leadership team prior to the assessment workshop.

Facilitators should be conscious of whether some participants are dominating the conversation and **ensure all participants have an opportunity to voice their opinions**.

Adequate discussion time should be given for each core competency; however, this must be balanced with having sufficient time to **address all core competencies**.

Using and Adapting the Facilitation PowerPoint

The RECAP PowerPoint presentation provides a sample assessment workshop agenda, introduces the assessment tool and the plan for institutional strengthening. It provides an overview of RECAP, including the background, purpose, and process; introduces the assessment framework, domains, and scoring process; and details the steps needed to develop an institutional strengthening plan.

The presentation was designed to be adaptable according to the assessment scope and approach as determined by the assessment leadership team. In preparation of the assessment workshop, consider revising the following slides:


- **Slides 2–4**
These provide a sample agenda template for a three-day assessment workshop. Assessment leadership should work with the facilitator to determine the time needed to complete each portion. The agenda will vary based on the number of domains being assessed, and the time available to complete the assessment.
- **Slides 14–20**
Remove rows for any subdomains and/or delete the slides for any domains that have been removed from the assessment.

Workshop Closing

Reflect on the process:

- What did the participants enjoy about the process?
- Was there anything that was not covered that they wish had been covered?
- What parts of the plan are they most looking forward to?

Be sure to acknowledge the time and commitment participants have provided.



“[RECAP] is a very good tool that can help an institution to review itself and plan of effective ways of managing itself since the tool makes it possible for institutions to identify [its] own gaps and resources needed for its operations.”

— CSR staff



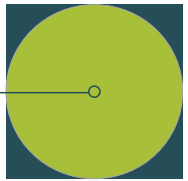
CSR staff, Malawi

Appendix A. Ghana Expert Consultation Workshop Attendance List, November 2019

	Participant	Organization
1	Aimee Ogunru	USAID, Ghana
2	Dr. John Williams	Director, Dodowa Health Research Centre
3	Dr. Ivy Osei	Ghana Health Service Research and Development Division
4	Bernard Togba	Capacity Building Advisor, Evidence for Development (E4D)
5	Godwin Afenyadu	Project Director, Evaluate for Health
6	Anthony Osei-Asare	Devtplan Consult
7	Dr. Justice Nonvignon	Chair, GEMNet-Health
8	Dr. Phyllis Dako-Gyeke	Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana
9	Dr. Duah Dwomoh	Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana
10	Dr. Samuel Dery	Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana
11	Judith Attakumah	Administrative Officer, GEMNet
12	Dede Bedu-Addo	Coordinator, Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum (GMEF)
13	Richard Otoo	CLEAR Anglophone West Africa
14	Dr. Belinda Nimelo	Ghana Health Service Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
15	Joshua Amponsah	YALI Regional Leadership Center
16	Dr. Genevieve Aryeetey	University of Ghana

Appendix B. Nepal Expert Consultation Workshop Attendance List, March 2021

	Participant	Organization
1	Bihungam Bista	Senior Research Officer, Health Research Section; Nepal Health Research Council
2	Diwakar Basnet	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Research Inputs and Development Action (RIDA Nepal)
3	Durga Pahari	Assistant Professor / Department of Community Medicine and Family Health; Tribhuvan University - Institute of Medicine
4	Kamal Devkota	Program Director - Research/Evaluation; Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS)
5	Madhav Chaulagain	MEL Director/USAID-SSBH project; Abt Associates
6	Madhukar Shrestha	Senior Public Health Expert; Melamchi Water Supply and Sewar Management Project - Department of Public Health and Occupational Health
7	Shophika Regmi	Senior Manager: Health System Research, Evaluation, and Learning; HERD International
8	Dr. Anita Ghimire	Director/Team Leader; Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER)
9	Nilesh Joshi	MEAL Manager; Group for Technical Assistant (GTA)
10	Nira Joshi	Deputy Director; New Era
11	Purushottam Gnwali	Monitoring and Evaluation Expert; concern Center for Rural Youth (CCFRY Nepal)
12	Ram Hari Gaihre	Senior Statistician- Social Statistics Division; Government of Nepal - National Planning Commission, Central Bureau of Statistics, Social Statistics Division



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