SHARE Organizational Capacity Assessment Survey

Instructions for Use

Introduction

One of the SHARE program's priorities is to contribute to partner organizational capacity strengthening. This involves supporting partners to improve their knowledge, skills, systems and, ultimately, performance in a range of areas associated with research development, implementation, and translation. Such capacity development ultimately contributes to SHARE's long-term aim of strengthening evidence ecosystems. Capacity strengthening can take place through a range of mechanisms, including mentoring, trainings, and knowledge exchange events. As participants in the capacity strengthening process, partners are expected to share their experience and expertise as well as benefit from experience and expertise of other partners. SHARE's theory of change assumes that if an organization is able to strengthen capacity in the areas that are a priority to them, and if able to use that capacity through an applied project (such as a SHARE research project), the organization will improve their demonstrated performance in those areas. The purpose of the SHARE organizational capacity strengthening tool is to support partners to consider, plan, monitor and self-assess their capacity in a range of capability areas. It has the following main uses: 1. For partners to indicate areas of strength which they would be willing to share with others. 2. For partners to indicate priority areas which they would like to develop, to set capability and performance targets for those areas and then to monitor progress. 3. For UND to obtain data about our partners' evolution in the capability and performance areas they identify as a priority. This information will be compiled and analyzed by UND, combined with that of other partners, and used to report to USAID on the percentage of SHARE-affiliated organizations that reported progress (CBLD-9).

Key Definitions

Capacity: Capacity is a measure of an ability that exists at present

Capability: Capability refers to the organization's skills, abilities, aptitude and knowledge

Performance: Performance is a measure of actual behavior and output within an organization

An organization's capacity assessment data is private to the organization and will only be viewed by the SHARE MEL-KM Director and the SHARE Organizational Capacity Strengthening Manager. An organization's capacity assessment is not used in any way to determine an organization's participation in SHARE, nor is organizational capacity assessment data shared with USAID or any other organizations. The only metric that is shared beyond the SHARE MEL-KM Director and Organizational Capacity Strengthening Manager is the aggregate CBLD-9 indicator, which is not linked to any one particular organization. Organizations are encouraged to be as candid as possible in their self-assessment, as the organization has the opportunity to develop a capacity strengthening plan based on its priority areas for capacity development and receive resources and support from SHARE to execute these targeted capacity strengthening plans to improve organizational performance throughout the duration of their participation in SHARE. The more candid an organization's self-assessment and the more targeted an

organization's plan for capacity strengthening, the more potential benefit the organization will derive from participation in SHARE's capacity strengthening activities. Similarly, organizations will have the opportunity to share areas of exceptional strength with other organizations within the SHARE network of research partners, creating institutional relationships that will lead to a stronger network of research institutions worldwide and the potential for future research collaborations and capacity exchange beyond the lifetime of the SHARE activity.

Who should complete this form?

The completion of the form should be led by the person responsible for _the administrative unit or organization anticipated to work with SHARE_ . This unit may be the research team, an institute, a department or an alliance. As the form is meant to reflect the capabilities of that unit as a whole, it is important that the form be filled in consultation with other team members within the designated unit. We recommend bringing the team together for a meeting to review the Rubric and Baseline Capacity Assessment Questions together before one designated individual completes the online Baseline Capacity Assessment Survey. When conducting their assessment and setting their targets, the partner organization may also consider requesting the feedback of its external partners or clients.

Confidentiality of the information

Only SHARE's MEL-KM Director and Organizational Capacity Strengthening Manager at UND will see the responses of each individual organization. These will be aggregated with the submissions of all other SHARE partners and will not be used by UND or USAID to assess individual organizations' capabilities. Once you identify your organizations' priority capability areas and target performance indicators at baseline, SHARE's MEL-KM Director will use this information to determine, based on your responses, whether you reported an improvement in these areas over the course of SHARE or not. This information will be aggregated with that of all other partners to report to USAID the percentage of partners who reported an improvement. The information you provide will also be used by SHARE to monitor the changes that may occur in association to the Activity and to learn from what is working and what is not. There are no expectations regarding your responses or reported improvements. The databases where your data - and that of other partners - is stored will always be in possession of UND and will not be shared with anyone else.

How can UND assist you through this process?

This assessment will not affect UND's decision to collaborate with you throughout the course of SHARE. We recognize that we and all of our partners have different experiences and areas of expertise. This process is a way to identify those and maximize the potential of organized exchange.

UND does not need to be part of the assessment process in your organization, but we are willing to assist in any way we can. This may involve answering clarifying questions throughout the process; holding a virtual session to go over the rubric and baseline sheets; and reviewing your baseline, semi-annual and final results with you once you have submitted them.

Where UND can possibly be of greatest support is in the Capacity Strengthening Plan, which will be developed jointly between your organization and relevant UND staff (SHARE Capacity Strengthening Program Manager and MEL-KM Director) Capacity Strengthening Plans will be developed with three main factors in mind.

1) Priority areas for development your organization identifies. This is the most important factor in the developing the plan
2) Areas for development that align with ongoing SHARE activities, in order to allow for an accompaniment approach to capacity exchange.
3) Areas of development that align with resources available within the larger SHARE network, including your organization. UND can help identify and access these resources. Your organization may also identify resources for capacity development in your own local networks.

With respect to the areas that your organization has indicated skills that you are willing to share, UND will coordinate to bring your organization into contact with other organizations within the SHARE network that have identified those skills and capacity areas as priorities for development within their own Capacity Strengthening plans.

Overview of the rubric for capacity assessment

The tool contains a rubric to help partner organizations assess their capacity. It describes 8 capacity areas (with seven research sub-capabilities focused on specific research approaches). For each capability area there are three cardinal levels defined:

- Level 1: Foundation. This is what would be observed when the organization is starting out in the capability area.
- Level 3: Developing. This is what would be observed, in addition to everything listed in Level 1, when the organization is developing its capacities in the area.
- Level 5: Excelling. This is what would be observed, in addition to everything listed in Levels 1 and 3, when the organization is highly capable in the area.

There are two other levels between these:

- Level 2: The organization demonstrates all of Level 1 and some, but not all, of Level 3.
- Level 4: The organization demonstrates all of Level 3 and some, but not all, of Level 5.

Overview of the questions for performance assessment

The tool will ask whether your organization currently uses specific indicators to measure performance (i.e. concrete demonstration of a specific capability) in the areas identified for development If so, these indicators may be useful to include later in the Capacity Strengthening Plan, which will also serve as a Baseline Report. If not, these indicators will be developed with support from UND later. While the rubric asks an organization to assess its capacity in 8 different capacity areas, the performance questions in the Baseline Report and the subsequent Semi-Annual Review reports elicit an articulation of performance indicators and measurement against those indicators to demonstrate how an organization has changed its performance with respect to key capacity areas identified as priority for capacity development. This distinction is critical to the goal of this capacity strengthening tool, as the objective is not simply to increase organizational capacity across the SHARE network, but rather to improve organizational performance across organizational capacity development priorities.

How to fill in the Survey

1. Read through the rubric and familiarize yourself with the definitions and cardinal levels of each capability area.

2. Answer questions 1a and 1b in the baseline tab. The organization will need to decide to which organizational unit you will apply this tool: e.g. which team, department, organization or alliance. Some of the capabilities refer to organization systems and resources (particularly at level 5). While this may be important for some projects, it may be outside the scope for others. Think about what will be most beneficial to the SHARE project and what is feasible for SHARE to support.

3. Consider who should be involved in the self-assessment process and schedule a meeting with them if necessary to go through the remaining steps. Ideally the assessment process will include members of the organizational team that are involved in or work in each of the capability areas being assessed. Write the names of those involved in 1c on the baseline sheet.

4. Going through each capability area, note down the organization's current level. For example, to be level 3 the organization must already be able to demonstrate all the behaviors described in that level, but do not exhibit any of the behaviors described in level 5. If the organization demonstrates some of the behaviors in level 3 but not all then the organization would be assessed at a level 2. If the organization exhibits all the behaviors in level 3, and some (but not all of those in level 5), the organization should be assessed to be in level 4. Go with the team's first instinct and do not think too much at this stage.

5.   If there are any capability areas which are important for the organization, but which are not reflected in the eight areas in the rubric, the assessment team can write its own. The team can fill in its own definitions for excelling, developing and foundation levels.

6.   Consider which (if any) of the capability areas are the organization's strengths – these will likely be level 4 or 5. Decide whether the organization would like to offer its experience or expertise in any of these areas. For each area the organization lists, describe in more detail what the organization would be willing to share with SHARE and other partners. This does not obligate the organization to any specific activity but will be used by SHARE when planning their capacity exchange agenda

7.   Consider which (if any) of the capability areas the team would like to further develop. This may be an area which is relatively weak compared with the others or it may be strategically important for the projects the team will contribute to SHARE, or for the organization's strategic plan. Select up to five areas. For each area:

    i.   Explain why this area is a priority.
    ii.   Recall the organization's current rubric level (1,2,3,4, or 5)which was filled in earlier).
    iii.   Select your target level – where you would like to be at the end of the project (likely one or two levels higher than the current level) .
    iv.   Describe in more detail the specific skills the organization would like to develop within this area).
    v.   List who in the organization should be involved in capacity-strengthening efforts in the identified area. Note that this can be specific individuals or a specific role or department. .
    vi.   If applicable, describe how the organization currently measures performance in the identified area using specific, measurable performance indicators.
    vii.   If applicable, describe the organization's achievements in the past year in the identified area with respect to the indicated current measurements of performance/performance indicators.

8.   Done! UND will get back to you shortly to discuss your responses and next steps.