# DPOD Partner Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool

The present organisational capacity assessment tool is intended to assist prospective DPOD programme organisations in the assessment of the capacity of their partner organisations to implement the planned programme. The purpose is also to identify key strengths and weaknesses in organisational capacities, so that these can be used to strengthen the programme – or be addressed as part of the programme’s organisational capacity building efforts. The intention is that the partner organisation in the Global South uses the tool to carry out a participatory self-assessment, with representation by the Danish partner, potentially facilitated by an external resource person.

The organisational capacity assessment methodology used in the suggested tool builds on a framework with three dimensions of organisational capacities, each of which requires strong capabilities for the organization to be effective, sustainable, and influential: *Internal Organisation*, *Programme Performance*, and *External Linkages*.[[1]](#footnote-1) Organisational capability is hereby seen to be a combination of organisation-specific competencies, geared to its core functions; internal systems and processes, aligned to support those competencies; and employee knowledge and skills (domain-specific as well as generic) congruent with the specific functional focus of the organisation.

The three dimensions have been broken down into a total of 15 areas of organisational capacities that are central to effective organisational performance. The tool consists of an overview chart (see next page) that briefly outlines how the 15 capacity areas are linked to each of the three dimensions, indicating that a strengthening of each of them will lead to improved organisational performance (improved effectiveness, sustainability, influence, and leadership). The chart also suggests some of the likely organisational capacity inputs and activities that would lead to improvements in the 15 capacity areas.

The second part of the tool outlines a set of questions that are to be used as guidance and inspiration during a organisational capacity assessment workshop or discussion with the intended programme partner: Many questions are likely to be relevant for most partner organisations, but some might not be applicable. Additional and related questions might need to be raised, based on past partnership experiences. It is important that findings and conclusions are noted and recorded, and that areas of organisational weaknesses or gaps are identified, so that that they can be included as part of proposed partner capacity building efforts in the programme proposal.



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| **Organisation: XXXX** | **Strong (S)** | **Adequate (A)** | **Weak/gap (W)** | **Not applicable (N/A)** | *Use the questions in each of the assessment areas as guidance and inspiration for a joint discussion with the partner regarding the organisation’s present status. Give each of the main areas a score, note key findings and conclusions, as well as capacity gaps that needs to be addressed as part of the continued cooperation in the programme.* |
| **INTERNAL ORGANISATION CAPACITY** |  | | | | |
| 1. **Vision/Mission/Goals** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 1.1 Are Vision, Mission, Goals (VMGs) clearly formulated? |  | | | | |
| 1.2 Are existing VMGs recent and are they mirroring the organisation’s actual areas of operation? |
| 1.3 Is the organisation’s role in its thematic focus area reflected in VMGs? |
| 1.4 Are VMGs relevant to the situation in the thematic area – and to beneficiary needs? |
| 1.5 Are VMGs understood and accepted by key internal and external stakeholders? |
| 1.6 Is staff and management actively committed to the VMGs? |
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| 1. **Governance** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 2.1 Is there a clear separation between policy making and execution in the organisation structure and governance systems? |  | | | | |
| 2.2 Is there a Board (of Directors); are they elected or appointed; how many members? Is the role of the Board clearly defined? |
| 2.3 Is the Board actively involved in policy and strategy matters? (are there systems of regular meetings, meeting minutes, attendance records?) |
| 2.4 Who is the Board accountable to (members?). How do they perform their accountability role? |
| 2.5 Is the Board playing an active role in defining overall VMGs and organisational strategies? |
| 2.4 Does the Director / CEO report to the Board? |
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| 1. **Organisation Structure** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 3.1 Is the decision-making structure based on clear divisions of responsibility? |  | | | | |
| 3.2 Is responsibility for sector knowledge, coordination, capacity building, etc. clearly placed with a section or specific staff members? |
| 3.3 Is division of tasks and responsibilities clear and understood by the staff? (Is there a proper organigramme?) |
| 3.4 Is division in departments and units clear and logical? |
| 3.5 Is co-ordination between departments/units sufficient and effective? |
| 3.6 Is communication between management levels sufficient? |
| 3.7 Is there an adequate balance of positions filled – in terms of gender, disability, marginalisation, etc.? |
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| 1. **Financial, Administrative and Infrastructure Management** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 4.1 What type of **financial management** systems and tools are used? (Vouchers and cash books? Excel or accounts software system? Single or double signature cash withdrawal system? Trained finance officer? Internal audit system? Annual external audit?) |  | | | | |
| * 1. Are financial management systems and procedures adequate? |
| 4.3 Does the organisation adhere to the financial management systems? |
| 4.4 Are **procurement and logistics systems** and procedures in place? (Procurement policy? Assets register? Other administrative systems?) |
| 4.5 Are procurement and logistics systems and procedures adequate? |
| 4.6 Does the organisation adhere to procurement and logistics management systems? |
| 4.7 Are anti-corruption policies and procedures in place, and are they actively used to prevent, disclose and follow-up on irregularities? |
| 4.8 Does the organisation have adequate infrastructure to work effectively? (Office premises, equipment, supplies, services?) |
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| 1. **Human Resources Management** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 5.1 Are human resources sufficient to sustain org. activities? |  | | | | |
| 5.2 Are all staff qualified for the positions they hold? |
| 5.3 Is staff qualified to manage engagement activities in the thematic area of focus (monitor and learn from experiences, build knowledge, manage resource base, carry out capacity building, coordination efforts, joint advocacy work)? |
| 5.4 Is staff performance adequate, considering the circumstances? (Is staff adequately utilised?) |
| 5.5 Is staff remuneration (salaries and benefits) adequate – and linked to staff performance? |
| 5.6 Is the performance of staff reviewed periodically? |
| 5.7 Are recruitment procedures clear, adequate, and adhered to? |
| 5.8 Is staff turnover within normal limits? |
| 5.9 Is investment in staff development adequate? |
| 5.10 Do staff have sufficient career perspectives? |
| 5.11 Does staff policy adequately address inclusivity? |
| 5.12 Does the organisation have a human resource policy? |
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| 1. **Fund Raising and Income Generation** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 6.1 Are financial means adequate in consideration of the level of ambition? |  | | | | |
| 6.2 How sustainable is the financial basis (What is the size of funding at present and over past 5 years, how diversified is it (national/international), how big a percentage is generated from local resources?) |
| 6.3 Does the organisation have a resource mobilisation/donor/partner strategy? |
| 6.4 Are major financial risks identified, and how are they minimized? |
| 6.5 Is the organisation good at writing proposals (and getting them funded)? |
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| 1. **Organisation Culture and Leadership** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 7.1 Is the organisation culture in line with the organisation’s mission – and is it conducive to motivating staff and make work effective?  (e.g. balancing between short and long-term thinking / risk taking and risk reduction / individual responsibility and team spirit) |  | | | | |
| 7.2 Is adequate attention paid to accountability and transparency? |
| 7.3 Is the organisation willing to learn from its past mistakes? |
| 7.4 Is attention to security risks sufficient? |
| 7.6 Are management decisions taken in a timely manner? |
| 7.7 Is staff adequately involved in decision-making? |
| 7.8 Is staff adequately informed on decisions? |
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| **PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT CAPACITY** |  | | | | |
| 1. **Programme Strategies** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 8.1 Which are the organisation’s current programmes, and are all projects and activities in line with the MVGs? |  | | | | |
| 8.2 Does all programmes have clearly articulated and realistic strategies? |
| 8.3 Do strategies address inclusivity issues of target groups (gender, disability, other marginalised groups)? |
| 8.4 Are all projects and activities that the organisation implement fitting into an articulated programme strategy? |
| 8.5 Are programme strategies and interventions based on a problem and context analysis? |
| 8.6 Are strategies translated into clear, realistic annual plans? |
| 8.7 Are annual plans regularly monitored and adapted? |
| 8.8 Are staff adequately involved in planning and monitoring? |
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| 1. **Outputs/Results** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 9.1 Does the organisation deliver relevant products and services for member/peer CSOs and other relevant stakeholders? |  | | | | |
| 9.2 Do the products and services adequately address the needs of the target group? |
| 9.3 Do products/services adequately address the different gender roles, minority issues and other positions of the target group? |
| 9.4 Is demand for these products/services sufficient? |
| 9.5 Does the organization deliver a substantial volume of outputs? |
| 9.6 Can the organization meet the demand for its products/services? |
| 9.7 Are the services provided seen to be strategic – meaning that they can serve as a model for replication by others? |
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| 1. **Technical Skills and Knowledge Management** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 10.1 Are staff members specifically trained in the organisation’s fields of expertise? How many and for which skills? How are skills maintained? |  | | | | |
| 10.2 Does some staff members have specific skills or competencies in networking, capacity building, advocacy work, research (within fields of expertise)? |
| 10.3 Are key resources (documents, videos, websites, contacts with resource persons and organisation) maintained and systematically stored? Are the resources accessible to staff? Are best practices disseminated? |
| 10.4 Is the organisation involved with or participating in research efforts, to increase awareness and understanding within the field of expertise? |
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| 1. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 11.1 Are monitoring systems in place for all programmes? Which tools are used and how useful are they? |  | | | | |
| 11.2 Are project and programme achievement indicators developed and used? |
| 11.3 Are case studies / success stories developed? |
| 11.4 Are programmes and projects regularly reviewed – with participation by representatives from target groups and stakeholders? |
| 11.5 Are external evaluations of programmes conducted? |
| 11.6 Is sufficient information about results and impact easily available? |
| 11.7 Is data and case stories about results and impact effectively documented? |
| 11.8 Is results and performance monitoring systematically used for organisational learning, so that experiences are used to adjust approaches? |
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| **EXTERNAL RELATIONS CAPACITY** |  | | | | |
| 1. **External Factors** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 12.1 Is the socio-economic situation conducive to the performance of the organisation? (Is this analysed – and how?) |  | | | | |
| 12.2 Are socio-cultural norms and values among the target group and in society conducive to performance? (Is this analysed – and how?) |
| 12.3 Is the political climate conducive? (Is this analysed – and how?) |
| 12.4 Is the security situation allowing for programme performance? |
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| 1. **External Actors** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 13.1 Is the target group satisfied with the quality and volume of products and services delivered? (Is this assessed – and how?) |  | | | | |
| 13.2 Is the organisation satisfied with the relations with partners/donors? (Is this assessed – and how?) |
| 13.3 Are the partners/donors satisfied with the results? |
| 13.4 Are relations with government and policy makers (ministries, key authorities, commissions – centrally and locally) adequate? |
| 13.5 Does the organization have a good public image? |
| 13.6 Is an Annual Report on the organisations work produced, published, and publicly launched? |
| 13.7 Does the organisation publish newsletters, brochures, case stories, radio programmes, videos, etc. or hold public hearings about their work? |
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| 1. **Constituency and Outreach** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 14.1 Does the organisation have a presence in provinces/districts/communities covered by programme activities? |  | | | | |
| 14.2 Does the organisation have a thorough understanding of the realities in the local area(s), established through structured surveys or other tools? |
| 14.3 Are relations with local structures (government, traditional power holders, civil society, private sector) established and functional? |
| 14.4 Are local target groups and stakeholders consulted with or participating in prioritising, influencing, and/or implementing projects? |
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| 1. **Networking and Alliance Building** |  |  |  |  | **Findings, Conclusions, Gaps to be addressed** |
| 15.1 Is the organisation a member of national, regional and/or international CSO networks and alliances? Which ones? Is the organisation in a leading position in any of the networks? |  | | | | |
| 15.2 Does the organisation have a sector networking role in relation to:   1. building knowledge, resources, research results in the sector? 2. building sector capacities for other CSOs and agencies? 3. coordination of CS efforts (including advocacy work)? 4. demonstration of strategic service delivery / good practice models? |
| 15.3 How is the above-mentioned networking role practiced? |
| 15.4 How would you like your networking lead role to develop over the coming years – which position would you like to be in? |

1. The tool is adapted from BOND: Assessing effectiveness in building the capacity of organisations and institutions, March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)