Capacity Development Measurement

Review of Recommendations

August 27, 2015

- Partner impetus to develop shared measurement approaches (e.g. at HICD Pro launch event, AIDSTAR II closing)

- Respond to findings of Learning Agenda on Local Capacity Development

- Improve project design by monitoring links from organizational-level change to system change and development results

- ***What gets measured, counts*** is often true in USAID

- Emphasis on partnership, local ownership has renewed focus on capacity development

- Crux issue: how to measure it?

AVOID measuring "capacity" as potential

- Limited use, often misleading
- Easy to distort energy toward "best practices" signaling

isomorphic mimicry…   **…capability traps**

Agency-accepted shared approach to measuring organizational capacity development and its link to higher-order results of interest:

➢ Developed in wide consultation

➢ Incorporated into guidance as a mix of recommendations and requirements

➢ Seeded through pilots across sectors

➢ Supported with tools and TA

1. Measure centered on **performance**

2. Measure performance across multiple domains: effective achievement and **adaptive functions**

3. Measure at two levels: **organization ↔ local system**

4. Emphasize the **contribution** of programming to change (many contributing factors ≠ attribution)

5. Account for **systems effects**:

   ➢ Unforeseen effects/outcomes

   ➢ Alternative influences/causes of change

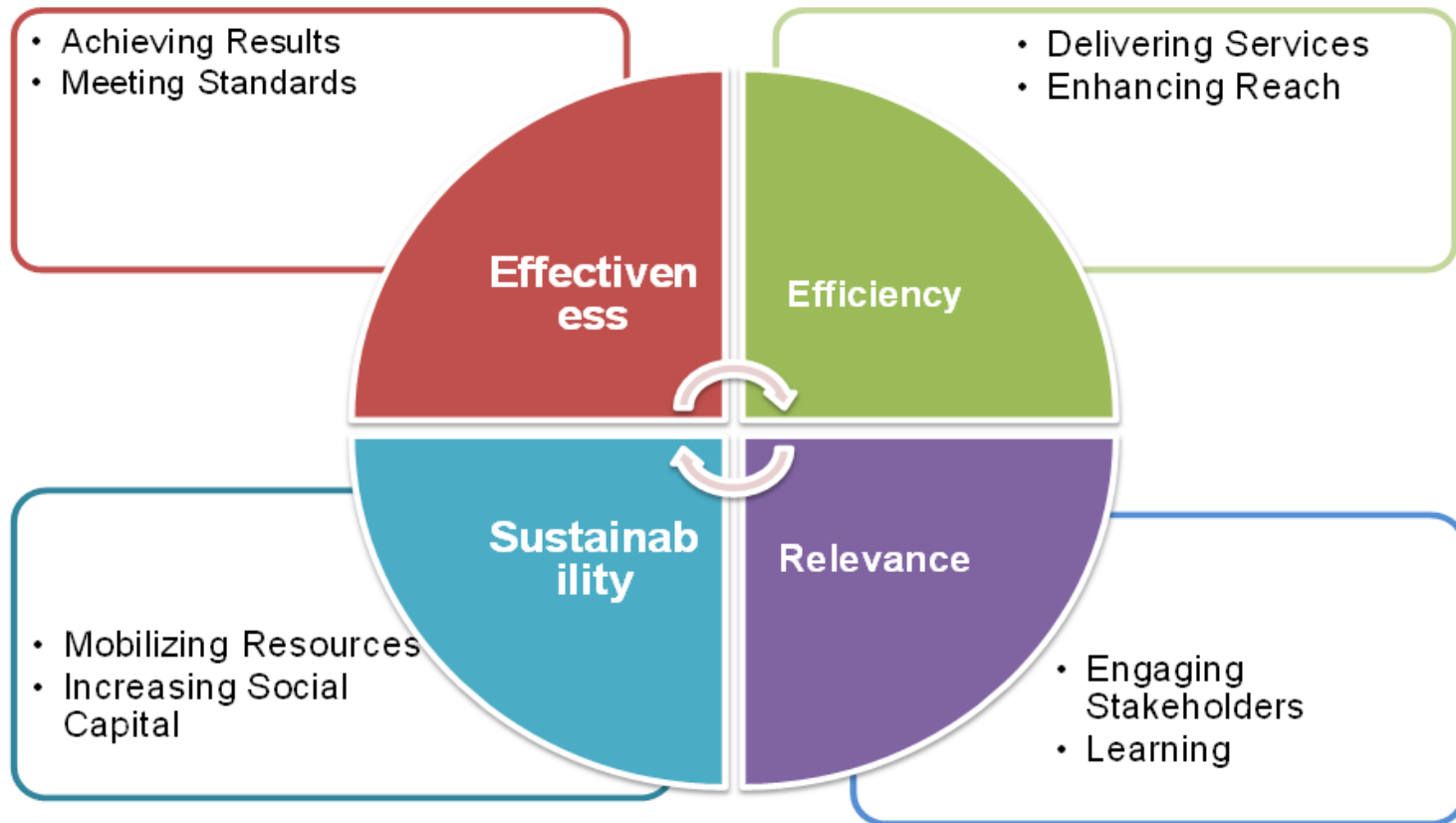   ➢ Multiple, non-linear pathways to contribution toward change

- Measure for learning and higher-order accountability
- Capacity developed → **improved performance**
- Capacity improved or increased… "so what?"

Strengthen Capacity, Measure Performance

- Achieving Results
- Meeting Standards

- Delivering Services
- Enhancing Reach

Effectiveness

Efficiency

Sustainability

Relevance

- Mobilizing Resources
- Increasing Social Capital

- Engaging Stakeholders
- Learning

Adapted from PACT

- We strengthen any organization so it can operate in and influence a wider system

- To monitor, must measure both change in organization and change in system

- Surfaces (and adjusts) the theory of change

- Performance and capacities depend on role that organization plays

4. Look for Our Contribution (not attribution)

- Systems (organizational) change is complex - doesn't always emerge in the same way from the same steps

- Paradigm for systems-focused interventions, such as capacity development, is **contribution** – our work is one important influence among many

- To understand **contribution** to results, must look at both change in organizations/relationships and change in the system

- Important to have realistic claims of contribution – easy to overstate

➢ Unforeseen effects/outcomes

➢ Alternative influences/causes of change (incentives, organizational culture, other actors…)

➢ Multiple, non-linear pathways to contribution toward change

3 Principles of Complexity-Aware Monitoring

Learn more at:

http://usaidlearninglab.org/complexity-aware-monitoring/basics

- Measures what we care most about – performance change and resulting impact

- Easier to adopt "best fit" approach, reduces pressures for cookie-cutter models

- Clearer communication to and through partners

- Allows comparison of different approaches, including other systems interventions

- Better trace ways capacity development matters, over longer term

- Bringing into sharper focus when and how of different approaches

Risk Assessment	Monitoring	Capacity Development
Understand likelihood and magnitude of potential negative occurrences; define risk mitigation and/or management plan	Ongoing and routine data collection to reveal whether desired results are being achieved	Efforts to improve the capability of a given partner to perform, sustain, and self-renew over time

Annexes 1 & 2: Bibliography and Background

- Citations in literature linking recommendations to scholarship and practitioners

- Describes internal and external process to develop these materials

- Highlights cross-Agency group reflecting diverse sectors that support capacity development

Annexes 3 & 4: Example Project M&E Plans

- Reminder: Project (USAID-speak for multiple, related awards/activities)

- Two Examples in two sectors

- Model how to apply these recommendations without providing cut-and-paste boilerplate

- Help articulate fit with regular and required reporting

Annex 5: Example Solicitation Language

- Easy ways to ask offerers/respondents to apply recommendations

- Applicable to different forms of solicitation & award

- Aim: implementer can customize proposed response as appropriate for solicitation

- Continued internal sharing of recommendations and related package of tools

- Building recommended approach into Agency training courses on M&E, Project Design

- Early adoption from some flagship central mechanisms

Group Exercise

1. We have 6 flipcharts around the room to **form 6 groups**
2. **Select a reporter** to share back
3. Discuss the recommendations – does this resonate with your experience? (30 min)
4. Note on flipchart – top areas of endorsement, areas of concern; **pick top 3 of each**
5. Next, considering the solicitation language and other materials – **pick top 3 steps to make this practical**