



Capacity Building index (CBI)

User's manual

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AVSF
AGRONOMES & VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES VSF INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Introduction

The **Capacity Building Index** proposes a method to assess the strengthening of the capacities of organizations, based on the analysis of 6 key components of organizational strengthening, empirically identified by the work of AVSF and its associates and

partners. These organizations may be Farmers' Organizations (with different levels of organization) or implementation partners.

Without discussing whether these 6 variables are sufficient to depict the situation of an organization, AVSF proposes this guide as a tool to indicate quite well the state of capacity building of an organization. It is an easy-to-use tool, which is however relatively reliable and quantifiable, without pretending to be able to completely describe an organization's situation.

CAPACITY BUILDING VARIABLES

- **Technical capacities** are defined as the capacities to design and execute technical propositions and to implement projects;
- **Administrative and financial capacities** are defined as the capacities to administer the structure and manage funds efficiently;
- **Political impact capacities** are defined as the organization's capability to impact on local or national policies, its ability to mobilize and negotiate;
- **Representativeness / legitimacy** is defined as the social sector and/ or the quantity of people actually represented by the organization;
- **Democratic functioning/ governance**, in particular the turnover capacity of the organization and the transparency of its financial management;
- **Diversification of financings or self-financing** of the organization, according to the type of organization (number of funders or equity funds / total funds administrated).

CBI's conditions of use

The CBI can be used with **any type of organization**: Farmers' organization and/or implementation partner, which is supposed to build capacity as part of an action or a partnership with AVSF.

The capacity building process (CB) often takes place within the framework of a project in which capacity building is a component. Nonetheless, it can occur that the CB process take place outside of a project, the action of AVSF having thus no other objective but to accompany the capacity building of the partner/farmers' organization.

It is advised to use this tool at the start of an action with a partner/ farmers' organization, to evaluate

the initial state of the organization (baseline). Nevertheless, if we consider actions that have already started, it will be possible to perform a midterm or an annual evaluation of the project.

CBI is a tool meant for the organization's members, for them to evaluate the evolution of their structure. **It is hence a participatory tool, which implies a high level of participation amongst the partners/ farmers' organization and their members, as part of a self-assessment process.**

In this context, AVSF's role is to propose and present the tool to the members of the organization and to facilitate (or co-facilitate with a member of the organization) the CBI's implementation. The organizer from AVSF plays the role of a facilitator and, as such, mustn't get too implicated or take part in the decision making process of the members who are conducting the self-assessment process. Ideally, the organizer/ facilitator from AVSF shouldn't be directly implicated in the day-to-day management of the action (for instance the national coordinator, the leader of another project, etc.).

A few tips to successfully organize a CBI workshop

Implicate at least one leader of the organization at every step of the way, specifically for the preparatory phase of the CBI workshop:

- Adapt CBI: choice and formulation of the quantitative indicators and the guiding questions, translation of the tool (if needed)
- Precisely set up the objectives of the CBI workshop, the participatory aspect, the respective roles (AVSF organizer, members of the organization), facilitating methods

During the workshop, the AVSF organizer plays a role of moderator, of facilitator:

- Stay neutral (do not get involved in the decision making process)
- Ensure the participation of all present members (and not only the leader-s)
- But do not hesitate to:
 - Redirect the discussion
 - Reformulate for everyone to understand
 - Ask for precisions, concrete facts, sources of verification in support of some assertions

■ The CBI is:

- **A self-assessment tool**, which allows to estimate the evolution of the capacity building of an organization over time
- **A guide** with generic principle and format, meaning to be adapted to each organization for a better understanding and appropriation of its members
- **A tool, which needs to be used in a participatory manner** in order to set off a dialogue between members of the organization and to facilitate the discussion

■ CBI is not:

- **A tool to compare organizations with each other:** the percentages and values of the indicators are only useful to compare the same organization over time
- **A tool to resolve internal conflicts in an organization:** this tool could be misused by the different groups inside an organization with internal conflicts

- **An administrative tool imposed by funders:** this tool was elaborated by AVSF, who wishes that it be a tool to stir up an actual dialogue with the partners and beneficiaries, to better the quality of its intervention.



Description and implementation

The tool consists in combining **two tables**: a more conventional one, quantitative and based on numerical indicators; and another table qualitative and «subjective», which can trigger a rich discussion between members of an organization. The quantitative table is to be prepared first, as to lay the ground for the discussion of the qualitative table.

The proposal here is to debate in workshop, on the basis of these two tables, with the participation of the executive board of the organization and, when possible, with other leaders from the organization.

The CBI workshop shouldn't last more than a half day, or a complete day if it's the first time of use.

This process will be regularly renewed, ideally every year, and in any case at the end of a capacity building process or at the end of a project.

→ Use of the **quantitative table**: see table A

It is a table of indicators classified by variables, pre-

ferably numerical, so that we may dispose of factual elements and not only subjective ones. It is highly recommended to **choose in collaboration with leaders of the organization 1 to 2 indicators maximum per variable**, whose value will then be stated at the time of the evaluation.

→ Use of the **qualitative table**: see table B

For each variable, we ask a few **guiding questions**. After a discussion based on these questions, **a score will be attributed by consensus** for each variable (from 0 to 4, and based on clear/defined criteria). The score will be explained and justified.

It is important to underline that the guiding questions are only here to give a direction to the debate. It is suggested to present **1 to 2 questions maximum per variable** to trigger the discussion, but not to try to answer each one of them one by one. The important point is the triggered debate (whose principal elements can be chosen) and moreover the final consensus, expressed in score.

→ **Final synthesis**: see table C

The **Synopsis table** will be validated by the organization and the external facilitator.

It can feed a reflexion on the capacity building in case of a partnership, it can serve as a mid-term assessment of the partnership approach, and it can possibly enrich an annual report as part of a project.



A - Quantitative table

This chart is adaptable according to each organization (size, mission, maturity, cultural context, etc.). The indicators included in this table are only examples: they can be chosen or not, reformulated, or others can be added. The same applies to some variables, which can be taken into account or not.

CBI Variables	Indicator	Indicator's value at baseline (date)	Actual indicator's value at the time of the evaluation (date)
Technical capacities	Examples: Number of technicians or leaders/ local experts Number of formulated projects or reports Number of computer used Or other indicator that expresses the technical capacities of the organization	Numerical value or description of the organization's technical capacity Ex.: 1 local technician	Ex.: 3 local technicians
Administrative and financial capacities	Examples: amount of administered funds Or number of successive years with audit Or other indicator that expresses the administrative and financial capacities of the organization	Numerical value or description of the organization's administrative and financial capacities Ex.: 1 year with favorable audit	Ex.: 3 3 years with favorable audit
Political impact capacities	Examples: Number of people convened to mass events Or number of proposals formulated or accepted Or other indicator that expresses the political impact capacities of the organization	Numerical value or description of the organization's political impact capacities Ex.: 500 people took part in the demonstration	Ex.: 2000 people blocking the street as part of a punctual event
Representativeness / legitimacy	Examples: Number of active members Or Number of communities involved	200	
Democratic functioning / transparency	Examples: % of turnover among the leaders Or % of members taking part in the general meeting Or % of women in the management committee	Numerical value or description of the organization's functioning Ex.: 0 women in the management committee out of 10 people	Ex.: 3 women in the management committee out of 10 people
Diversification of financing or self-financing	Examples: Number of funders Or % equity capital/ total funds	Ex.: 1	3



B - Qualitative table

This table is adaptable according to each organization (size, mission, maturity, cultural context, etc.). The guiding questions included in this chart are only examples: they can be chosen or not, reformulated, or others can be added. The same applies to some variables that can be taken into account or not. **Consider including some guiding questions related to the place and role of women in the organization.**

(*) Score: Very weak = 0; Weak (with problems) = 1; more or less = 2; Well = 3 Very well = 4

CBI Variables	Guiding questions Example of questions to choose/adapt	Score (*) at baseline (date)	Current score at the time of the evaluation (date)	Explanation of the current score - comments
Technical capacities	Does the organization have internal capacities linked to its fields of technical specialties? Does it have internal technician, farmers and/or specialized professionals to support it? Does it have access to training for its members? In case of project implementation led by the organization: Does it have a capacity to identify, negotiate or implement projects? As far as the development of rural territories is concern, does it have clear proposals which are validated for the interest of its members?			Example: we didn't manage to better our technical capacities due to a lack of training for our members, which explains a difference of 1 point only
Administrative and financial capacities	Does the organization manage funds in a transparent and efficient way? Does it have an adapted financial management: bank account, management tools adapted to the financial amount, permanent or punctual adapted human resources? Does it have legal recognition? Does it issue on time its financial reports? Does it perform favorable external audits?			
Political impact capacities	Is the organization present in the areas of political influence at a local/ regional/ national scale? Does it have formulated proposals of public policies and have they been adopted? Does it have the capacity to mobilize? Does it benefit from alliance capacities to reach its political goals? Is it possible that the organization pave the way for changes in local public policies? In national public policies? Is the organization recognized by external actors, public or private, for its proposal capacity?			
Representativeness / legitimacy	Is there a good communication between the staff and the political representatives of the organization? Does it manage to express the request of its members? Is there a good communication between the members and the board? Is the organization representative of the small-holder families in the villages/ districts/ provinces where its activities are implemented? Is it famous and recognized at a local/ regional/ national scale?			
Democratic functioning / transparency	Does the organization have a well-defined and respected internal functioning (be it associative or entrepreneurial): assembly, executive committee, record of decision, etc.? Is there a sufficient turnover among the leaders? Who makes decisions? And how: is there information/ consultation/ dialogue or co-decision? How do women take part in the making of important decisions? Are there services/praxis that allow women to break free from their familial chores in order to participate in meetings? Is the floor given to them (or do they take it) or, are they in a listening posture?			
Diversification of financings or self-financing	Is the organization financially independent? Does it have equity funds or does it depend on external financing? How many different sources of financing does it have? What type of funders (public, members, private, international cooperation, etc.)?			
TOTAL				

C - Synopsis table

CBI Variables	Indicators values from the quantitative table		Indicators scores from the qualitative table		Comments /explanations
	Initial value	Current value	Initial value	Current value	
Technical capacities	Indicate the value	Indicate the value	Indicate the value	Indicate the value	Write a summary of the comments and explanations on these results
Administrative and financial capacities					
Political impact capacities					
Representativeness / legitimacy					
Democratic functioning / transparency					
Diversification of financings or self-financing					
Total					Write a summary of the comments and explanations on these results
				Final conclusion	



References

3 sources can be downloaded from the F3E website: www.f3e.asso.fr, category "ressources / guides / guides méthodologie"

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