RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY (RAC)
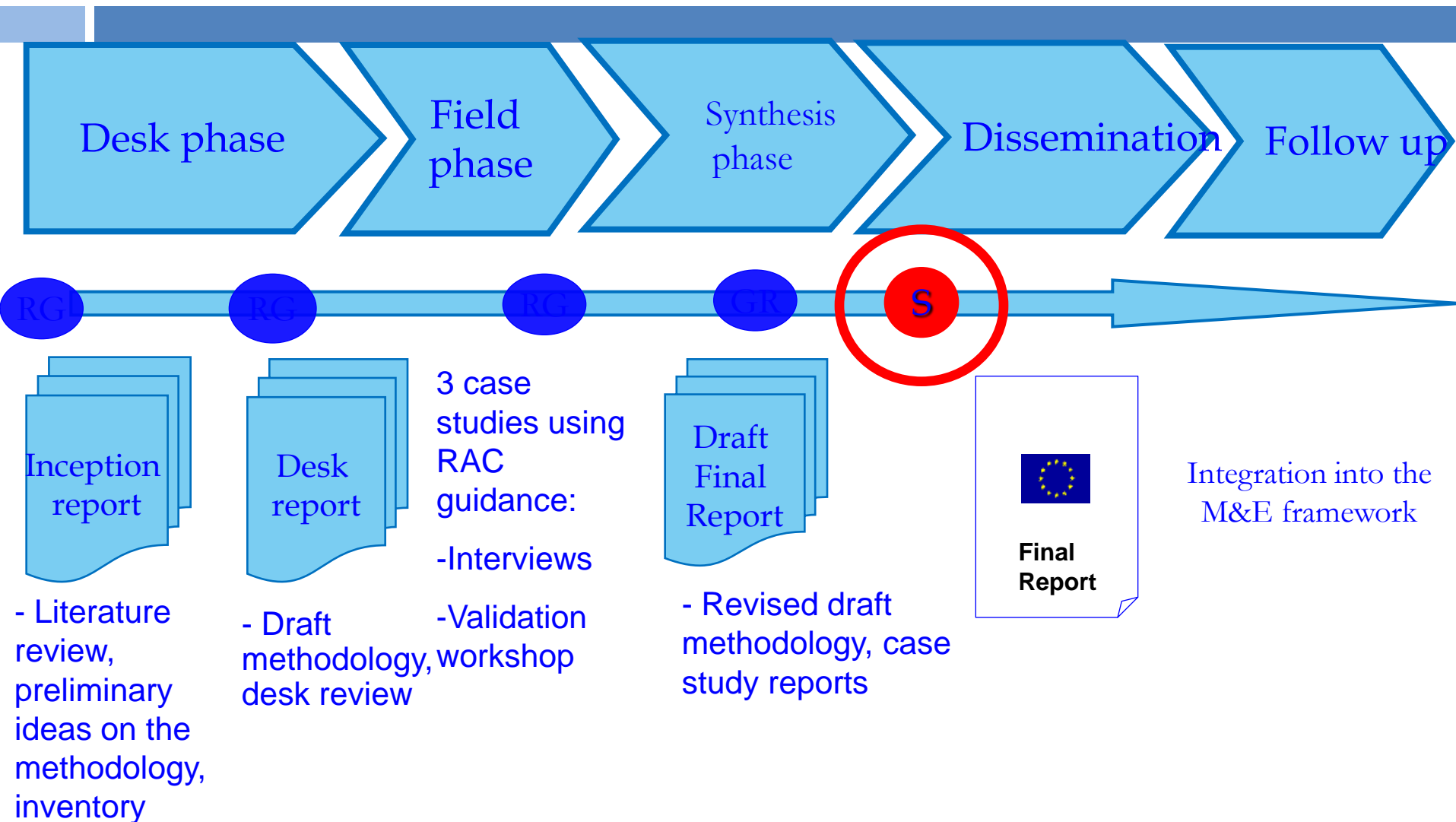
PROPOSED APPROACH TO ASSESS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN AID PROGRAMMES

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Workshop Discussion

31 May 2012

Study phases

Desk phase	Field phase	Synthesis phase	Dissemination	Follow up
RG	RG	RG	GR	**S** (circled in red)	

Inception report

- Literature review, preliminary ideas on the methodology, inventory

Desk report

- Draft methodology, desk review

3 case studies using RAC guidance:

-Interviews

-Validation workshop

Draft Final Report

- Revised draft methodology, case study reports

Final Report

Integration into the M&E framework

The lessons learned from the literature review

1. How do we <u>identify and assess CD outcomes</u>, as distinct from short-term programme performance? (*Capacity v/s Performance*);

2. How to introduce in the assessment the <u>driving role of the political and economic environment</u> on Capacity development and Aid effectiveness, if we consider CD a pillar of Aid Effectiveness? (*Pull v/s Push*); and

3. How do we consider <u>other enabling factors</u> that are supposed to influence CD (Knowledge sharing processes, quality of the design and implementation,…)

Building on the EC and other main partners' experience

The current debate on aid effectiveness and capacity assessment, namely:
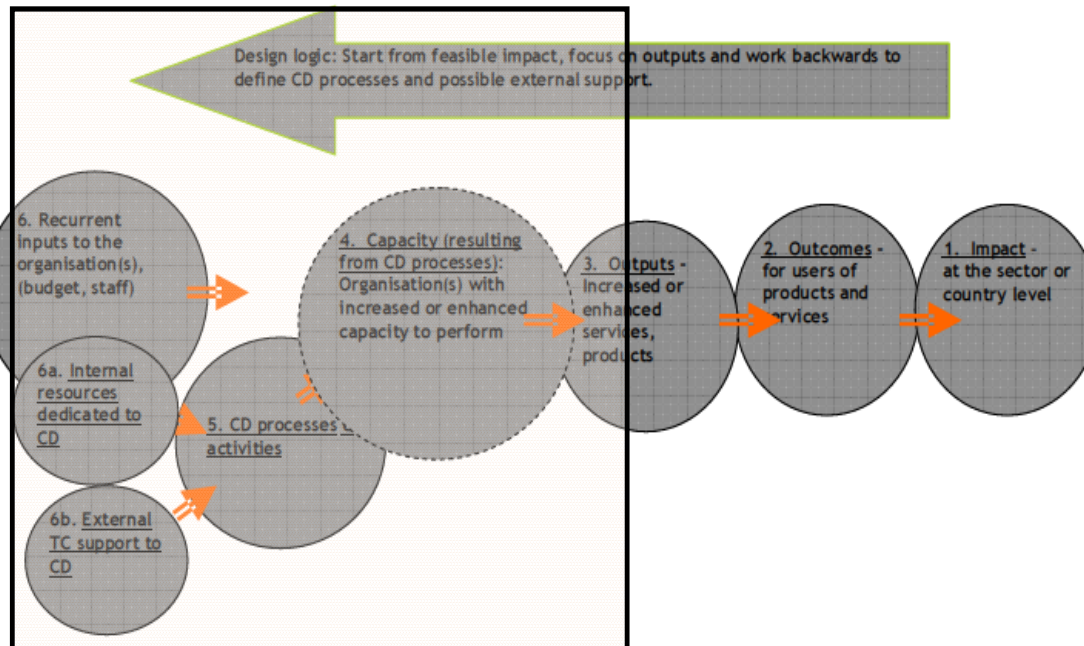
- ◘ The <u>EC backbone</u> reform and the related approaches to evaluation (ROACH), and now the PPCM reform.
- ◘ Other main partners' engagement in CD assessment, with a special consideration of the contemporary works of <u>5Cs/IOB, WB, and UNDP</u>).

The EC Backbone reform of Technical cooperation and the ROACH (Result Oriented Approach for Capacity change)

ROACH <u>highlights well the capacity development process</u> implicit in the intervention logic of a development action. It does not, however, provide specific instruments for identifying whether or not a capacity development process has taken place successfully, aside from the standard performance assessments. The methodology proposed integrates and revises the ROACH, on two key points:

☐ the possibility/need of assessing the CD process itself; and

☐ the need to take into account the role of the context-related driving factors in CD processes
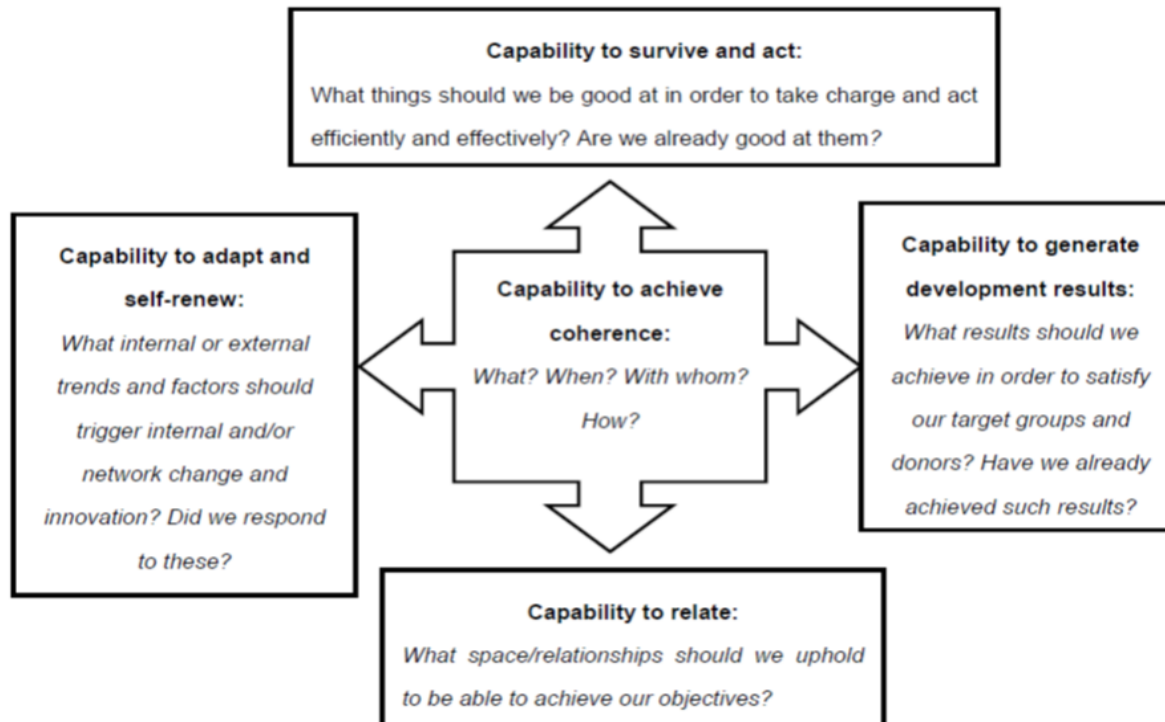
Design logic: Start from feasible impact, focus on outputs and work backwards to define CD processes and possible external support.

6. Recurrent inputs to the organisation(s), (budget, staff)

6a. Internal resources dedicated to CD

5. CD processes activities

6b. External TC support to CD

4. Capacity (resulting from CD processes): Organisation(s) with increased or enhanced capacity to perform

3. Outputs - increased or enhanced services, products

2. Outcomes - for users of products and services

1. Impact - at the sector or country level

The 5Cs ECDPM / IOB approach

The 5Cs approach of the ECDPM (2007), tested by the Dutch cooperation focuses the key changes in 5 main areas, including about 20 pointers (indicators), to adapt and integrate according to the contexts. The advantage of such approach relies on its broad empowerment focus and the relations it establishes between the capacities of the target institution/ system and the external environment.

The difficulty is related to the in depth assessments required, and the need of a complex involvement of the counterparts in the assessment process.

A balanced approach to monitoring and evaluating capacity: assessing change in five core capabilities that affect capacity and performance

Capability to survive and act:

What things should we be good at in order to take charge and act efficiently and effectively? Are we already good at them?

Capability to adapt and self-renew:

What internal or external trends and factors should trigger internal and/or network change and innovation? Did we respond to these?

Capability to achieve coherence:

What? When? With whom? How?

Capability to generate development results:

What results should we achieve in order to satisfy our target groups and donors? Have we already achieved such results?

Capability to relate:

What space/relationships should we uphold to be able to achieve our objectives?

An application of the World Bank Capacity Development Results Framework

The World Bank has developed a simple methodology (June 2011) for assessment of CD outcomes in the current Bank's programme, in line with the Capacity Development Results Framework (2009). The approach adopts an IL with two levels of CD outcomes: an intermediate one (e.g. enhanced skills), and a second one (strengthening of demand and


Figure 1. CDRF Capacity Development Process

supply institutions - increased institutional efficiency and effectiveness and enhanced stakeholders' ownership). The idea is that the learning process (and the related outputs) enhances the institutional capacity and this is instrumental to the achievement of the development goals. This is very similar to the UNDP approach (next slide).

Here as well the CD process is identified as key for the achievement of the development results and its intermediate and final outcomes are spelled out.

UNDP
Capacity Measurement Framework

In its Measuring Capacity of June 2010, UNDP proposes a comprehensive approach to assess and measure CD, through the identification of specific CD outputs and outcomes that ensure the achievement of the national development goals. UNDP has always been particularly advanced on such matter since 1998 (Capacity Assessment). It has supported the idea of CD as a process. Now UNDP proposes probably the most comprehensive approach based on the key assumption that the overall development process depends upon Capacity Development. Again a disaggregation of specific Outcomes and Outputs.
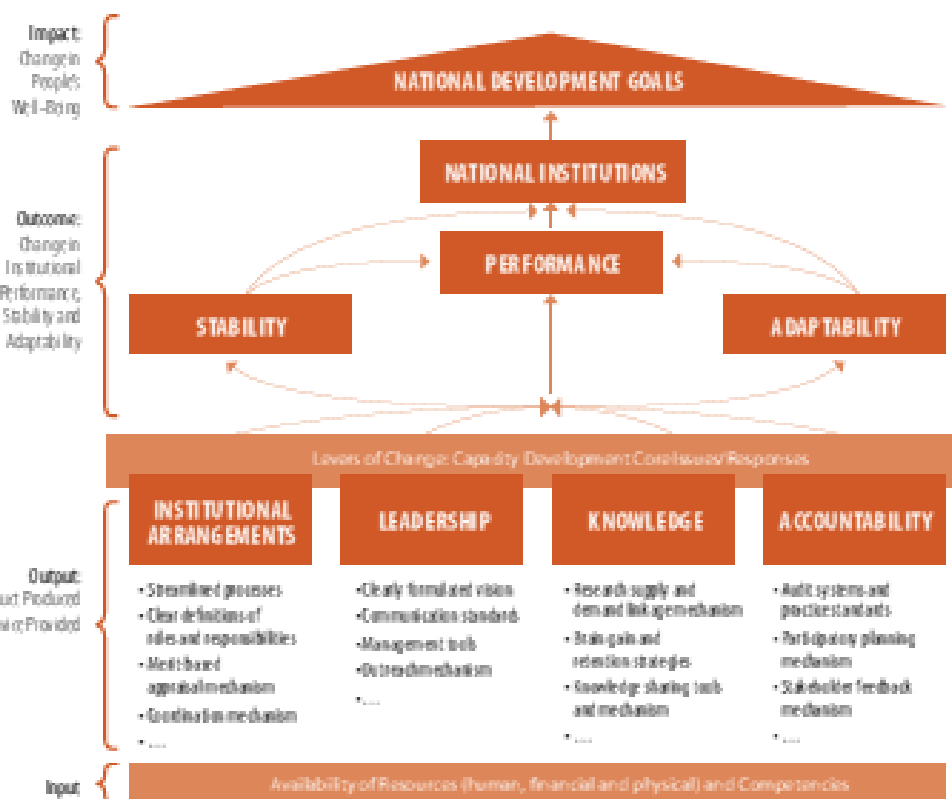
MEASUR. FACTORS	COMPONENTS
1. Performance	Effectiveness
	Effciency
	Institutionalization
2. Stability	Risk Mitigation
	Investment for Innovation
3. Adaptability	Continuous Improvement

How to integrate Capacity Development in the Intervention Logic of an aid programme

If we consider the classic intervention logic of a development project, we have the **blue chain, from inputs to outputs** (direct and induced) and outcomes. To ensure sustainable results, however, the programme must pass through a **transformation of the people and the institutions involved, which is the yellow chain**. This is implicit, but must be made explicit – as shown in the examples above – if we want to assess the results in terms of CD.
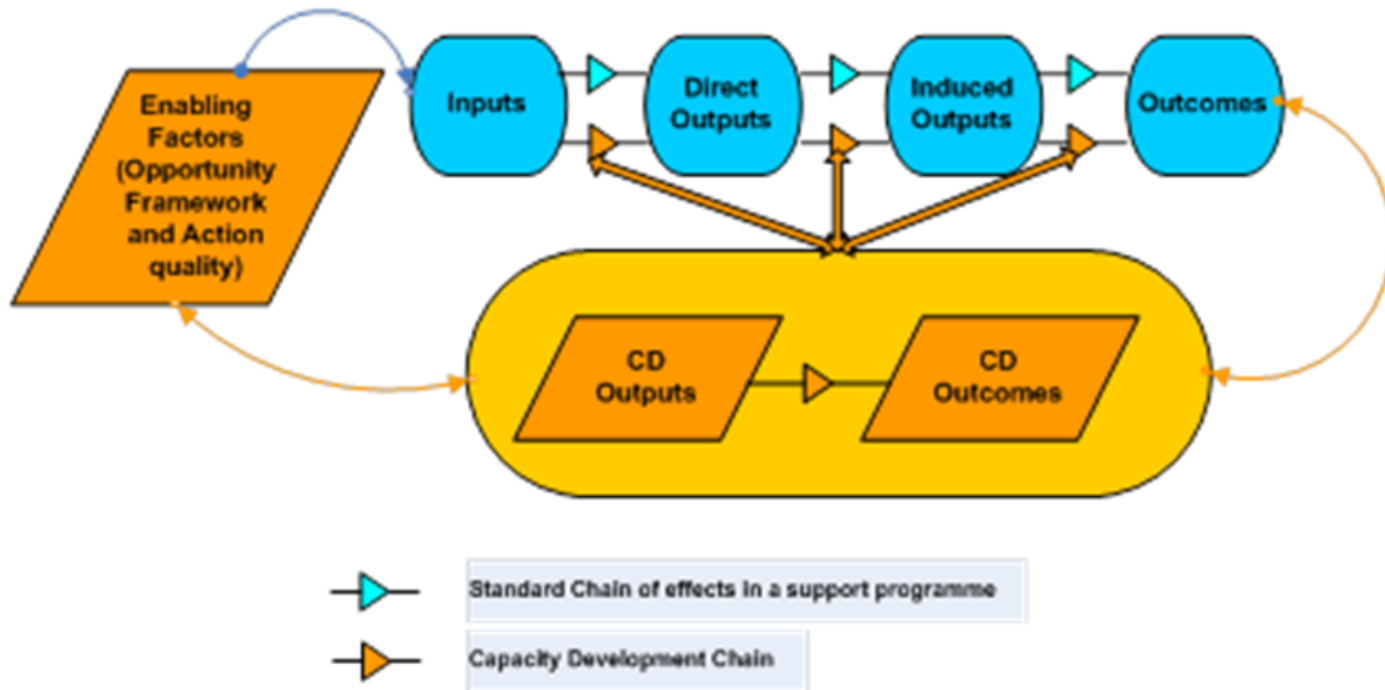
Without a focus on **CD** assessment, the sustainability of a development action may be overlooked.
Performance indicators are not proxy of **CD** indicators.

WARNING:

- a project which does not work significantly through the CD chain might produce many direct outputs. It might produce some induced (policy) outputs as well, if the TA replaces some institutional functions. In fortunate circumstances (depending on the environment) it might 'generate' some outcomes for a short period;
- the opposite case is possible as well: a project which works through the CD chain, but incurs in negative external conditions, may reach significant outputs and outcomes at institutional level, while not performing well in the short term.

FOCUS: if we do not look for the specific effects of a development action on CD (i.e. people and institutions) they may escape to our attention and performance indicators are not proxy of CD indicators.

Which are the factors to be investigated to assess CD?

ENABLING FACTORS: first of all, a stronger consideration of the context is necessary, since we are looking for <u>human and institutional changes and not only technocratic or material changes</u>. This is why a special consideration of the pre-existing and accompanying enabling factors is necessary (details next slides).
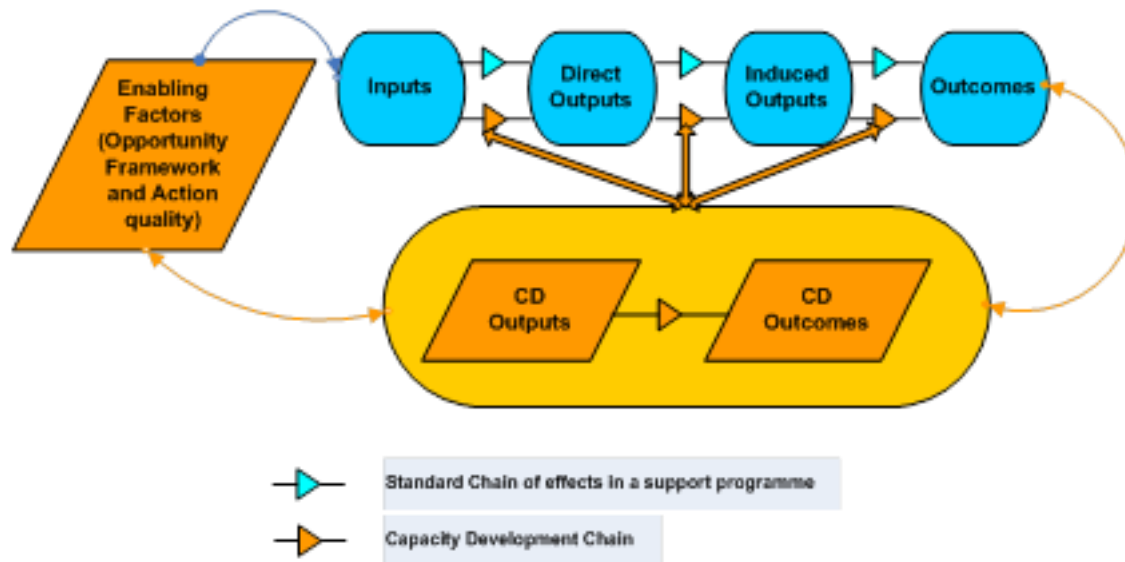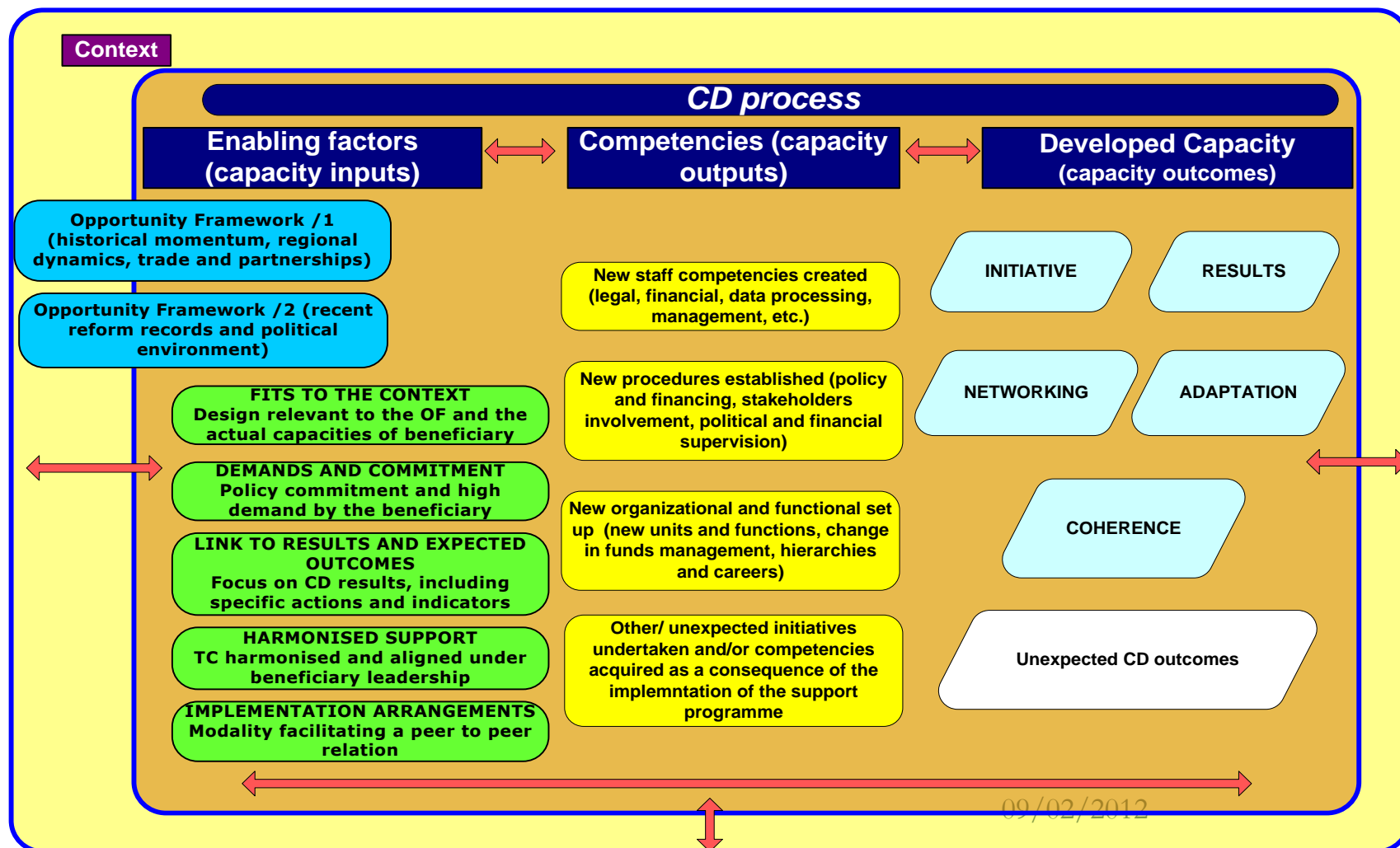

SPECIFIC OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES: Then we must highlight specific CD outputs and outcomes, which are not necessarily focused by the aid programme, but are necessary for its sustainable execution (details below).

The Logic of the CD process (only the CD chain)

Proposed standard IL for the Evaluation of Capacity Development Support

Context

CD process

Enabling factors (capacity inputs)	Competencies (capacity outputs)	Developed Capacity (capacity outcomes)

Opportunity Framework /1 (historical momentum, regional dynamics, trade and partnerships)

Opportunity Framework /2 (recent reform records and political environment)

FITS TO THE CONTEXT
Design relevant to the OF and the actual capacities of beneficiary

DEMANDS AND COMMITMENT
Policy commitment and high demand by the beneficiary

LINK TO RESULTS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Focus on CD results, including specific actions and indicators

HARMONISED SUPPORT
TC harmonised and aligned under beneficiary leadership

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS
Modality facilitating a peer to peer relation

New staff competencies created (legal, financial, data processing, management, etc.)

New procedures established (policy and financing, stakeholders involvement, political and financial supervision)

New organizational and functional set up (new units and functions, change in funds management, hierarchies and careers)

Other/ unexpected initiatives undertaken and/or competencies acquired as a consequence of the implemntation of the support programme

INITIATIVE

RESULTS

NETWORKING

ADAPTATION

COHERENCE

Unexpected CD outcomes

09/02/2012

The components of the IL:
Enabling Factors – the Opportunity Framework

A specific contribution of the proposed methodology regards the role of the **Opportunity Framework** for CD. This includes two main components:

- The <u>regional and international opportunities</u> and the way the <u>existing partnerships</u> and the related <u>political dialogue</u> affect the CD processes:
  - example Ukraine: a programme to support a SWAp in Agriculture and Rural Dev., for the adoption of an EU-based Agricultural and Rural Development strategy was conceived under a possible EU pre-accession framework and implemented under an opposite international partnership framework. There was no political dialogue on Agriculture to tackle such dysfunction.

- The political momentum at country and sectoral level, and the way it enhances or limits the opportunity for institutional change in the targeted areas:

  - example Bolivia: a programme to support a new approach to fight drug trafficking benefits of several conditions: a) the high sectoral priority (with allocation of financial and human resources) in the new Gov. agenda; b) the support of its main constituency; and b) a special partnership with the EC (which helps the Gov. replace the traditional US-supported substitution approach)
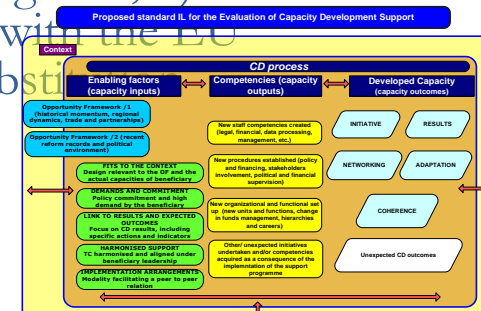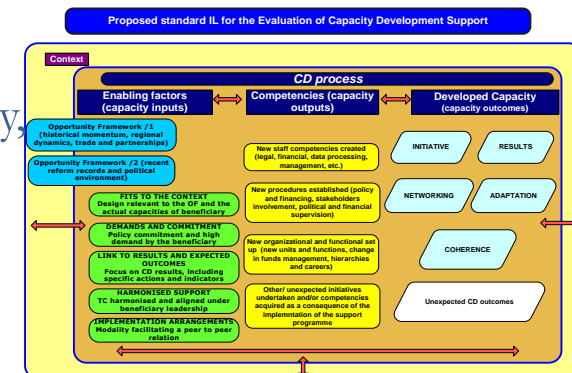
The components of the IL:
Enabling Factors – Quality Criteria

The Quality Criteria of the ROACH, with few integrations, have been incorporated in the proposed methodology, as part of the CD enabling factors:

- ❑ <u>Fits to the context</u>. Includes the relevance of the programme *in relation to* the OF and the existing capacities of the beneficiary.

- ❑ <u>Demands and commitment</u>. This includes the level of policy commitment of the beneficiaries and their internal process of appropriation.

- <u>Harmonised support</u>. Includes the dialogue framework driven by the beneficiary with an harmonised participation of donors (e.g. SWAp).

- <u>Link to results and expected outcomes</u>. Includes clear identification of results (possibly highlighting specific CD outputs and outcomes) and establishment of effective M&

- <u>Implementation arrangements</u>. Includes the TC supply modality, i.e. the decision-making process (e.g. PIU), and how the TC is delivered (peer-to-peer, top-down, other…).

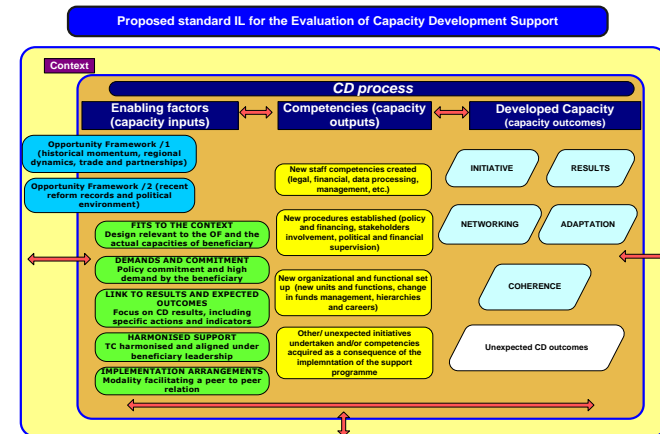# The components of the IL: Capacity Outputs

These are the <u>individual and organisational Capacity changes</u> created or induced by the inputs provided and other specific support action(s). They include changes in:

- <u>Staff</u> trained and upgrading: cross-sectoral skills (e.g.: policy analysis, results-based management…); and sectoral skills (e.g.: phytosanitary standards, auditing…

- Procedures and various functional improvements: stakeholders consultations; MTEF; aid coordination; policy and regulation review and drafting; policy enforcement and control…

- Structures' creation and consolidation: planning / M&E / policy analysis units; decentralised structure…

- Unexpected changes in individual skills and/or in the organisation: changes that were not envisaged or planned

Proposed standard IL for the Evaluation of Capacity Development Support

The components of the IL: Capacity outcomes

These include the acquisition by the beneficiary institution(s) of new levels of institutional capacity (beyond the individual and organisational change). The 5Cs proposed by the ECDPM and tested by IOB have been integrated in the methodology to describe the CD outcomes.

❑ Initiative: this includes political and financial autonomy, and adequate technical instruments.

❑ Achieving Results: this is based on a sound cycle including planning, implementation, monitoring and learning.

❑ Networking: this includes the relationship with stakeholders and with external partners.

❑ Adaptation: this includes the resilience and the readiness of the institution to profit of the opportunities and/or protect itself from the threats of the external environment.

❑ Coherence: the capacity to mix and integrate the above.

Proposed standard IL for the Evaluation of Capacity Development Support
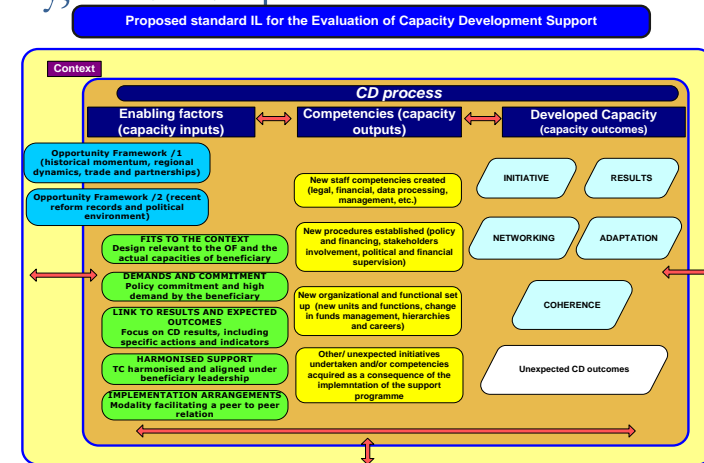
Basic Evaluation Questions, by IL Level
Enabling Factors

1. To what extent the Opportunity Framework affects the change of the targeted institution(s) and political and policy dialogue allow possible influence on it? (possible two sub-questions)

   - regional economic and political framework
   - international economic and political partnerships
   - reform records and citizens support (political economy)
   - sectoral effects of the OF
   - political dialogue / Policy dialogue: country and sectoral effects

2. To what extent does the evaluated programme respond to the Quality Criteria for CD? (possible five sub-questions)

   - relevance to the OF and other context features,
   - ownership of targeted institution(s) and commitment to reform,
   - strategic focus, with explicit targeting of CD,
   - harmonisation and possibly SWAp
   - appropriate delivery modalities, including peer to peer methods

Basic Evaluation Questions, by IL Level Capacity Outputs

3. To what extent did the programme inputs or other factors contribute to generate changes in staff competences, establishment and consolidation of appropriate policies, tools, approaches, strengthening and innovation at organisational level? (possible several sub-questions)

- staff trained in cross-sectoral and sectoral matters
- policy analysis and drafting
- financing methods (e.g. MTEF)
- stakeholders consultation
- aid coordination
- M&E
- consolidation and rationalisation of the organisation (units…)
- other unplanned outputs

The evaluator has to assess the change and identify the contribution of the programme's inputs and other factors (using current evaluation methods and techniques). Then it should identify the specific role of the Opportunity Framework and the Quality Criteria

Basic Evaluation Questions, by IL Level
Capacity Outcomes

4. To what extent the key Capacity Outcomes and their coherent mix have been achieved; which was the role of the Capacity Outputs and which was the role of other factors, including the Opportunity Framework? (up to 5 sub-questions)

- indicators of institutional autonomous initiative
- indicators of strategic consistency
- indicators of inter-institutional links
- indicators of resilience and adaptation
- indicators of coherence

The evaluator has to identify **context-sensitive issues and then indicators**. *For instance: the policy leadership of the institution(s), its accountability and learning from the results, its sustainable links with the Parliament and the CS, its recurrent behaviour in reaction to different political phases, its performance record over time. The indicators should show* comprehensive changes, *not just reversible achievements. Once identified the actual changes, the* **determining factors** *should be detected, using available evaluation methods, with* particular attention to the Capacity Outputs and the Opportunity Framework

WHY the Rapid Assessment of Capacity (RAC)?

According to the logic structure shown so far, the methodology has been developed with detailed standard EQs and indicators.

The nature of the questions, however makes a <u>thorough evaluation complex and invasive</u>: impossible to carry out without the leadership of the institution (s) involved, as it actually happens in most institutional evaluations (mainly self- or peer-to-peer evaluations).

Moreover, the EC is looking for <u>a tool to assess the CD processes on a regular base</u> on a number of projects, possibly more than once per project.

This is why, to allow a <u>replicable CD assessment</u> in all development actions with significant CD implications (TC, Budget Support, and Civil Society support), a Rapid Assessment method has been outlined and tested.

The <u>RAC</u> is built on the logic structure of the Evaluation Methodology outlined above, but utilises **a mix of periodic assessments and *ad hoc* rapid survey methods**, so as to allow a standardised and recurrent assessment of a number of programmes at decentralised level.

The RAC components: Periodic Assessments

The RAC is not a special methodology. It is only a simplified application of the comprehensive methodology discussed so far.

It includes:

1. The recurrent assessment of the Enabling Factors. This should be done periodically under the leadership of the EUDs, with the aid of consultants, using periodic reviews and assessments, namely:

   - the Opportunity Framework should be assessed regularly, as part of the PPCM, with a reference to its effects and implications on key intervention sectors. When carrying out a RAC on a single programme, such assessment may be easily adapted and integrated;

   - the Quality Criteria should be assessed on a recurrent base in the framework of the QSG (ex ante) and ROM (ongoing) for each significant single programme. When carrying out a RAC, the existing assessments may be easily adapted and integrated.

The RAC components: the Questionnaires

When the RAC of a specific programme is decided, the evaluators should execute the following tasks:

2. <u>Updating and adaptation of the periodic assessment of the Enabling Factors</u>. As said, this is a relatively quick adaptation of data which exist in the planning and monitoring documents, that may be completed through some specific interviews to resource persons.

3. <u>Adaptation of a standard Questionnaire</u> on Capacity Outputs and Outcomes and the related causality links. The standard questions of the Questionnaire need to be adapted to the context and specific indicators need to be introduced to orientate the interviewees, although the identification of the changes should be left relatively free (MSC technique).

4. <u>Information and motivation of the counterpart</u>. Some introductory meetings with key members of the institution(s) involved should be organised at the highest level, to inform on the assessment method, reassure on the restitution of the results, establish a collaborative framework, possibly test the questionnaire.

5. <u>Administration of the Questionnaire</u>. The interviewees should be selected among experienced and knowledgeable staff of the institution(s) involved, including stakeholders and partners, with the addition of a few informed persons. The interviews should be limited in number (between 8 and 12 per interviewer).

The RAC components: the validation

Once the Questionnaires have been completed, the consultants will process them to present the results of the interviews in a validation workshop, that may take different forms according to the context:

6. <u>Validation and restitution of the results</u>.

- ◘ This final step should be done through a <u>workshop</u>, which may involve the interviewees and other stakeholders which have been involved in the assessment (EUD, other representatives of the institution(s) and their partners).

- ◘ The workshop should submit to the participants and possibly validate:

  a. the Capacity <u>outputs and outcomes</u> identified during the interviews; and

  b. the <u>causality links</u> hypothesised, including possible discrepancies and differences.

The method of the interviews and the form of the workshop depend very much upon the motivation and the availability of the participants. In the case of Bolivia, a coaching approach has been tested successfully, facilitating groups, or couples of participants to help each other. In other cases, the interviews have been limited to the essential replies and the workshop has been limited to a commented restitution.

RAC execution: inputs and time

The RAC has shown to be a <u>quick and relatively effective tool, with a reduced burden of TA</u>.

Including most of the work on the Enabling Factors, which should be normally done on a recurrent base (by the EUDs and the ROM), each exercise has been done with the following inputs:

- <u>one international expert for 15 days</u> (this may be replaced by EUD staff and local experts, when people have been trained).

- <u>one local expert for about 30 days</u>

- <u>a total duration of two months</u> (mainly to organise the participation of the counterparts).

Further details will be provided in the presentation of the case studies.

Thank you