



Summary of Organizational Capacity Assessment Tools

NPI EXPAND applied several capacity assessment tools while working with local organization partners to understand their strengths and needs and to identify areas for capacity strengthening support. Primarily, the project used/adapted USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tool, the Organizational Performance Index (OPI), and relevant Technical Organizational Capacity Assessment (TOCA) Tools. In one instance, the project applied a rigorous relational capacity assessment using an Organizational Network Analysis Tool. NPI EXPAND developed several TOCA tools for technical areas in which our grantees worked, and appropriate tools were not already available. This included social marketing, social accountability, gender integration, and public health emergency mitigation and prevention. In developing these tools, the project selected the standards based on existing literature, best practices, and through consultations with subject matter experts.

Facilitating a capacity assessment is a key step in the process of providing capacity strengthening support to an organization. Given the significant investment in time and resources needed to facilitate and participate in an organizational capacity assessment, it is essential that the assessment be demand driven, that the tool is fit-for-purpose, and that the organization is prepared and motivated to own the results and drive the plan to use them for capacity strengthening. Participants tend to view the OCA process as tied to a specific project and see it as a means of obtaining external support. To counteract that tendency, NPI EXPAND made sure that leadership of the organization was involved from the start and was committed to the process; that we selected, tailored, or created the tools appropriately according to its purpose and alignment with the organization's current status, mission, and its ambitions; and that the participants determined the priority areas for improvement.

To further support ownership within local organizations, NPI EXPAND facilitated self-assessments, whereby an external facilitator leads the assessment process, but the organizational leadership and staff discuss and determine the ratings across the indicators in the assessment tool. This process promotes reflection around how the organization's capacity aligns with global norms and standards, and it can foster organizational learning, team building, and action planning. While doing so can introduce an element of subjectivity and some hesitancy to speak up in front of leadership, the purpose of the assessments under NPI EXPAND was to help our partners identify priorities and inform their capacity strengthening plans. Thus, the actual scores were less critical, as we did not plan to repeat the assessment and compare scores, rather, we tracked improvements toward performance objectives in line with USAID's CBLD-9 indicator. With one exception, we did not conduct assessments for the purpose of recommending if an organization was ready for direct funding (e.g., using the NUPAS tool), where scores are pivotal and inform donor decision making.

NPI EXPAND applied the following norms across partners and tools:

- The assessments were facilitated either in person or virtually; in person was highly preferred and as it likely leads to more nuanced findings and is more likely to establish strong relationships and trust for capacity strengthening.
- All assessments required facilitators who are knowledgeable in the technical or organizational systems functions being assessed so they can ask pertinent follow-up questions and review existing documentation with an informed sense of what needs to be improved. At the same time, facilitators need to be experienced with participatory techniques and consensus building. Thus, NPI EXPAND found that a pair of facilitators was ideal.
- While facilitators with the relevant technical expertise are important, subject matter experts need to be careful not to intimidate participants into accepting scores they don't agree with, which undermines ownership.

- Participants reviewed the criteria, discussed, and reached consensus on each score. Individual scoring was not done prior to the discussions.
- Where leaders and staff are together in a group consensus scoring process, depending on organizational context and preparation, this may lead to reduced staff voice or scoring may not represent staff opinion accurately. NPI EXPAND discussed this with leadership while orienting them toward the tool and the process.
- All assessment processes include both facilitated self-assessments and triangulation/verification against internal documentation and review of systems. Thus, NPI EXPAND requested and reviewed relevant documents from the organization prior to the assessment meetings. In many cases, additional documents were reviewed during the assessment meetings.

NPI EXPAND produced a report that summarized the scores into graphs, sorted the qualitative data into strengths and capacity needs, and included a prioritized list of capacity needs to use for preparing a capacity strengthening plan. Many other resources review and compare different capacity assessment tools and methods, including the following from USAID:

- <https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/guide-distinguishing-tools-used-local-capacity-strengthening>
- <https://www.usaid.gov/local-capacity-strengthening-policy/measurement>
- https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/USAID_NPI_PartnersLandscapeFieldGuide_FINAL.pdf
- <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-capacity-strengthening/bureau-global-health-lcs>

The table below is a brief crosswalk of the primary assessment tools that NPI EXPAND used, highlighting how the tools and process are differentiated and some relevant considerations. Follow the embedded links to the tools for more guidance.

Tool Title	Purpose	Capacity Areas/Domains	Scoring	Participants	Time and Resources	Considerations
<u>Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCA)</u> ¹	To identify an organization's strengths and needs across critical functional areas and to inform a capacity strengthening plan according to priorities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational governance 2. Strategic planning and management 3. Financial management 4. Human resource management 5. Administration and support functions 6. Programs and services 	<p>Each of the 6 capacity areas has 2-5 sub-capacity areas. Each sub-capacity area has a set of indicators that describe a standard for different levels of maturity. The indicators are weighted into three levels (1.0 low, 1.25 medium, and 1.5 high) depending on which criteria the participants think are most important.</p> <p>The participants discuss and score an indicator on a scale of 1 (lowest)-4 (highest). Further, the participants provide a written justification for the score.</p>	<p>The assessment group comprises representatives of the organization, including those who are responsible for and knowledgeable of the capacity areas being assessed.</p> <p>The team represented may shift from domain to domain, but core participants should be consistent across the domains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 3 days for physical meetings and 5 days for virtual meetings. • Hard or soft copies of the OCA tool • Pre-formatted MS Excel spreadsheet for data analysis 	<p>A facilitated self-assessment approach reduces assessment bias without compromising a sense of ownership by the participants. Scoring can be fairly subjective, even when the facilitator tries to adhere to standards. The OCA does not address technical capacity in programmatic areas and is often accompanied with a relevant TOCA. OCAs are often followed by an OPI to strengthen the links between internal investments in capacity and organizational performance (see below).</p>
<u>Social Marketing Technical Organizational Capacity</u>	To identify the technical capacity strengths and needs of an	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product quality and procurement 2. Marketing: 	Each SM sub-capacity area has a set of indicators that describe the optimal capacity in an organization. The indicators are weighted into	The assessment group comprises staff directly responsible for the social marketing program and services,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 days for physical meetings and site visits. 	<p>One facilitator must be a social marketing expert</p> <p>Requires more evidence to justify the scores.</p>

¹ Adapted from the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tool

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<u>Assessment (SM-TOCA)</u>	organization that uses social marketing approaches in delivering its health products and services to inform capacity strengthening interventions	i) General ii) Productivity iii) Price iv) Distribution v) Promotion 3. Finance 4. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	three levels (1.0 low, 1.25 medium, and 1.5 high) depending on which criteria the participants feel are most important. The participants discuss and score an indicator on a scale of 1 (lowest)-4 (highest). Further, the participants provide a written justification for the score.	including organization leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard or soft copies of the assessment tool. • Excel spreadsheet for data analysis. • Evidence of good marketing practices requires documentation of consumer and distribution research and proof of how it is being used by the organization. 	
<u>Social Accountability Technical Organizational Capacity Assessment (SA-TOCA)</u> (This tool was designed for use in primary healthcare, but it can be	To identify the technical capacity needs of an organization implementing social accountability programming to improve health service delivery to inform	1. Social accountability strategic focus 2. Social accountability planning 3. Issue identification and prioritization 4. Information and evidence for decision-making 5. Public engagement	Each SA sub-capacity area has a set of indicators that describe the optimal capacity in an organization. The indicators are weighted into three levels (1.0 low, 1.25 medium, and 1.5 high) depending on which criteria the participants feel is most important.	The assessment group comprises staff directly responsible for the social accountability program design and implementation and organization leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 days for physical meetings and site visits. • Hard or soft copies of the assessment tool. • Excel spreadsheet for data analysis. 	One facilitator must be a social accountability expert with experience in participatory assessments.

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adapted for other service areas.)	capacity strengthening interventions.	6. Community mobilization and coalition building 7. Advocacy and negotiation for change 8. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning	The participants discuss and score an indicator on a scale of 1 (lowest)-4 (highest). Further, the participants provide a written justification for the score. Requires rigor in triangulating the assessment score and info through review of documents, observing actual SA sessions.			
<u>Public Health Emergency Mitigation and Prevention TOCA</u>²	To identify organizations that can support the health system in the event of a public health emergency such as the outbreak of an infectious disease like COVID-19.	1. Organizational strategy 2. Data and Management Information System 3. PHE response activities. Each core capacity area has several sub-capacities.	The participants discuss and score an indicator on a scale of 1 (lowest)-4 (highest). Further, the participants provide a written justification for the score.	The assessment group/respondents should be staff involved in public health emergency response activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 4-6 hours • The tool is prepared on an appropriate virtual platform, such as MS Forms. 	The structure encourages an organization to be more strategic and organized in response to public health emergencies

² All of the public health emergency TOCAs were facilitated virtually.

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<u>Organizational Performance Index (OPI)</u> ³	Measures the overall performance of an organization in four different domains.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectiveness: Standards, Results 2. Efficiency: Service delivery, Reach 3. Relevance: Learning, Target Population 4. Sustainability: Resources, Social Capital 	<p>Each of the 4 domains has 2 sub-domains. Each sub-domain has a description of the expected performance across 4 levels: 1 (lowest)-4 (highest). Further, each performance level gives examples of evidence to support a decision to place an organization's performance at that level.</p> <p>During the assessment, the participants review all four levels of performance and the associated evidence and pick the level that best represents the situation in the organization.</p>	The assessment group comprises the organization's leadership and representatives of various departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 hours • Hard or soft copies of the OPI tool. • Pre-designed Excel spreadsheet for data analysis. 	<p>The OPI focuses on performance (outcome level results), which enables an organization to assess how it is progressing toward its mission, as they define it.</p> <p>The scope of the OPI is wider than what most capacity strengthening projects/initiatives address.</p> <p>Many organizations require more time (longer than most projects) to show improved performance that can be attributed to capacity strengthening efforts.</p>
<u>Organizational Gender Assessment Tool</u>	Identifies areas and activities that can (1) improve gender	<p>Internal Operations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance, Board policies and procedures 2. Human Resources 	This tool does not use numeric scoring for each area of gender integration. Participants simply discuss	The assessment group comprises the organization's leadership and representatives of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 hours, which can be broken into two sessions. 	If the participants are not familiar with concepts of gender equality and integration, some training may be necessary before conducting the assessment.

³ Adapted from Pact's Organizational Performance Index (OPI)

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	equality in the internal operations of the organization and (2) improve the organization's ability to integrate gender in its programmatic activities.	3. Financial Management 4. Strategic Planning 5. ICT Programmatic: 1. Gender Analysis 2. Gender Focal Persons 3. Gender in MEL 4. Budgeting 5. Partnerships 6. Advocacy	whether or not specific indicators or practices in support of gender integration are in place or not.	various departments, ensuring gender balance.		Gender can be a sensitive topic and participants may be reluctant to speak frankly.