



Study on Capacity, Change and Performance

Monitoring & Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development

Workshop report

Organised by ECDPM
Maastricht (The Netherlands),
1-3 March 2006

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May 2006

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Box 1: Monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development

M&E of capacity and capacity development - Summary of points raised in this report

1. Capacity and capacity development are different from other developmental objectives, and this has implications for how they can be monitored

- Capacity development is **both a means and an end** of development.
- It is a **non-linear process** that is unstable and changeable.
- Monitoring it means assessing **complex issues**.
- Monitoring of capacity and capacity development therefore need to be based on **good analysis** and **realistic expectations**.

2. What are we monitoring and why?

- We cannot concentrate on performance alone but need to monitor **all five dimensions of capacity** - (i) the willingness to act, (ii) the capability to generate results, (iii) the capability to relate, (iv) the capability to adapt and self-renew and (v) the capability to achieve coherence.
- This means assessing:
 - **Issues which often have little specificity or visibility**, such as legitimacy, operating space, relationships, volition, motivation and trust
 - **Long-term processes**
 - **Contextual factors** such as political governance and power
 - **Empowerment**
 - **Capacity at different levels**

3. How should we monitor capacity and capacity development?

The M&E of capacity and capacity development should:

- Assess **all five dimensions** of capacity together (they interrelate)
- Use **qualitative** as well as quantitative tools
- Use **long-term** indicators, and assess capacity and capacity development *at the right moments* (not make judgements too early)
- Use **common indicators** agreed between the development partner and the supporting organisation. This means reaching agreement on what needs to be monitored.
- Use a **manageable number of indicators** (avoid the decapacitating effect of too many indicators)
- Use **participatory** approaches
- Use and promote **national M&E systems** wherever possible
- Use **local accountability mechanisms** where they exist

4. What should M&E achieve?

- M&E should be **learning-friendly** and **promote positive change**. This requires more focus on M&E as tools for learning and guidance and a **greater acceptance of risk and failure** in capacity development (both are important for learning)
- M&E should develop (not impede) the **capacity of development partners**.
- M&E should serve both **endogenous** and **external accountability needs**.

The **M&E framework** resulting from the above should be **participatory and owned**. Given that capacity development activities are very different from each other, it should also be **flexible**. Rather than proposing a “one size fits all” straightjacket, development organisations should focus on providing guidance on developing the relevant indicators to allow partners to adapt the M&E framework to their needs.

Enabling factors for M&E of capacity

- Specificity
- Visibility

Complicating factors for M&E of capacity

- Complexity of CD
- Much of capacity about soft issues - difficult to assess
- Difficulty of establishing plausible links
- Need to monitor long-term processes

1 Introduction

This report discusses the workshop on *Monitoring & Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development*, which took place in Maastricht in March 2006. The workshop was organised by ECDPM in the context of the study on *Capacity, Change and Performance*, a research project which the chair of the Governance Network of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee asked ECDPM to undertake in 2002. The study aims to develop a better understanding of how capacity develops endogenously in organisations and systems, and includes 18 case studies and a number of theme papers. The issue of monitoring and evaluation of capacity emerged as a subject for a theme paper because of expressed concerns that many existing approaches to M&E do not adequately capture capacity and capacity development.

ECDPM organised this workshop to explore the issue of monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development and share experiences. Participants included developing country practitioners, staff from international development agencies, researchers and other interested individuals. The workshop's key questions were:

- ***Is there anything different about capacity issues that calls for a different approach to monitoring and evaluation? How does the nature of capacity shape the way we do M&E?***
- ***What are we monitoring and why?***
- ***To what degree can we use standard M&E techniques?***
- ***What approaches appear promising?***
- ***What could be done to refine or adapt these approaches for broader use?***

This report provides a summary of the main issues discussed during the workshop. It should be read in conjunction with the discussion paper on *Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development* by David Watson.¹

2 Why are we interested in the M&E of capacity?

At the beginning of the workshop, participants identified a number of issues and questions which were of particular interest to them regarding the monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development. These included the following points:

Background to the debate on capacity and capacity development

- With the new financial (and other) commitments taken by donors in 2005 **capacity development** is suddenly **high on the political agenda** of development agencies. There is an enormous pressure to show how the extra resources provided can be translated into development outcomes. Unless **performance and results** can be demonstrated the political and public support gained for development will evaporate. It is in this context - and given that not much time so far seems to have been spent on thinking about the M&E of capacity - that the question of how to monitor capacity and capacity development, and of what to assess therein, is so significant.

What is it that we are talking about? – Need for a common language

- Before we monitor capacity and capacity development, we have to be clear on what it is that we are trying to monitor. There is a **need for a common** (and understandable) **language** for what we mean by capacity and capacity development. This need arises not least because of the necessity to “to explain what we have been doing since the late 1960s”, as one participant phrased it.

¹Watson, D. 2006. *Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development*. Maastricht: ECDPM.

- If we understand capacity and capacity development to include to **'soft' (relational and political) issues** such as relationships, people, behaviour, power, control and ownership, we have to accept that these are things which are **complex to measure and assess**.
- Capacity and capacity development are also not easy to assess because of the difficulty of establishing **plausible links** between 'inputs'/contributing factors and outcomes (there is an attribution problem).

What needs to be taken into account in the M&E of capacity?

- Given the complexities of the issues involved, there is a need to **link research and practice** on capacity development, and to bridge the gap between **policy and programming** on the issue.
- There is a need for the **acceptance of a certain degree of risk** as being not only inevitable but desirable. Activities without any risk are not likely to be either new or innovative. The question is what degree of risk is appropriate, how to manage it and how to learn from failure.

Questions

- To what extent is **results-based management (RBM)** compatible with capacity development? Development agencies live under the pressure to deliver and show results quickly. How can they move away from this towards approaches focused on building longer term capacity?
- How can we **make M&E workable**, while avoiding the decapacitating effect of too many indicators which have to be measured?
- How can M&E be made the subject of those whose capacity is being developed? How to get to **domestic accountability** and away from the external accountability to donors? How can we learn from approaches that focus on endogenous/domestic accountability?
- How can we strengthen the **capacity of evaluators in partner countries**?

3 What is it that we are monitoring when we are monitoring capacity?

This chapter is based on the presentation of the draft paper '**Capacity - What is it?**' by Peter Morgan, a presentation by Paul Engel on **M&E of capacity – What is there to see?** and the subsequent discussion held during the workshop. More information on this topic can be found in the paper **The Concept of Capacity**² (which is a revised version of the paper 'Capacity - What is it?') and other reports which have come out of the study on Capacity, Change and Performance, such as the Interim Report³ and the forthcoming Final Report. More information on the study and all available publications can be found at www.ecdpm.org/dcc/capacitystudy.

Box 2: What is capacity?

The ECDPM study on Capacity, Change and Performance uses the following definition of capacity:

“Capacity is that emergent combination of attributes, assets, capabilities and relationships that enables a human system to perform, survive and self-renew.”⁴

This understanding of capacity is based on the analysis of **18 field studies** (which cover cases from the public and the non-governmental sectors, ranging from whole systems to one unit), the patterns which emerged in them and **wider research**, and is not prescriptive. As outlined in more detail elsewhere, the study looks at capacity from a participatory perspective. It looks at **capacity as a means and a development end in itself**, as an end that is relevant, resilient, legitimate and adaptive. For the sake of focus, the study concentrates on the nature of capacity and not on capacity development.

The study distinguishes **five core capabilities** which make up the broader capacity of an organisation or system:⁵

- The capability to **act and survive**
- The capability to **generate development results**
- The capability to **relate**
- The capability to **adapt and self-renew**
- The capability to **achieve coherence**

The study looks at capacity as a 'systems concept'. **Systems thinking** is helpful when trying to understand why capacity emerges and is sustained, to understand the nature of the process of emergence of capacity and the self-organisation that develops in human systems.⁶ The study also derives insights from **complexity theory**, such as how large scale complex systems develop or the seemingly disproportionate effect that small events can sometimes have on larger systems. Deriving operational implications out of these strands of thinking remains a challenge.

The study focuses on **capacity mainly at the organisational level**. It puts less emphasis capacity at a larger scale, such as at the inter-organisational, national, regional or global level.

² Morgan, P. 2006. *The concept of capacity – Draft version*.

³ Morgan, P., T. Land, H. Baser. 2005. Study on Capacity, Change and Performance – Interim report (ECDPM Discussion Paper, 59A). Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management.

⁴ Morgan, P. 2006. *Capacity – What is it?* Page 15.

⁵ The study initially distinguished three basic dimensions of capacity, namely

- the capability to generate development results
- the capability to achieve and maintain operating space and legitimacy, and
- the capability to self-renew and self-organise.

However, as a result of the discussions held during the workshop, the number of core capabilities which constitute broader capacity has now been revised to five. More information on the core capabilities/different dimensions of capacity can be found in the paper '*The concept of capacity*' by Peter Morgan, which will be distributed with this report and will be made available at www.ecdpm.org/dcc/capacitystudy.

⁶ The paper on systems thinking by Peter Morgan provides more information on systems thinking and its utility for understanding capacity and capacity development. See: Morgan, P. 2005. *The Idea and Practice of Systems Thinking and their Relevance for Capacity Development*. Mimeo.

As regards terminology, the study uses the following terms⁷:

- **Competencies** - the skills and abilities of individuals.
- **Capabilities** - a broad range of collective skills of organisations or systems which can be both 'hard' (e.g. policy analysis, marine resource assessment, financial resources management) and 'soft' (e.g. the ability to earn legitimacy, to adapt, to create meaning and identity). Capabilities can be understood as the building blocks of an organisation's overall capacity to perform.
- **Capacity** - the overall ability of a system to perform and sustain itself: the coherent combination of competencies and capabilities.

Source: Presentation by Peter Morgan and paper 'Capacity - What is it?'

3.1 The basic dimensions of capacity

Before the discussions at the workshop which revised the number of core capabilities which we see as constituting capacity to five, the ECDPM study distinguished three basic dimensions of capacity:⁸

- The capability to generate **development results**
- The capability to achieve and maintain **operating space and legitimacy**
- The capability to **self-renew and self-organise**.

The first dimension, the **capability to carry out tasks and achieve results**, including development **performance**,⁹ is the most widely used and understood way of thinking about capacity in international development practice. However, by itself this perspective is not enough to explain the nature of capacity, or why some organisations or systems appear to have capacity while others do not.

The second dimension of capacity, the capability to achieve and maintain **operating space and legitimacy**, refers to capacity as a **relational quality**, the dimension of capacity conferred on an organisation or system from the outside. It includes the ability of an organisation or system to **relate to its context, survive, gain legitimacy, protect and defend itself, establish relations, buffer itself from politics and take advantage of the political situation**. In the cases we looked at, the leaders of organisations spent a lot of time thinking about this aspect of capacity, particularly in environments which were not stable or in which access to resources was not guaranteed. The downside of this dimension of capacity is that it is not necessarily by itself connected to the capacity for performance. As an example, a modern government may manipulate images and symbols to gain legitimacy, without delivering or improving performance.

The third element of capacity refers to the capability of a system to **adapt and self-renew**. Complex human systems are constantly under pressure to change and adapt to change. This requires capabilities such as the capability for **learning**, for **response** and for **retaining the ability to perform while constantly changing** the things which need changing. The

⁷ Source: Morgan, P., A. Land, H. Baser. 2005. *Study on Capacity, Change and Performance - Interim report*. Maastricht: ECDPM.

⁸ As a result of the discussions during the workshop, the study now distinguishes five core capabilities which make up capacity, namely:

- The capability to act and survive
- The capability to generate development results
- The capability to relate
- The capability to adapt and self-renew
- The capability to achieve coherence.

More information on the core capabilities/different dimensions of capacity can be found in the revised chapter on 'What is capacity' by Peter Morgan, which will be distributed with this report and will be made available at www.ecdpm.org/dcc/capacitystudy.

⁹ The ECDPM framework on capacity distinguishes between results and performance. Performance is one result of capacity but there are also others, and we therefore try to avoid equating the two terms.

organisations in the ECDPM case studies which consciously thought about this dimension of capacity developed the capability for self-renewal, while some others concentrated mainly on performance.

The organisations which did best in the case studies had all the **different dimensions of capacity simultaneously**, and in a balance and order which seemed to work. The difficulty is that the **relationship** between the different dimensions of capacity is **not self-evident**. Results-focus and performance and the ability to adapt to change, for instance, or performance and the ability to gain legitimacy, do not always go hand in hand. In fact, the overarching emphasis on results and performance in much of the current development practice risks undermining capacity. In the case studies, successful organisations were those which somehow managed to develop a virtuous circle which combined the different capabilities in the right balance and through this achieved broader organisational capacity. In contrast, there were also cases of organisations which settled for 'satisfactory underperformance' or inadvertently destroyed their capacity or that of others.

Given the importance of dimensions such as response, adaptation and change in explaining why an organisation has capacity, we need to take into account the concept of **agency** or **volition**. For an organisation or system to self-organise and act, the actors within it have to want to do something.

The challenges in assessing capacity

The **capacity of successful organisations thus has many dimensions**, and is about more than the ability to produce performance. This has **implications for how capacity can/should be monitored and assessed**¹⁰. If we accept the multi-dimensional nature of capacity, this implies that measuring performance alone is not sufficient to tell us about the capacity of an organisation to survive and adapt to change.

To monitor capacity we have to think about what there is to see if development goes well, which means assessing many different issues. Given the complexity of the things we need to monitor when we want to assess capacity, the M&E of capacity therefore may be helped by a selective perception of reality and judgement, by '**optimum ignorance**' as Robert Chambers (IDS) terms it. It also requires the **views of diverse stakeholders** to complete the picture.

In the current aid context, with the emphasis on demonstrable development results, especially performance, the complexity of capacity therefore raises a number of questions regarding the monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development:

- How can monitoring and evaluation of capacity be made more meaningful?
- How can the risk of the narrow focus on performance undermining capacity be averted?
- How can we develop the capacity for learning?
- How can we make 'accountability' more learning-friendly?

Discussion

The discussion on the nature of capacity raised, inter alia, the following points:

- The **distinction between the different dimensions or capabilities of capacity is useful**, but the contradictions or distinctions between them should not be overemphasised.
- **Do donors focus too much on one element of capacity** - performance - to the detriment of the other two? The research indicates that while the pattern of donor interventions was mainly focused on the first dimension of capacity (the capability to generate development results), the situation regarding the other elements is more complex than may be assumed. In the ECDPM cases, some donors did work on fostering

¹⁰ While during the workshop terminology such as 'measurement' and 'measuring' capacity was used frequently, we prefer to use the term 'assessment', which has a more qualitative focus.

organisational learning (e.g. ESDU), and many capacity development interventions by donors were much less intrusive than might be thought, allowing systems to self-organise and emerge (e.g. ENACT). The cases also show that donors understood the 'time question' of 'what is a reasonable period for the emergence of an organisation/a system' much better than may be expected.

- A key question was the **order, sequencing or 'braiding'** of the basic dimensions of capacity to produce broader organisational capacity. The research indicates that as a rough sequence, the capability to produce **results and performance** tends to come first (people come together to produce some kind of value), followed by **legitimacy** (protecting the technical core that an organisation has built up) and then the **adaptive, soft capabilities** which allow an organisation to learn and to change. It also indicates that once actors/organisations become conscious of who they are and how they operate (i.e. have self-awareness, either from the beginning or developed over time), more proactive techniques of **braiding** the different basic elements of capacity together in the right balance are used.
- One participant suggested that the different dimensions of capacity reflect the **perspectives of different entities** in development cooperation. Whereas the capability to demonstrate development results and performance (e.g. progress towards the MDGs) is of interest to both the external intervener and the developing country organisation, the capability of that organisation to survive, and to adapt to change, may be seen to be of less interest to the donor. Indeed, some participants suggested that performance may be the only aspect of capacity which matters to donors. Most participants saw this as a too limited perspective, which however may be difficult to change in practice.

4 Monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development

4.1 Monitoring and evaluation of capacity: Research findings

This section is based on the presentation and paper by David Watson on '**Monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development**' and the subsequent exchange held at the workshop.

The paper is based on a review of the literature on M&E and a synthesis of the M&E of capacity development aspects of the ECDPM case studies. In particular, the paper draws on the following cases¹¹:

Public sector cases:

- Capacity Building for Decentralised Education Service Delivery in Pakistan
- Capacity Building for Decentralised Education Service Delivery in Ethiopia
- Developing Capacity for Participatory Development in the Context of Decentralisation (Indonesia)
- Developing Capacity for Tax Administrators: The Rwanda Revenue Authority
- Local Government Reform in the Philippines

Non-governmental sector cases:

- Organising for large-scale system change - The Environmental Action (ENACT) programme (Jamaica)
- COEP - Comitê de Entidades no Combate à Fome e pela Vida - Mobilising against hunger and for life: An analysis of capacity and change in a Brazilian network
- Resilience and high performance amidst conflict, epidemics and extreme poverty - The Lacor Hospital (Uganda)
- The growth of capacity in IUCN in Asia

The paper also reviews some innovative approaches used to M&E capacity and capacity development: ActionAid's Accountability Learning and Planning System (ALPS), Most Significant Change technique (MSC), and IDRC's Outcome Mapping.

M&E of capacity and capacity development in the literature and the ECDPM cases

The literature on M&E is broad, and mainly draws on the approaches of multilateral and bilateral donors on the one hand and the experience of NGOs on the other.

- Much of the literature stems from the concerns of **donors**, which often but not exclusively focus on **public sector** capacity development in developing countries.
- There is however also a growing body of literature emerging from **NGOs** and studies of independent organisations. This mainly concerns **organisational capacity development** as an **internally driven** process.

At the risk of oversimplification, the M&E approaches reviewed can be roughly divided into two broad schools, one based on **results based management** and the other based on **systems thinking and participatory approaches**. The first is prevalent in the donor community, while the second tends to be used more by NGOs than by donors, although there are also cases where development agencies use them. These categorisations are not mutually exclusive. Box 2 below contrasts both approaches.

¹¹ Full references for these cases can be found in the bibliography.

Box 3: Contrasting characteristics of how M&E is applied to capacity development

M&E of capacity development in the literature and the ECDPM cases	
Donor / Public Sector	NGOs /independent organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of RBM/ logical framework for design • Detailed CD plans • Numerous indicators become basis for M&E • Results of CD generally disappointing (some exceptions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shallow needs analysis in problematic, opaque public sector environments ○ RBM leads to short-term pressure? ○ Reporting burdensome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More systems-thinking oriented • CD based on broad goals • Emphasis on learning from experience (self-assessment; work-stories) • Informal but routine and integral M&E; it builds (analytical) capacities • 'Training' = practical on-the-job skills development • Generally more positive results in terms of CD
<p><i>Source: Presentation by David Watson</i></p>	

Based on the analysis and review of the literature and the cases, the paper on the M&E of capacity and capacity development draws the following conclusions:

- There are very few examples in the literature of monitoring capacity itself. **Monitoring of performance** is often adopted as a proxy from which conclusions are drawn on whether and what type of capacities are being developed.
- The **purpose of M&E is often unclear**. M&E often is an externally-driven activity which is undertaken reluctantly. There are few incentives for staff of development agencies to do it well, and there is little learning from M&E.
- Little concern is given to mechanisms of **'endogenous' accountability** (see 'accountability' below). This is problematic as, at least in the ECDPM cases, 'endogenous' accountability mechanisms appear to provide much stronger incentives for performance improvement and capacity building than monitoring largely for accountability to outside stakeholders.
- The **results of capacity development in the public sector are generally disappointing**. There are a number of causal factors which may explain this. These include:
 - Insufficient (or flawed) capacity needs analysis
 - The difficulties inherent in public sector environments
 - The prevalence of RBM/ logical framework approaches, which tend to stress short-term products and delivery. Such pressures are not conducive to sustainable capacity development which, as the ECDPM case studies illustrate, is a long-term process.
- The **heavy burden of (donor-driven) formal M&E systems** also may impede capacity development. The operation of such systems diverts resources from the primary mission of the organisations whose capacity is being supported.
- There are some positive examples where the **'formal' M&E of capacity development interventions** seems to be feasible and productive, including in the public sector. This however only seems to work in certain circumstances, where a number of preconditions are fulfilled:
 - The performance and capacities needed can be unambiguously and specifically defined - **specificity** - and where defining indicators is therefore relatively straightforward.
 - The **stakeholders** are able and willing to assess their own capacities and needs, acknowledge capacity gaps, 'sign up' to the intervention and agree to collaborate with

- the externally- resourced assistance
- **Incentives** to improve performance (e.g. demand pressure from clients and citizens)
- There is firm **leadership**
- The above conditions combine to produce **commitment, ownership and focus**.

The M&E of **public financial management** (PFM) is one example of public sector capacity development where clearly specified performance indicators helped to define capacity needs and to design appropriate support strategies and output indicators, which in turn helped M&E.

- However, from the literature it appears that the circumstances in which formal M&E systems can be used productively are rarely encountered or created in donor-supported capacity development interventions in the public sectors of partner countries. This is problematic as there also seem to be difficulties in using more informal approaches to M&E in public sector environments, for a number of reasons, including the complexity of the sector and the formal relations between donors and partner governments.
- While the M&E of donor supported capacity development interventions thus tends to be hampered by a number of weaknesses, the ECDPM cases nevertheless also showed evidence of flexible donor approaches, especially in the cases concerning NGOs. See Box 3 below for an overview constraints and enabling factors.

Box 4: Constraints and enabling factors for effective M&E of capacity development

Constraints to effective M&E by donors	Positive examples of donor approaches
<p>Use of project framework for planning and M&E of capacity development – rigid framework, narrow focus and insufficient needs analysis</p> <p>Domestic political pressures to prove results – constraint on emergence of long-term processes</p> <p>Constraints in aid agencies for M&E:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor staff incentives for improved M&E ○ Lack of institutional memory ○ Limited capacity for the M&E of capacity development <p>= Limited learning on how to improve capacity development</p> <p><i>Source: Presentation by David Watson</i></p>	<p>Long-term funding</p> <p>Minimal interference and no insistence on detailed planning</p> <p>Acceptance of recipients reporting routines and formats</p> <p>Trust in recipient to be a learner and not an expert</p> <p>Donor staff experience of recipients' work</p>

- Different organisations have different needs in terms of **accountability mechanisms** for capacity and capacity development:
 - Donors need to prove aid effectiveness to politicians and taxpayers
 - Recipient governments or organisations must account to their lenders/donors for the utilisation of resources. The paper labels this **exogenous accountability**.
 - Recipient governments or organisations also should be responsive to the needs of their clients, customers or members. The paper refers to this as **endogenous accountability**.

Exogenous accountability is predominant when the players of the development system look more outside the system than inside for performance demonstration/ accountability. It is often a feature of dependence on external resources and can undermine endogenous accountability.

“**Endogenous’ accountability** appears to be more important as an incentive to performance than performance monitoring largely for reporting to ‘exogenous’ stakeholders”.¹² It can be a strong motivator for performance improvement and capacity development.

Discussion

The discussion which followed the presentation raised the following points:

- We tend to link **monitoring and evaluation** but **are they distinct?** Monitoring of the extent to which an activity delivers the anticipated outputs is to be done by the relevant programme managers in development agencies and the country partners, while evaluation of the longer term impact tends to be carried out by a separate evaluation department.
 - (a) The literature on M&E does not tend to make any distinction between the two, and both monitoring and evaluation are seen as problematic. Whereas monitoring (while an activity takes place) may bring small adjustments, the bigger learning which would be expected from an evaluation does not take place. The clustering together of M&E may reflect a deeper lying problem - the **resistance to learning and change from both monitoring and evaluation**.
 - (b) The support for participatory development in the context of decentralisation in Takalar district in South Sulawesi province in Indonesia raises a related point. While the assisting donor agency (JICA) supported monitoring and carried out an ex post evaluation with positive results, the quality of participation had eroded when the research for the case study took place two years later. This raises the question of **when is the appropriate moment to carry out evaluations**, of how much time should be between monitoring and evaluation.
- The notion of **specificity** is very important. The positive examples of indicators for monitoring and evaluating capacity building in public finance management (PFM) indicate that the more specific an input, the easier it is to monitor. Are there any cases of effective monitoring and evaluation involving less specific objectives than the M&E of public finance management?
 - (a) The literature indicates that M&E of capacity development is not only easier when the desired results are more specific, but also when they are more **visible** (e.g. road building).
 - (b) The case of the devolved education system in Ethiopia shows how specificity was introduced into a non-specific sector through the setting up of citizens’ education monitoring committees and the use of a traditional system of performance assessment (the *gemgema* system, a 360 degree assessment of leaders by subordinates which was developed during the liberation movement).¹³
- The use of **too many indicators** for the monitoring of capacity development interventions turns monitoring into a **straight jacket** and undermines its usefulness. There should be more scope for use of relevant local parameters (e.g. the indicator should not be how many kilometres of roads have been built but whether local transport - which may not be by road - has improved).
- Is it useful to continue to accept the need for indicators linked to external rather than internal accountability? If the purpose of a capacity development intervention is to improve delivery and capacity it should be possible to come up with a **common framework of indicators for internal and external accountability**.
- If the focus of capacity development interventions and M&E is on results, the fact that

¹² Watson. 2006. Page 22.

¹³ See Watson, D., L. Yohannes. 2005. *Capacity building for decentralised education service delivery in Ethiopia*. (ECDPM Discussion Paper, 57H). Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management.

there are different dimensions to capacity should nevertheless be made explicit. While at one level results may be most important, they have to be generated by an organisation. The broader capacity of this organisation (which comprises its legitimacy and ability to adapt) should not be forgotten. Sustaining the legitimacy of an organisation is an important step (if not a precondition) towards achieving results. (This also came out of the Ethiopia case referred to above).

- The success in monitoring interventions aimed at strengthening PFM systems indicates that interventions can easily be assessed where **common benchmarks/indicators** are used. In contrast, assessing capacity and capacity development interventions becomes complex when the relevant players of the development system cannot agree on common standards (e.g. the role of parliaments in a political systems). This implies that development interveners and developing country organisations **need to be realistic about the goals and objectives** that can be achieved.

4.2 An initial mapping of approaches for monitoring capacity and capacity development

*This section is based on the **Initial mapping of approaches towards the M&E of capacity and capacity development**¹⁴ presented during the workshop. It should be read in conjunction with the document, which is available at www.ecdpm.org/mapping_capacity. The document is still in development and we hope to add to it after an exchange of ideas and experiences with other practitioners and researchers. The latest version of the document will be made available online.*

During the workshop ECDPM shared an initial mapping of 14 approaches that are being used by different organisations for their monitoring, evaluation and reporting on capacity/capacity development.

These include approaches that are based on results based managements (RBM), as well as approaches that emphasise a more participatory perspective. The former are being used mostly by bilateral and multilateral agencies, while the latter are more prominent in civil society organisations and NGOs.

The approaches are clustered into five different groups:

- A. Systems approaches (2)
- B. Approaches which focus on changes in behaviour (3)
- C. Performance-based approaches (2)
- D. Approaches which focus on strategic planning (4)
- E. Rights-based / Empowerment-based approaches (3)

These are discussed along the following four questions:

1. WHAT are they monitoring/evaluating?
2. WHOSE capacities are they monitoring/evaluating?
3. WHY are they monitoring/evaluating (purpose, use of results)?
4. HOW are they monitoring/evaluating? - Which methodologies, how are they collecting data (qualitative, quantitative)?

¹⁴ ECDPM. 2006. *Mapping of approaches towards M&E of capacity and capacity development* – draft.

5 Insights and implications

5.1 *Is there anything different about capacity issues that calls for a different approach to monitoring and evaluation? How does the nature of capacity shape the way we do M&E?*

5.1.1 Capacity development is different

As the discussion on the nature of capacity in Chapter 3 above and other points raised in this report indicate, capacity and capacity development are different from other developmental objectives and processes. This has implications for how they can be monitored.

- Unlike measuring progress towards other more specific, visible or quantifiable development objectives, monitoring capacity and capacity development involves **assessing an autonomous process which is not linear or stable but changes** (i.e., in systems thinking terminology, has an emergent character).
- Capacity development is also different from many other development objectives in that it is both a part of the result we are trying to achieve and a part of the performance. It is **both a means for development and a development end**.
- For development organisations supporting capacity development, the time perspective is very important: There is a **conflict between the short- and long-term perspectives**, between the pressure for short-term results and the objective of long-term capacity development. Reconciling this is a major challenge.¹⁵
- Capacity development requires making a distinction between individual organisations and institutions. While the sustainability of an individual organisation which wastes resources and does not perform (e.g. a water company) may be unwarranted, the existence and survival of the institution (the ability to deliver water – the wider system) may be crucial. As organisations usually are the entry points for capacity development, the challenge for development agencies is to gain an **understanding of the wider systems in which organisations operate**.

5.1.2 What does this mean for how we assess capacity and capacity development?

- Many participants at the workshop felt that **monitoring and evaluation** of capacity and capacity development is **complex**. Various techniques are being used in different situations, but there is not yet a convincing M&E tool for capacity and capacity development.
- Others argued that, while capacity and capacity development are complex, their **monitoring and evaluation do not have to be complex**. Assessing capacity and capacity development means monitoring issues such operating space, legitimacy, adaptability etc., but once we are conscious of this need capacity and capacity development can be assessed.
- It may also be possible to assess **the building blocks of capacity**. Some of these are not difficult to monitor (e.g. school enrolment), while others may be more complex. If we try to be as comprehensive as possible in this and measure those building blocks for

¹⁵ One answer to dealing with the pressure for short term results, at least in the past, was the setting up of Project Implementation Units (PIUs), but these have now become less 'popular'. The criticisms of PIUs often neglect that there are many different kinds (on a continuum from remote to part of a ministry), and there is a need for a more nuanced view and better understanding of PIUs. For more information please see UNDP. 2003. *The PIU Dilemma: how to address Project Implementation Units - A Practice Note*. Mimeo.

which we can establish plausible links to capacity development, we have at least a proxy for an M&E system of capacity.

- The challenge is to **define clearly what it is that we are trying to assess** when monitoring capacity (see section 5.2 – What are we monitoring and why?), and on that basis attempt to develop an integrated and long-term vision of how to use the instruments available for the M and E of capacity and capacity development.
- Learning from experience and adaptation are important contributors to the overall capacity of an organisation or a system. It is therefore important that the **M&E of capacity and capacity development** serve as **tools for learning**.

5.1.3 Why do we have difficulty in monitoring capacity and capacity development?

- The difficulty in assessing capacity development in part stems from the misguided idea that **M&E** has to be **cheap, fast and performance-oriented**. This conflicts with the nature of capacity and capacity development, which as we indicate above has many different dimensions and is the outcome of long-term developments rather than short-term inputs.
- It is also a reflection of the fact that the **political economy of the aid system is very difficult to manage**. There are many groups with different agendas in it, and the system often is more geared to political things than development per se. Monitoring and evaluation therefore are often not providing the information required.
- The **incentives in the monitoring and evaluation systems** used in development cooperation are skewed. Unlike the relationships created in a business where there are owners and clients, **development cooperation involves a third party**. This third party, the technicians and managers of the aid system (the donors and, to some extent, the bureaucratic elites in partner governments) spend the business' money, while the clients in whose name development cooperation is provided are not involved. Monitoring and evaluation in the aid system thus is not related to what the customers/clients want or need, but based on the needs of this third party. It is carried out mostly for the purposes of the funding agencies, with the needs of the development partners being of secondary concern, if considered at all.

5.2 What are we monitoring and why?

Monitoring capacity and capacity development involves assessing dimensions which often have **little specificity or visibility** and do not lend themselves to standard, quantitative approaches to M&E. They are also often **political** rather than technical and depend on the **quality of the relationships** established by the actor/organisation trying to develop its capacity with the wider system in which it operates.

If we accept that 'capacity' is the fortuitous outcome of the combination of the five core capabilities cited above - the willingness to act, performance, the capability to relate, adaptability and coherence - then monitoring and evaluating 'capacity' and 'capacity development' entails assessing more than just **performance**.

- It means assessing issues such as **legitimacy, operating space, relationships or volition**, and soft capacities such as **trust, motivation or confidence**.
- It means monitoring **long-term processes** rather than short-term developments.
- It also means assessing contextual factors such as **political governance** - authority, accountability, responsiveness and legitimacy - and **power** issues.
- If we see the purpose of capacity development to be to empower people, organisations or

countries, then a precondition for any capacity development activity is to **establish whose capacity is being developed for what**. By extension, it also means that the M&E of capacity and capacity development has to attempt to assess **empowerment**.

- Capacity exists or is developed **at different levels** (the individual, organisational and the systemic level – e.g. state capacity). The M&E of capacity and capacity development needs to reflect this.

The challenge is to develop indicators and M&E tools which adequately reflect these different issues and dimensions.

5.2.1 Capacity and performance

- Some participants felt that for reasons of **political credibility and legitimacy** their organisations have to focus on capacity as performance. The outputs of performance can usually be quantified and are therefore more easily measured than the other dimensions of capacity (the willingness to act, legitimacy, adaptability and coherence).
- It was also suggested that some of the other dimensions of capacity could be subsumed under performance and therefore not lost in an assessment system. The capacity of an organisation to renew, for instance, can be seen as an indicator of performance.
- However, most participants felt that it is not an option to simply focus on performance. All dimensions are integral to capacity, and concentration on performance alone cannot explain, for instance, why the MDGs are being achieved in Asia but not in Africa. It is precisely the understanding of capacity as multi-dimensional, as being about more than just performance, which gives us the ability to understand why it develops in one situation and not in another. **Performance is the reflection of other capacity dimensions** (e.g. adaptability), which the focus on performance indicators alone does not capture adequately.
- A related issue is **who defines performance** in development cooperation. If we accept that we have to show performance to the ‘rulers’ of the aid system (the politicians), we need to look at whom performance is to serve. Are we trying to serve the rulers or provide services for the people?

Will the overwhelming focus of donors on performance undermine state capacity?

There is a **risk that the extra development funds provided do not scale up capacity but even undermine it**, for instance by creating parallel structures. The dilemma is that while state building and capacity development take a long time, the political window of opportunity is very narrow. The ‘aid tsunami’ (as one participant termed it during the workshop) leaves donors little time to think about capacity, as they have to focus on how to disburse, for instance through global funds and budget support.

Development agencies/donors therefore need to focus both on short term performance and long term capacity development. For political purposes they need to show quick and visible results. However, at the same time they need to ensure that quick disbursement mechanisms such as the global funds either build local capacity or at least not undermine it, and put money directly into local systems to **build local capacity**. This is a major challenge.

A related challenge for development organisations is to develop **domestic demand for services and accountability**, and to build **incentives for governments to provide services**. One major incentive and building block is transparency.

Development agencies therefore need to

- ...channel funds through ‘quick disbursement mechanisms’ such as the global funds and budget support (which go to governments)
- ...provide funds to the local level, such as funding for social safety nets, budgets to

schools, civil society, etc.

- ...improve transparency to stimulate domestic accountability.

Box 5: Building blocks for an aid system which fosters local capacity

- Transparency to provide incentives for governments to provide services
- Funding directly to schools, local governments, civil society etc. to spark capacity development from the bottom up, create domestic demand for services and domestic accountability.
- Combining endogenous and exogenous accountability

The question is whether an aid system which maintains the same structure as the current system but aims to do things in a better way is good enough, or whether a major reform of the international aid system is needed [the reality of this happening is very slim].

5.3 How should we monitor capacity and capacity development?

Monitoring the different elements of capacity requires different approaches. Performance can often be assessed using **quantitative** measures, but assessing the other dimensions of capacity such as the capability to act and to adapt requires more **qualitative** tools and indicators.

While the different dimensions of capacity need to be assessed differently, they should not be assessed separately or only in part, one to the exclusion of another. The five core capabilities interrelate, and the connections between them should form an important element of any assessment approach. Given the current focus on performance and the pressure to show results, this **need to assess all five dimensions of capacity should be made explicit**.

We should not fall for the fallacy that we can assess capacity development in the short term. Assessing capacity development requires the use of **long-term indicators**, and means monitoring those changes in capacity for which we can establish plausible links.

5.3.1 To what degree can we use standard M&E techniques?

- As Chapter 4 indicates, many of the usual M&E techniques, especially those in use in bilateral and multilateral development agencies, focus on monitoring performance and leave aside other aspects of capacity. Their suitability for monitoring capacity in its multiple dimensions therefore appears limited, especially if we take into account the heavy operational cost of many such techniques (which may in fact impede capacity development).
- This being said, there may be limited scope for the use of standard M&E techniques on particularly **quantifiable and specific capacity outcomes** (e.g. the strengthening of PFM systems), at the **project level** or for monitoring the **performance** element of capacity.
- There may also be room to *adapt* approaches such as results-based management and formulate more qualitative objectives

5.3.2 What approaches appear promising?

- In contrast to standard M&E techniques, some of the more **participatory approaches** appear more promising for assessing capacity and capacity development and going beyond performance measurement. Approaches such as *Outcome Mapping* and the technique of *evaluative thinking* were mentioned during the workshop but, as the initial

mapping of some 14 M&E approaches (see Chapter 4) indicates, there may be many more. These participatory approaches are presently used more in the NGO sector and in small development organisations like IDRC than in the larger multi- and bilateral development organisations.

- There is also potential in some **endogenous accountability systems** such as the *gemgema* system used in Ethiopia. They could democratise the negotiations on capacity development by involving the people for whom services are being provided beyond the usual elites - the donors and government officials. In the ECDPM cases, endogenous accountability was a stronger incentive for performance and capacity development than accountability to external partners (exogenous accountability). The **use of endogenous accountability may not only improve monitoring but also build capacity**.
- Given the importance of ownership, commitment, volition and participation in any capacity development process, it is important to **develop and strengthen national systems of monitoring**. National systems are likely to be more suited to collecting the type of information required by local development partners for their capacity development than systems introduced by external development agencies. The case of the Philippines Local Government Programme (see Annex 1) shows that putting enhanced trust in the country partnership can increase local capacity and ownership.
- In any approach to the monitoring and evaluation of capacity, the **participation** of stakeholders can be one way of **ensuring that M&E is value-adding to capacity development** rather than taking away resources.

5.3.3 What could be done to refine or adapt these approaches for broader use?

- There is potential to apply approaches such as Outcome Mapping, which have so far mainly been used in the non-government domain, in the public sector/governmental domain, but this needs to be thought through.

5.4 Next steps - What can we build on for the future?

5.4.1 Change of approach to M&E and capacity development

- **Moving towards M&E as tools for learning and guidance rather than control:** The impending 'aid tsunami' can only be absorbed effectively and contribute to capacity development if organisations learn from their experience. This implies that M&E systems must move beyond the present focus on responding almost solely to the accountability needs of funding agencies and incorporate better the needs of development partners, especially for learning and guidance. There is also a need to refocus M&E on issues which are more relevant for them.
- The **burden of conventional donor M&E systems** on partners (which can reduce capacity rather than serving to build it) needs to be more explicitly addressed.
- An increased focus on learning also implies the **acceptance of risk and failure**. The current aid system provides little space for taking risks and is often unforgiving of failure, both of which are important for learning.
- There is also a need for more inclusion in the debates on M&E and capacity and capacity development of **voices from the South, members of civil society and development practitioners**. (The INTRAC workshop on capacity building for civil society in December 2006 will provide one forum for exchange.) There is a real risk that, given the pressures of the impending 'aid tsunami' and the pressure for performance, governments will be seen as the sole vehicles for development, with negative consequences for the capacity of civil society.

- To achieve an improved M&E system for capacity and capacity development, we need to think about the **incentives** which need to be put in place **for doing M&E better**.

5.4.2 Implications/ next steps for researchers

- There is a need for a broader view and **more analysis of the tools available** for the M&E of capacity, especially those which go beyond simply measuring performance. As one step in this process, ECDPM will initiate a discussion on the mapping of approaches shared during the workshop (which is available at www.ecdpm.org/mapping_capacity).
- There is a need to **develop an integrated vision on how the different instruments can be used for assessing capacity and capacity development**. ECDPM will have a chapter on the monitoring and evaluation of capacity in the final report of the study on *Capacity, Change and Performance*, but further work on this issue will be required.
- There is also a need to **provide better and more accessible evidence** (in particular to the funders of the aid system) that **capacity development is both a means and an end of development**. Documenting positive and negative experiences could be one way of doing this. The ECDPM case studies for the study on *Capacity, Change and Performance* are a starting point, but there may be a need for more accessible materials.
- It would also be useful to **codify the experience of 'aid tsunamis' in the past**. This could serve to remind the development system of past mistakes, and promote the learning of lessons and positive change.

5.4.3 Implications/ next steps for donors

To move forward on the issue of M&E of capacity and capacity development, responses are needed at two levels:

- Can we draw up a **framework of questions** which covers the major issues/dimensions that should be addressed in any exercise aimed at monitoring capacity and capacity development? Such a framework should be simple and short enough (e.g. 15 questions) to be communicated to a wider audience (practitioners and policy-makers). The system used for M&E in public finance management could serve as an example.¹⁶
- Can we put together a more concrete inventory of tools for the M&E of capacity and capacity development - **a toolbox**?

¹⁶ See Watson, D. 2005. *Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development*. Page 4.

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All presentations and other workshop related materials are available at www.ecdpm.org/DCC/capacity (go to Policy Dialogue/Workshops/Calendar and then the Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation)

More information on the study on *Capacity, Change and Performance* and the publications in its context can be found on the same site (www.ecdpm.org/DCC/capacity) and at www.capacity.org.

Annex 1: Approaches to capacity development in different organisations

A. *The M&E of the capacity and performance of local governments in the Philippines*

*This annex is based on the presentation of capacity development and performance improvement in the area of local governance in the Philippines by Evelyn Jiz. Capacity building for local governments was supported by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Program (LGSP). Further information on this case can be found in the paper on **The Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Program** by Alix Yule and Agriteam Canada Consulting.¹⁷*

Context: The CIDA-supported Local Government Support Program (LGSP) is one of the most extensive local government programmes in the Philippines¹⁸. The programme grew out of the reforms which followed the 'People Power' movement and the restoration of democracy, including the enactment of the Local Government Code (1991).

Goals/objectives: LGSP aims to support poverty reduction and operationalise decentralisation in the Philippines through strengthening four clusters of capacities that appear to be critical for local governance performance: (i) local government management, (ii) service delivery, (iii) resource generation and management and (iv) participation and accountability.

Coverage: LGSP covers 205 local government units (LGUs), and changed their role from 'post office'-function (to central government) to that of provider of basic services in health, agriculture, social services and disaster management.

Evolution of the programme: The programme was implemented in two phases: Phase I from 1991 to 1999, and Phase II from 2000 to 2006. An extension to Phase II runs from 2005 to 2009.

The capacity development process: LGU capacity development and organisational change and adaptation took place in a four-stage process. This consisted of (1) consensus building, (2) capacity strengthening, (3) application and (4) institutionalisation.

In each of the four areas selected for capacity strengthening mentioned above, personnel and organisational capacities were identified and indicators selected to measure the level of capacity within each LGU as well as performance.

The Performance Information System (PIS): To measure changes in the level of capacity and performance of LGUs, LGSP - with the participation of stakeholders - developed a Performance Information System consisting of 49 output indicators. LGSP staff feel that while the development of the indicators together with local government representatives was a time-consuming task which took a year, the PIS made planning, monitoring, assessment and reporting on the capacity and performance changes of LGUs much easier.

The PIS is used as a tool for priority setting and planning:

- to understand capacity, needs, priorities and targets
- to allocate resources appropriately and effectively
- to measure and understand performance
- as a learning tool
- to promote replication and sustainability.

¹⁷ Agriteam Canada Consulting Ltd. 2006. *The Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Programme – A case study of local government capacity development in the Philippines.*

¹⁸ A number of other initiatives are/were funded by other donors, including Australia, Germany, the United States, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNDP. See: Agriteam Canada Consulting Ltd, p. 4.

The benefits of the PIS include that partners and the LGSP get the information they need, and that the participatory nature of the development and running of the system increases local M&E skills and commitment to the implementation of the recommendations.

The Local Government Performance Monitoring System (LGPMS): On the basis of the positive experience with the PIS and out of the different performance indicator systems in use the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), with LGSP and ADB assistance, developed a Local Government Performance Monitoring System in 2003. This was field tested in over 100 LGUs in 2004 and is being rolled out nationally in 2005 and 2006.

The rationale for the LGPMS is to have a common platform for assessing LGU capacity, performance, productivity and development conditions. Its purpose is to promote a culture of performance, provide benchmarks for LGU performance and provide insights for strategic policy reform and capacity development.

LGPMS measures LGU input and outputs in five performance areas: governance, administration, social services, economic development and environmental management. It uses 107 main indicators (reduced from some 600 in use previously).

LGPMS is primarily used as a tool for LGU self-assessment. It forms part of an LGU management information system which provides data to LGU managers. There is reflection on whether LGPMS should be used as a tool for resource allocation to LGUs, but this may risk undermining the integrity of the system as a self-assessment and learning tool.

The lessons learned from the Local Government Performance Monitoring System include that:

- Building and sustaining a culture of performance management takes **time**
- **Ownership** is crucial
- **Participation** is critical in building ownership.

Box 6: The M&E systems used to assess local governance in the Philippines

Performance Information System (PIS): a programming and M&E tool of the LGSP used for planning, monitoring and reporting to donors.

Local Government Performance Monitoring System (LGPMS): a nation-wide local government self-assessment tool for management and development.

- The PIS is an example of the **participatory development of an M&E system** and high ownership and commitment
- The LGPMS reflects the transition from a national government rating system to **self-assessment** at the local level
- Both faced the challenge of developing a **manageable set of indicators** – this takes time and resources.
- **Enabling factors** for local government capacity building in the Philippines were the demand for services and a vibrant civil society

Source: Presentation by Evelyn Jiz¹⁹

¹⁹ Presentation by Evelyn Jiz, National Programme Coordinator, Local Government Support Programme Philippines-Canada

B. IDRC's approach to capacity development – Focus on the individual and soft capacities

Capacity development (CD) is one of the two strategic goals of IDRC. The organisation started a study on the conceptual issues surrounding capacity, capacity development and enhancement around one year ago.

IDRC has **no corporate definition of capacity**. This serves the organisation well on the one hand, but on the other means that it has no way of classifying what it is doing (Some 75% of IDRC's activities are thought to deal extensively with capacity development, while only 25% are reported as such). This is difficult for IDRC's corporate reporting (which is based on a utilisation approach, not RBM) and learning. IDRC has no systematic way to ensure learning about CD within the organisation - learning is often silent.

IDRC's approach to capacity development can be summarised as follows:

- a. *Whose capacity is IDRC developing?* IDRC focuses on the **individual**. It uses a trickle-up approach, aimed at building multipliers. This works for IDRC as a small organisation, but may not work for donors.
- b. *What capacities is IDRC developing?* IDRC focuses on developing **soft capacities** such as motivation, confidence, trust and relationships, but also supports the development of hard capacities such as research.
- c. *How are they developed?* IDRC tries to develop the capacity of its partners and partners' partners through a **mix of activities** – a hands-on approach supported by training. It places great emphasis on the dialogue and relationships it has with its partners.
- d. *Factors which have contributed to CD successes:*
 - o Flexibility of funding arrangements – ability to shift budgets.
 - o Face-to-face interventions – constantly building relationships with people
 - o Building of social relationships – long term relationship/ partnership between Programme Officers and recipients
 - o Regional presence - regional offices
 - o History of and experience in supporting networks
 - o Mutual learning – shared learning from long-term relationships
 - o Long-term approach - few one-off trainings
 - o IDRC's location within government system – does not have to report like government agencies

Monitoring and evaluation of capacity development at IDRC

- IDRC supports the idea of **evaluative thinking** – a feedback process built in right from the beginning of an intervention.
- IDRC also increasingly uses the technique of **Outcome Mapping** to discuss behavioural change, which a lot of capacity development is about. This works well at the project level, and IDRC may gradually also use it at the programme or system level.

C. DFID's approach to capacity development – Focus on state capacity and political governance

Within DFID there is no interest in definitions of capacity, but much interest in performance. It is accepted as a given that there is no simple solution to capacity development. CD is seen as technically complex, politically risky and organisationally challenging.

Capacity development so far is focused on the organisational level. However, DFID is now turning its attention from the organisational to the state level, to **building effective states**. (What is the capacity of the state to deliver? - Absorb aid? Scale up? Make sure that programmes are rolled out?) This interest in state capacity and political governance is the legacy of the political and financial commitments made in 2005.

Political governance is understood to cover three broad areas:

1. Civil liberties / human rights;
2. The nature of the political regime/ political responsibility and accountability;
3. State institutions - state capacity, administrative performance.

Most of DFID's work in the third area has been on developing the capacity of individual organisations. Because of government priorities DFID now has to look at state capacity – the formal and informal institutions in the three areas and the interaction between them.

State building is about the **social contract** – the political settlement between the governed and the governors (Charles Tilly, Mick Moore). The social contract has to be developed. This normally happens through governments raising resources from the citizens (taxes, government bonds) in return for providing services. The problem in many Sub-Saharan African countries, for instance, is that governments depend on rents from natural resources (rather than on income from their citizens) which means they are largely able to ignore the needs of the citizens. To what extent are donors responsible for this given the large amounts of aid they provide?

What makes political governance good?

- **Authority**
- **Accountability**
- **Responsiveness**
- **Legitimacy**

External interventions in support of political governance need to decide what organisation and institutions to support and when. Merilee Grindle's work on "*Good Enough Governance Revisited*" (2005) argues that the nature of the support should vary according to the nature of the state.²⁰ (A country like DRC after the civil war, for example, needs authority more than responsiveness, while a country like Tanzania, where there is a social contract, needs accountability and responsiveness.) **Donors** therefore need to become much **more sophisticated and nuanced** in their governance programmes. As state building is about compromise, negotiation and dialogue (rather than events, organisations and constitutions) donors also need to be extremely modest in their expectations.

What needs to be monitored?

Monitoring and evaluation not only need to assess outputs and outcomes, but also the processes involved in building state capacity and effectiveness. They should not look at events but at long-term processes, to avoid short-term knee-jerk reactions. This raises the question of what should/could be the indicators for **monitoring long-term processes** (such as the ARAL trajectory - from Authority to Accountability and Responsiveness to Legitimacy).

Discussion

The discussion which followed the presentation by DFID raised the following points:

- Two themes emerge out of the DFID presentation – the theme of large programmes delivered at the level of the state [the idea of changing the state is breathtaking] versus an approach that emphasises modesty and customisation. This is a real issue the organisation is facing, given the financial resources which DFID will need to spend with a comparatively small number of staff in

²⁰ Grindle, M. 2005. *Good Enough Governance Revisited*.

comparison to other agencies with large budgets (e.g. the World Bank).

- It is important to consider **whose capacity we are developing for what?** State building develops the capacity of the governors for government, but ignores the capacity of the governed.
- *What is our understanding of the role of external agents/ donors in capacity development?*
 - (i) In contrast to the past focus on capacity development through *technical* assistance, our understanding has changed and there is recognition that the issue of **capacity development is political**.
 - (ii) What has not yet changed is the understanding that whatever the inputs, **capacity development is about dialogue and relationships, and M&E therefore needs indicators to capture these relations**. Finding indicators for capacity at the state level is frightening, given the difficulties we have with finding appropriate indicators for organisational capacity.
- The **social contract** on which the state is built **needs to be negotiated at the country level**. Donors can only:
 - (i) protect the **space** for this to happen, and
 - (ii) provide **stepping stones** such as infrastructure and communication.

D. The experience of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

The African Capacity Building Foundation, based in Harare, Zimbabwe, is an independent capacity-building institution established in February 1991. It is a membership organisation in which multilateral institutions, African governments and bilateral donors come together.

ACBF is interested in the M&E of capacity because...

- ... it has gathered a lot of experience in the design and implementation of CD interventions in its 15 years of existence but now needs more mechanisms for assessing the results of these interventions.
- ...the organisation is under pressure from its shareholders to show results. Between 1995 and 2005, seven major external evaluations of ACBF were carried out.

ACBF therefore **needs a credible M&E framework**, approved by its shareholders and stakeholders, which could reduce the frequency of external evaluations.

ACBF seeks to **track the impact of its CD interventions at three levels**:

- (a) At the level of the *broader enabling environment/broader policy level* - This involves tracking changes in the system (e.g. the role of parliament in PFM, or the role of civil society).
- (b) At the level of the *organisation* – Tracking changes in the capacity of an organisation - the enhancement of the legitimacy of an organisation, its capacity to sustain itself and to self-renew.
- (c) At the level of the *individual* – e.g. the challenge of capacity retention.

ACBF's perspective on the M&E of capacity and capacity development:

- ACBF aims to develop a **Performance Measurement Framework** focused on measuring the development results of its CD interventions as well as changes in capacity. This is based on the outcome of an international workshop on Performance Measurement in Capacity Building in 2004, which concluded that results-based approaches to the M&E of capacity development "must be balanced between development outcomes and capacity building processes". The workshop also concluded that "Performance Measurement Framework should be participatory and owned by the beneficiary institutions".²¹
- ACBF would also like to be in a position to assess its own performance in supporting capacity building in Africa.

To develop such a framework, ACBF is in the process of collecting information on what works and what does not through monitoring activities and regular **feedback and knowledge sharing** with clients/grantees, as well as **benchmarking missions** to partner institutions. On the basis of this information, it aims to prepare a results-oriented Performance Measurement Framework with Guidelines for preparing performance indicators for core public sectors and non state actors' interventions. (Given that ACBF supports capacity building interventions in six different areas it is not feasible to use the same standard indicators for all of them. The guidelines aim to give guidance to partners on developing their own relevant indicators.) A draft for discussion is expected for March 2007, for submission to the Board of Governors in June 2007.

Box 7: Challenges in the design of capacity development interventions – ACBF's perspective

- **Tracking changes at the three levels of capacity:** combination and sequencing has to be contextual, and expected outcomes are not always quantifiable at the design stage
- **Clear identification of drivers of change and promotion of endogenous accountability:** institutions and individuals
- **Agreement on key objectives and major processes** to be monitored and evaluated
- **Long-term commitment** to CD and social transformation where there is commitment to standards of accountability and participatory development
- Acceptance of **collective accountability** as a way of dealing with the problem of attribution of results

Source: Presentation by Apollinaire Ndurukwigira

²¹ Presentation by Apollinaire Ndurukwigira, Program Team Leader, African Capacity Building Foundation

E. INTRAC's approach to capacity development – Focus on civil society

INTRAC supports capacity development activities in **civil society** and other organisations through consultancy services and training (reactive) as well as research, publications and linking up with partners (proactive).

It sees capacity development as an elemental part of any development process which has to **empower people** (given that development can not be done for them).

Capacity development is about **people, relationships and changing behaviour** - which are all unpredictable. Establishing dialogue, long-term relationships and trust therefore is a precondition for successful capacity development.

The key in any capacity building activity is to **establish whose capacity is being developed for what**. CB initiatives also have to take into account **power** issues (power to do something and power over another) and the **contextual factors** which may influence an intervention. **Expectations** should be **realistic**

It is important to define **what is meant by 'accountability'** in capacity development initiatives. The prominent role of large Western consultancy firms in Africa, for example, can be explained by the fact that they can meet donors' accounting criteria rather than their capacity development credentials and needs. There should be **mutual accountability** – not only should development partners be accountable to donors but donors should also be accountable to partners.

INTRAC's perspective on monitoring and evaluation

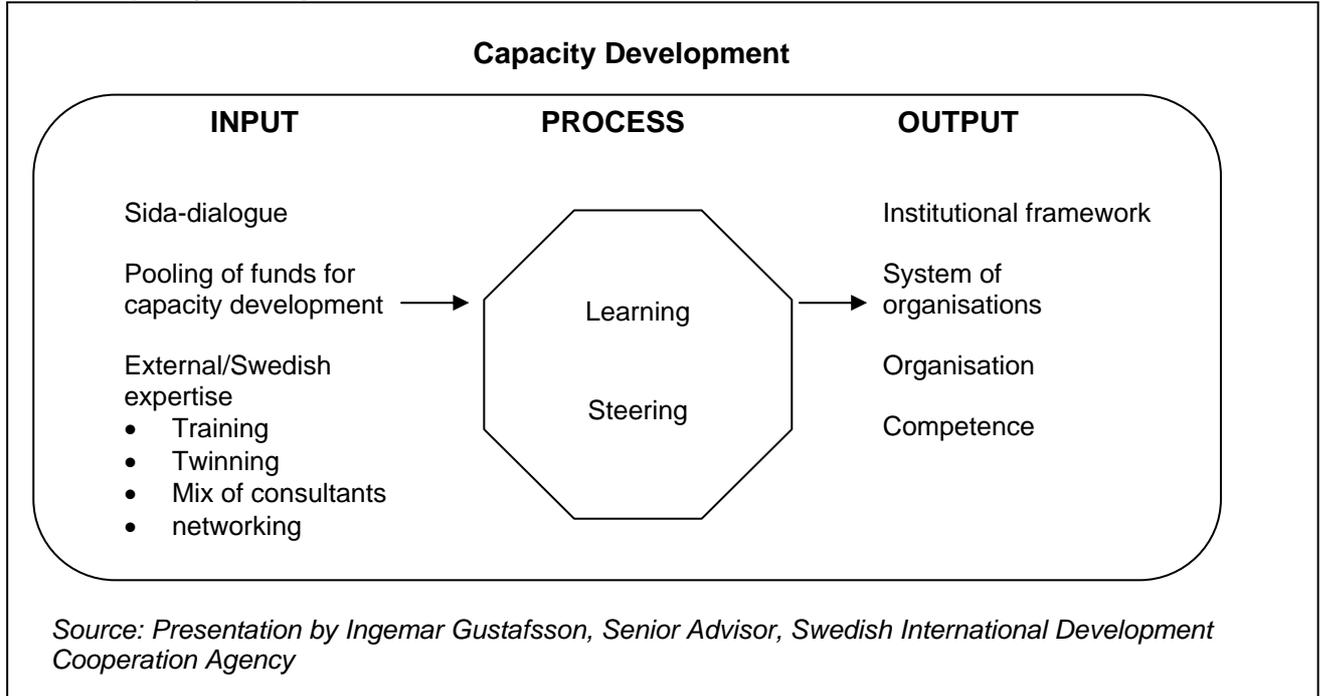
Building dialogue, relationships and long-term trust takes time and resources. However, **once the preconditions for capacity development are established** - which is the difficult part – **assessing capacity development is possible and not too difficult**.

F. Sida's approach – From organisational to institutional capacity development

Sida's approach to monitoring and evaluation is rooted in RBM. There is as yet no special framework for monitoring capacity development.

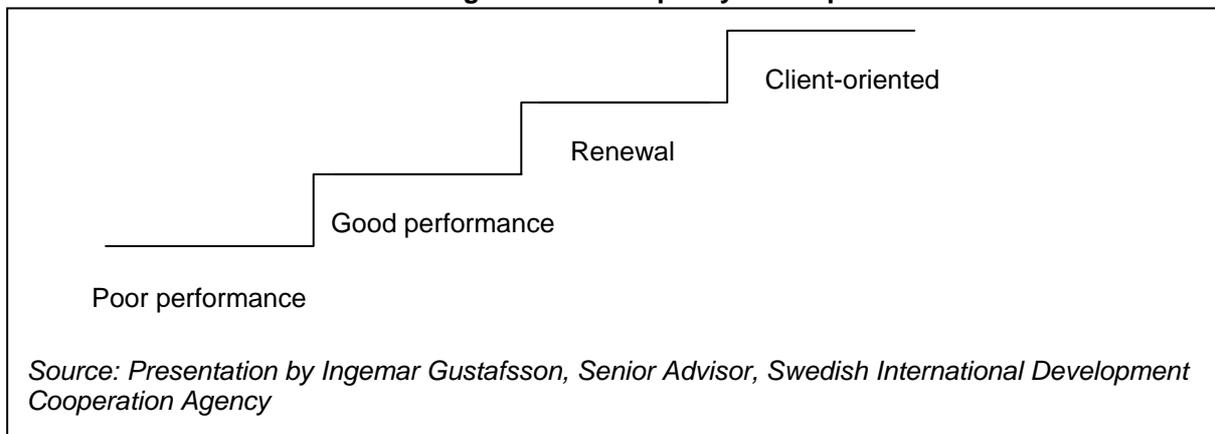
Sida uses a framework for its capacity development activities which distinguishes between outputs at the level of the individual (individual competence), the organisation (organisational capacity), a system of organisations and at the level of the institutional framework. At most of these levels Sweden provides some kind of CD input. The challenge for Sida now is to think about how to move up from the organisational to the institutional level.

Box 8: Capacity development at Sida



Sida uses a staircase model ranging from 'poor performance' to 'good performance' to 'renewal' to 'client-oriented' for the planning, diagnosis and evaluation of its CD interventions at the organisational level. This model takes into account that in capacity development we cannot know exactly what we will have to do in the future but have to adapt in the process of getting there, and thus tries to deal with the time perspective - **the conflict is between the short- and long-term perspectives.**

Box 9: Sida's staircase model for organisational capacity development



Annex 2: Workshop Programme and List of Participants

A. Workshop Programme

This workshop will bring together policy makers and practitioners with an interest in capacity issues with experts in M&E and ECDPM researchers. There will be about 25 participants.

Key questions for the workshop:

- Is there anything different about capacity issues that calls for a different approach to M and E? How does the nature of capacity shape the way we do M and E?
- What are we monitoring and why?
- To what degree can we use standard M and E techniques?
- What approaches appear promising?
- What could be done to refine or adapt these approaches for broader use?

Expected outcomes of the workshop:

- Mapping (as a typology or framework) of approaches to M&E of capacity and capacity development that is useful for practitioners
- An understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches – both conceptual and practical
- Perspectives on the above questions and some ideas of how to use them for policy and practice
- Steps to address remaining gaps

Day 1: Wednesday, 1 March 2006

EIPA, Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 22, 6211 HE Maastricht

12:00-13:00: Lunch

13:00-13:30: Welcome and Introductions

13:30-14:30: Discussion on attached paper 'Capacity, what is it'

14:30-15:00: Break

15:00-17:00: Presentation by David Watson 'Monitoring and evaluation of capacity and capacity development' and discussion

Day 2: Thursday, 2 March 2006

EIPA, Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 22, 6211 HE Maastricht

8:30-9:00: Coffee

9:00-10:30: Case study: Philippines Local Government M&E of capacity

- Presentation by Evelyn Jiz, National Programme Coordinator, Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Programme, the Philippines
- Discussion

10:30-11:00: Break

11:00-12:30: M&E of Capacity Development: Why do M&E of capacity? Conceptual issues and challenges

- Roundtable discussion launched by two short presentations - Kevin Kelpin of IDRC and Graham Teskey of DFID.
- Questions to be addressed:
 - How much attention should be paid to M and E of capacity vs development results (performance)?
 - Why?
 - Is there anything different about capacity and capacity development that calls for a different approach to M and E?
 - How does the nature of capacity shape the way we need to think about M and E?
- Discussion

12:30-13:30: Lunch

13:30-15:30: Issues, challenges and promising approaches from a methodological and programmatic perspective

- Panel of 3 speakers:
 - Apollinaire Ndorukwigira, ACBF
 - Rebecca Wrigley, INTRAC
 - Ingemar Gustafsson, Sida
- Points for discussion:
 - Key issues and challenges for a methodological and programmatic perspective,
 - Existing approaches: possibilities and limitations, and
 - The most promising approaches.
- Discussion

15:30-16:00: Break

16:00-17:00: Review and discussion of mapping of approaches to M&E of capacity - Suzanne Taschereau

Chart on some approaches to monitoring and evaluation of capacity will be available for review, correction and addition

Roundtable discussion:

17:00-17:30: Key questions emerging from the day and from David's paper (David Watson and Peter Morgan)

17:30-19:00: Reception at ECDPM, Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21, 6211HE Maastricht

Day 3: Friday, 3 March 2006

EIPA, Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 22, 6211 HE Maastricht

8:30-9:00: Coffee

9:00-10:00: Key insights and remaining questions - buzz in small groups (30 min) and plenary (30 min)

10:00-10:30: Break

10:30-12:15: Implications and next steps

Future perspectives:

- What needs to be done, could be done to refine and adapt promising approaches to M&E of capacity?
- What next steps?

Small group discussion – 45 min

Plenary roundtable – 45 min

12:15: Lunch

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The **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** aims to improve international cooperation between Europe and countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Created in 1986 as an independent foundation, the **Centre's objectives** are:

- to enhance the capacity of public and private actors in ACP and other low-income countries; and
- to improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the ACP Region.

The Centre focuses on **four interconnected themes**:

- Actors of Partnerships
- ACP-EU Trade Relations
- Political Dimensions of Partnerships
- Internal Donor Reform

The Centre collaborates with other organisations and has a network of contributors in the European and the ACP countries. Knowledge, insight and experience gained from process facilitation, dialogue, networking, infield research and consultations are widely shared with targeted ACP and EU audiences through international conferences, focussed briefing sessions, electronic media and key publications.

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