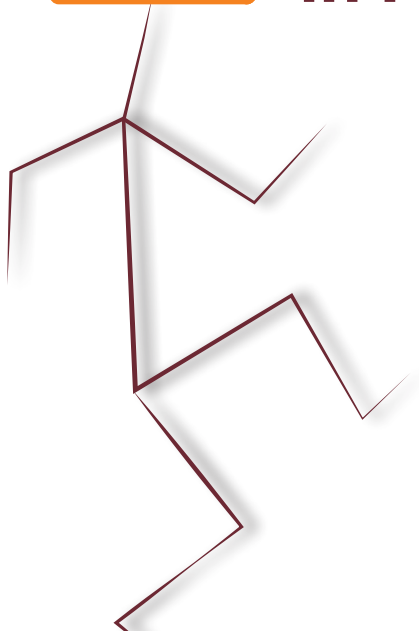




Checklist for Capacity Development in Partnerships



This checklist is based on a review of Capacity Development interventions in partnerships. The review was conducted by iCRA and commissioned by RVO and NFP in 2023. The checklist is a tool that can be used by RVO, NFP and partners for either assessment or design of capacity development interventions.

Capacity is “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.” Capacity Development (CD) aims to “unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain these capacities over time”. This definition covers a broad scope of interventions, from training farmers in adopting a new practice to the capacity of a partnership to engage successfully in food policy advocacy.

The checklist is a summary of the recommendations presented in the full paper. The paper looks into CD by [I] establishing the system of interest; [II] then defining the types of capacity; [III] capacities needed in partnerships and [IV] some points for approach and integration.

The checklist may be used to reflect on what type of CD is needed in a given situation. Limited, “simple” interventions may quickly produce measurable outputs (in numbers), whereas extensive complex interventions emphasise longer term outcomes and pursue integration with national policies and agencies.



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

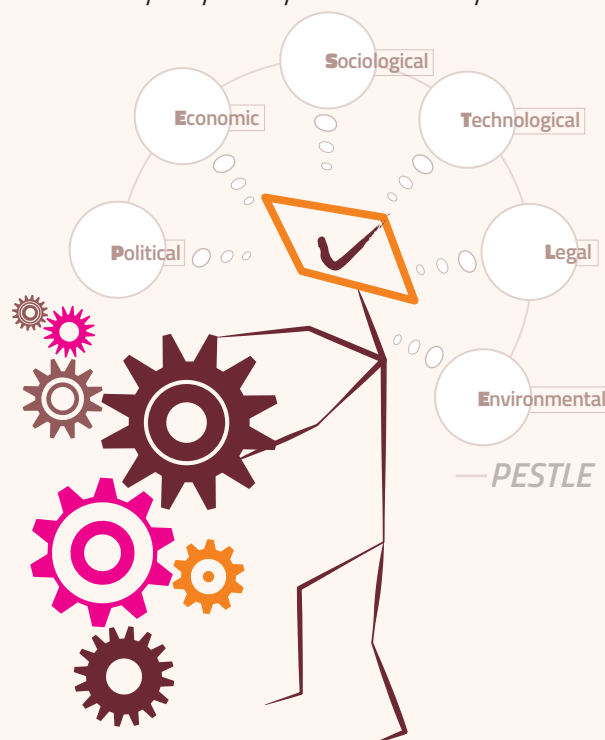


Checklist for Capacity Development in Partnerships

[I] System of interest

Food systems are complex because many domains are involved, and processes take place at different levels and scales (from farmers to global markets). They may offer multiple potentially competing and complementary points for intervention, and the capacity needs among stakeholders may vary widely. Consider the system when providing capacity development in partnerships:

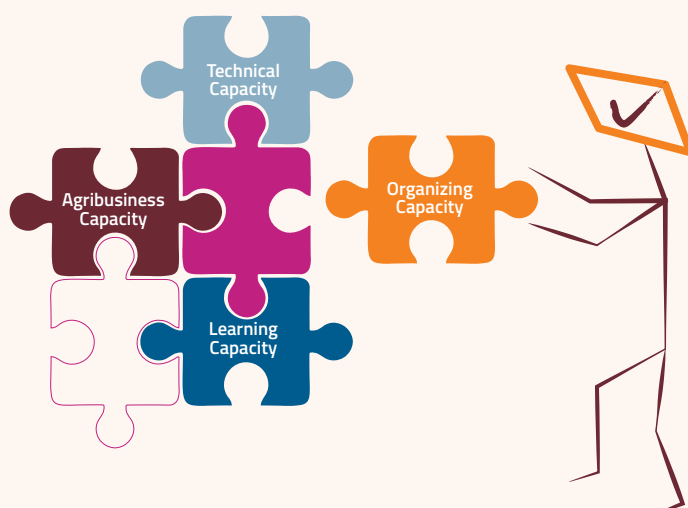
- ☐ **Define the system:** Who are the main actors? What element(s) of the system is the capacity development project addressing?
- ☐ **Determine the scope of the intervention:** If only one or two elements of a market system are addressed, who may address the other elements of the system?
- ☐ **Specify the overall capacity of the system:** What developments in capacity are being pursued?
- ☐ **Describe and assess the enabling environment:** What will affect the impact of the system targeted and the capacity developed? For example, use the PESTLE analysis model.
- ☐ **Specify possible measures to use or mitigate external developments in your capacity development approach:** Can/should action by the project be taken to "internalise" these factors? Monitor how these factors affect the expected capacity improvements. Are these institutional factors and their likely influence clearly identified in the project logical framework?



[II] Types of capacity developed

A more systematic and balanced analysis of the capacity development needs and interventions for technical, agribusiness and functional capacities can leverage outcome and impact of Partnerships. Consider these suggestions to begin a good partnership:

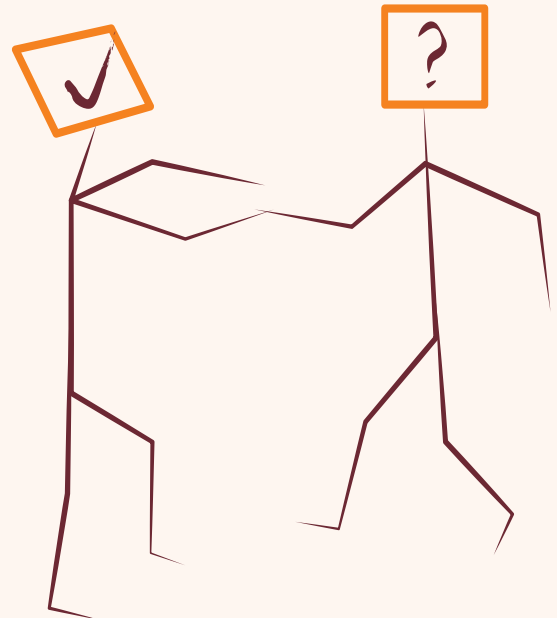
- ☐ **Define and prioritize capacities:** What improvements in technical capacity (to produce), agribusiness capacity (to sell, conduct business) and functional capacity (to relate, communicate, reflect and readjust) are needed by each actor?
- ☐ **Identify qualified capacity developers:** Who can be approached (inside or outside the consortium) to achieve the desired level in technical, agribusiness and functional capacity of each actor and/or the partnership as a system?
- ☐ **Examine adaptability:** Check how well the partnership and the people involved have the ability to adjust to changes. Use a SWOT analysis to understand how they manage risks and make changes in their plans.



[III] Partnership (whose capacity?)

Complexity of partnerships is affected by the number of partners involved as well as differences in culture, governance, management styles and operating procedures. The art of partnering can be critical to Partnerships. Consider these elements of effective and trust-based collaborations:

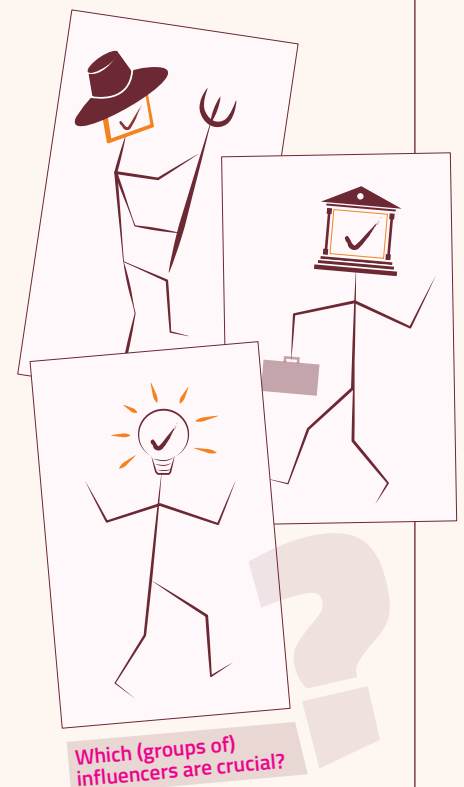
- ☐ **Examine potential and ambition:** What expertise, agency, commitment and authority do partners have to effect the changes needed to develop capacity improvement of the system?
- ☐ **Describe working relationships and trust levels:** Have partners collaborated before? What potential pitfalls or risks exist?
- ☐ **Determine the partnering skills available:** Should an internal or external partnership facilitator be appointed?
- ☐ **Treat partners and beneficiaries as equals:** (Or even better: do not differentiate at all!) How can actors with different roles and levels of engagement be acknowledged as stakeholders with well-defined interests in the project?
- ☐ **Identify critical actors:** Which actors in the system are required to achieve the expected capacity development?
- ☐ **Consider future scaling and sustainability:** Which actors will be needed to continue the capacity development processes once the project is completed?
- ☐ **Define roles and functions of each partner, including informal partners and other critical actors** (as mentioned earlier): What improvements in capacity do each of them need so they can effectively play their role?
- ☐ **Conduct a rapid risk assessment:** What factors could negatively impact or impede the expected capacity development of each partner? What mitigation measures can be implemented?



[IV] Approach and integration

Partnerships often struggle with embedding their capacity development efforts into the value chain and/or its supporting services on one hand and customizing it on the other hand. Needs of a recently established SME will be different from those of a cooperative with a longstanding track record on marketing; even every farmer is different. Consider how to identify and target the right people:

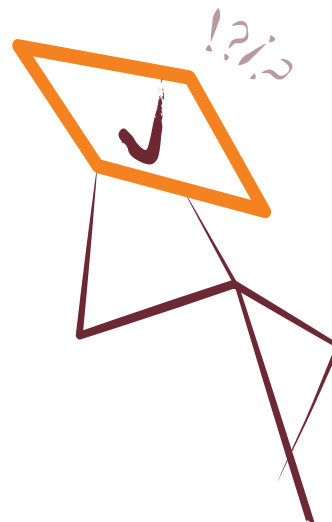
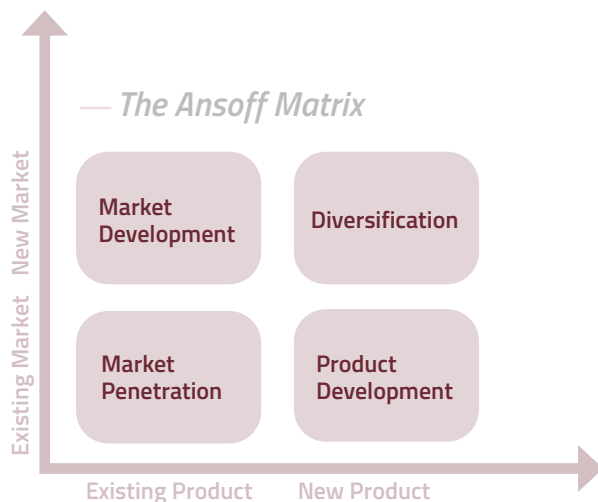
- ☐ **List the “influencers” and/or decision makers:** Who are crucial to achieve the technical, agribusiness and functional capacity developments desired of each actor? What capacities do they need to be able to fulfil this role?
- ☐ **Differentiate and classify actors according to their needs and level of professional development:** What are the different needs of (large groups of) actors such as farmers and cooperatives?
- ☐ **Tailor approaches:** What are the implications of these differentiated groups for capacity development activities and processes?
- ☐ **Focus on strength:** How can the “capacity to develop capacity” be strengthened in key individuals/champions in a group, organisation or public institution, so these people strengthen capacity of their colleagues and members?
- ☐ **Formalise learning:** Who is responsible for facilitating/coaching “experiential learning cycles” with the main actors/partners involved? How will the learning by the system (actors) be documented? By whom?



[V] Scale, sustainability, impact

Scalability, sustainability and impact combine to create successful capacity development interventions are particularly important in food system transformation. Formulated outputs and outcomes of a partnership project are even more relevant when sustained by a realistic view on how capacity development can become part of the business model and potentially applied on a larger scale. Consider scale, sustainability and impact when developing a partnership:

- ☐ **Define the “tipping point” or “threshold of irreversibility”:** What is needed to reach autonomous momentum so that capacity development continues even without project inputs? What capacities are needed by which actors to ensure this autonomy?
- ☐ **Outline post-project momentum:** How will capacity development actions and processes established by the project be continued after the project ends? Who will continue to provide the capacity development services?
- ☐ **Determine the scalability of project impact:** What is the scale of change expected by the end of the project, and by 5 or 10 years after completion? In line with the Ansoff Matrix, what is the potential for expansion of existing markets, product development, market development and/or diversification? What types of capacity – of which actors – are needed to realise this potential?
- ☐ **Identify other actors needed to achieve impact at a deeper or broader scale:** What additional capacity development interventions will be required? What organisational or institutional capacity development will be required?



Notes

Read: Find the full report *Capacity Development in Public Private Partnerships: Lessons learned from NL funded projects*, written by Cees van Rij and Richard Hawkins (iCRA)

- o RVO website (<https://tinyurl.com/RVO-CD-PPP>)
- o NFP platform (<https://tinyurl.com/NFP-CD-PPP>)

Watch: Scan the QR code to watch a 26-minute video presentation by author Cees van Rij to the RVO regional meeting in Kigali, in March 2023.



Give feedback: The report, this checklist and related events are part of a joint learning track by NFP and RVO. The learning track concerns a more efficient use of existing instruments by learning from our own practice, while also considering that future interventions should contribute to scaling, continuity and transformative change. Your comments, feedback and suggestions are most welcome:

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