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Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building for Circular city Transitions
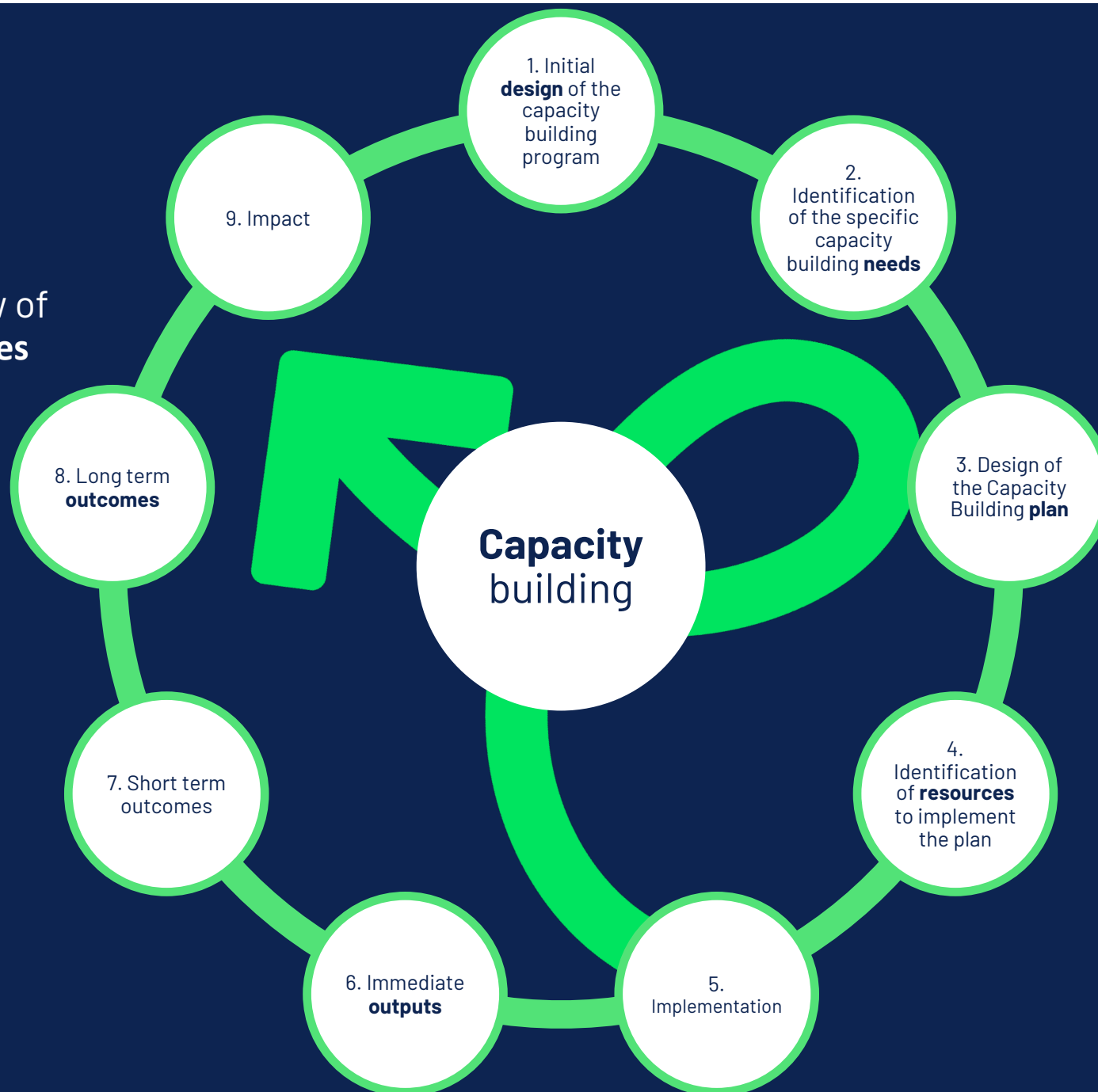
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What is the objective of this tool?

- The tool is designed to help practitioners plan how they will monitor and evaluate the capacity building programme to be implemented.

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How to use this tool?

- This tool consists of a set of guiding questions to be answered during and after the implementation of the capacity building program. It is developed around the key phases associated with designing a capacity building set of interventions.

Overview of **Key Phases**

Capacity building

1. Initial **design** of the capacity building program

2. Identification of the specific capacity building **needs**

3. Design of the Capacity Building **plan**

4. Identification of **resources** to implement the plan

5. Implementation

6. Immediate **outputs**

7. Short term outcomes

8. Long term **outcomes**

9. Impact

1. INITIAL DESIGN OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

What is this phase about?

The initial design refers to the identification of the purpose and broad objectives for the capacity building activities.

This can be expressed by a visual 'pathway of change' illustrating the linkages between capacity building activities and the ultimate program goals.

Guiding enquiries

- Why do we want to invest in strengthening the capacity of our ecosystem?
- What are the different levels in which we might expect to see changes (individual, team, organization, whole system)?
- How are these interconnected?
- What kind of capacity approaches and methods might be most effective and appropriate?
- What level and type of resources will be needed to manage and implement this work?

1. INITIAL DESIGN OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Monitoring questions during implementation

- Is the information we are gathering on our activities and outputs going to be sufficient to help us review our progress towards our ultimate goal?
- Do we need to revise our assumptions about how our Capacity Building activities are contributing to our ultimate goal?
- Are we assigning sufficient and appropriate resources for the delivery of the capacity building activities?

Tips and suggestions

- The review of original design or Theory of Change can be completed by further interviews and group discussions to test assumptions
- Outcome mapping may be an appropriate method to use in original design work

Evaluation questions

- How relevant and appropriate was the original design?
- How realistic was the original design?
- How effectively and efficiently was the Capacity building work managed?

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

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What is this phase about?

In this phase, decisions are taken about how to assess existing capacity (skills gap of the target groups), but also –the scope, methods and specific tools to be used. It also includes the development and implementation of these diagnostic methods and tools.

Guiding enquiries

- What is the gap between expected skills and competences of our target group and the current situation?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing stakeholders in the areas of interest of our program?
- What is there, in the external environment, which may enhance or debilitate the capacity of the partners?
- What are the most appropriate instruments and processes to use in order to assess these?

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

Monitoring questions during implementation

- Is the plan for the diagnosis process appropriate and realistic?
- Are we assessing the right things?
- Are we considering the external environment sufficiently?
- Are we achieving the level of engagement we hoped for?
- Are stakeholders' expectations being managed appropriately?

Tips and suggestions

- Requires expertise to design a diagnosis instrument and process that is relevant to the program.

Evaluation questions

- How effective and appropriate were diagnosis instruments and process?
- Were all the right people involved in diagnosis process?
- Were the outputs of this diagnosis phase relevant to the needs of the program?
- Did the process in itself, contribute in any way to strengthening capacity?

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3. DESIGN OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PLAN

What is this phase about?

This phase is dedicated to designing relevant, realistic, and quality capacity building plans –for individuals and/or for groups of organizations. The plan may also include work focused on the external environment.

Guiding enquiries

- Is the capacity building plan to be tailored to individual partners' needs?
- Will there be capacity building activities shaped around collective needs of groups of partners, or of networks?
- Is there clarity about how different activities will be prioritized and phased?
- What is the clear timeframe of our plan?
- Do we have a clear portfolio of methods and activities to choose from?
- Have we clarified the costs of capacity building support?
- What are our Milestone indicators?
- How will our work be monitored?

3. DESIGN OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PLAN

↻ Monitoring questions during implementation

- Does the plan reflect needs identified in the skills and competences assessment?
- Is the plan flexible and responsive to newly emerging needs?
- Are the objectives clear?
- Is the timescale and phasing of activities providing to be realistic?
- Is the plan 'owned' and understood adequately by all associated partners?
- How could the plan be improved?

↻ Tips and suggestions

- The plan should reflect the earlier work on the overall design.
- Consideration should be given to working with the 'emergent' and non-linear nature of capacity change.

↻ Evaluation questions

- Did the plan cover the right areas?
- How flexible and responsive was the plan?
- Were the objectives clear?
- How effectively did the plan address partner's capacity building needs?
- Was the plan realistic and appropriate?
- Was the plan 'owned' and understood adequately by the partners?

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4. IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

What is this phase about?

This phase is about the identification of the inputs and resources necessary to implement the plan.

Guiding enquiries

- Are there sources of support from peer organizations?
- How can we tap into the strengths of some partners to help the others?
- Is there a 'map' or 'scoping study' of potential sources of support for partner organizations?
- Have we identified a realistic budget for the work?
- Are we assigning dedicated staff to accompany the implementation of the work?
- Are there clear staff responsibilities for this work?

4. IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Monitoring questions during implementation

- Are the resources being used in the way that was intended?
- Are we accessing all possible sources of support?
- Is the leadership behind this work?
- Is the budget proving to be sufficient for the planned CB work?
- Is the staffing of the CB work proving to be sufficient and appropriate?

Evaluation questions

- Was the CB work suitably resourced?
- What other resources would have been useful?
- Did the partners have access to the support needed to implement the plans?
- Was there appropriate staffing?

Tips and suggestions

- Gather knowledge on potential sources of support and other resources.
- Internal discussion on roles of partners staff vis a vis capacity building work.

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5. IMPLEMENTATION

What is this phase about?

This phase focuses on the delivery of the activities. It is concerned with the detailed work planning and implementation of the activities included in the CB plan, including a concern for ensuring the quality of the content and process.

Guiding enquiries

- How are we operationalizing the capacity building plans? (e.g. what kind of work/activity planning will we use?)
- Do we have any kind of quality assurance methods in place?

Reflow 5. IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring questions during implementation

- What activities have been carried out in this past period and with whom?
- Were all the planned activities carried out? If not, why not?
- Can we /should we still do them?
- How well-organized and implemented were the activities?
- How can we improve?
- What were the implementation challenges and how were these overcome?
- Have we identified any new needs in this period?

Tips and suggestions

- Requires good quality documentation of all activities that took place.

Evaluation questions

- Were the activities that were carried out the 'right things to do'?
- Was there a match between desired capacity change and the type of intervention used?
- If certain planned activities did not occur, why was this?
- If certain unplanned activities took place, why was this?
- Was there any way of reviewing the quality of the support delivered?

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6. IMMEDIATE OUTPUTS

What is this phase about?

This phase focuses on capturing and reviewing the first level of what is emerging from the capacity building interventions. That is, the immediate products such as the number of trainings delivered and trainees in attendance; the number of coaching sessions, the number of interactive workshops and peer-learning events or processes and the number of people participating...

This phase is also concerned with capturing the immediate response by those who participated in the activities, and thus could be considered the beginning of the process of assessing what changes are emerging as a result of the capacity building work. These could be responses that express the degree of satisfaction with the quality of the output, the training event and any immediate changes in their understanding, skills etc...

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6. IMMEDIATE OUTPUTS

Monitoring questions during implementation

- Are we on track with our activities as indicated in the plan?
- Are the expected numbers of participants/individuals benefiting from the activities met?
- Are the 'users' the appropriate people to be involved?
- What are the participants/users saying about their experience of involvement with the activities?

Evaluation questions

- What activities have been delivered?
- What were the numbers and characteristics of the participants/users?
- What levels of participant satisfaction were expressed?
- What did participants report as immediate changes in their understanding, skills etc...?

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What is this phase about?

In this phase, we examine in more depth the short-term effects of the CB work. It can be about change at the level of an individual – skills/learning/knowledge acquisition; change in attitude or emotions; change in behaviors.
It can be about change at the level of organizational systems, policies, structures etc.

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7. SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

Monitoring questions during implementation

- What are we seeing in terms of changes in the behavior and performance of individuals?
- Is this what we hoped to see?
- What else are we observing in the partners that we think is an effect of the capacity building work?

Evaluation questions

- Did the capacity building work lead to the intended short-term changes in the partners?
- What unintended and unexpected changes have occurred at this level?
- What evidence is there that these changes can be attributed to the CB work?
- What other factors influenced the changes (intended and unintended) that occurred?

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8. LONG TERM OUTCOMES

What is this phase about?

This phase is concerned with capacity changes over the medium to long term, and also with how these changes may be contributing towards increased effectiveness (of individuals, with the work they do, and the relationships they nurture). This phase is looking at the results of the previous phase, that is, how short-term changes (e.g., increased skills and understanding, or improved partnership management processes) are being applied and what emerges as a consequence.

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8. LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Monitoring questions during implementation

- What are the emerging longer term changes?
- Are these what we have hoped for? If not, what else do we need to do?
- What are the changes in how partners are relating to other actors?
- What else can we do to further strengthen these relational capacities?
- What other (unexpected, unintended) longer term changes are happening? If positive, can we build on these?

Evaluation questions

- To what extent were the planned longer term changes achieved?
- What unintended and unexpected changes occurred?
- What evidence is there that these changes can be attributed to the capacity building work?
- What evidence is there that these changes are being sustained?
- What activities were particularly significant and influential?

Considerations

- This phase requires initial clarity on what the desired changes would look like (indicators). How 'long' is 'long term'? Some changes may take years.

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9. IMPACT

↻ What is this phase about?

This is where there is a look at the degree to which the overall program goals is being achieved after the capacity building work. It is about the changes in the 'world out there', in the lives of the people and communities who are the focus of the project's mission and strategies. It is the most challenging of areas for the monitoring and evaluation of capacity building.

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9. IMPACT

Monitoring questions during implementation

- What evidence is emerging of achievement of the overall project goals?
- Are there examples emerging of how increased capacity of our target groups are contributing to improvements in the circularity of our city?
- Can more be done to build on those experiences?

Evaluation questions

- What has changed in the situation of the people and communities since the beginning of the project?
- Is there any link with the capacity building work?
- What effects did the Capacity building work have on partners' ability to achieve their goals?

Considerations

- Given other possible intervening factors, it may not be possible to establish direct causality between the CB work and any improvement in the achievement of the overall goals. A decision may be needed about what is 'good enough' evidence and analysis at this level.

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