FREE TEMPLATE

Maturity Model Builder

Purpose, levels, descriptors and evidence: a maturity model your partners recognize.

1. About this model

Model name

Owner (name, role)

Network (who takes part)

Number of partners

Version

Date

Unit assessed

Design team (include partners)

2. The method, step by step

1. **Purpose and use.** Which decisions the model informs, who assesses, how often, and what it is not for.
2. **Dimensions.** Four to seven themes that do not overlap and cover what the purpose needs.
3. **Levels.** Four or five, each distinct, cumulative and named by its intent.
4. **Descriptors.** One observable state per dimension and level: something you can see, not an adjective.
5. **Evidence.** What shows each level, who provides it and who confirms it.
6. **Validate with partners.** Do they recognize themselves and their language? What is missing?
7. **Pilot and calibrate.** Two raters, three to five partners; rewrite every descriptor they disagree on.
8. **Govern and reassess.** Version it, change it once a year, reassess every 6 to 12 months.

3. What the model is for

Tick every use that applies. Most partner networks need the first two; the third needs stable criteria and enough partners.

- ☐ Describe: show where each partner stands today
- ☐ Guide: show each partner its next step
- ☐ Compare: count partners per level across regions or cohorts

Question	Your answer
Which decisions will this model inform?	
What will it never be used for?	
Who fills it in, and who confirms?	
How often will partners be assessed?	
What does a partner get back from it?	

Write this page first and agree it with a few partners. Every later choice, from dimensions to evidence, should serve the decisions listed here.

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4. Dimensions

The themes the model covers. Split a broad theme into two or three sub-dimensions; each one becomes a row of the grid on page 3.

#	Dimension (theme)	What it covers	Sub-dimensions (2 to 3)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

- [ ] No piece of evidence would count in two dimensions
- [ ] Nothing the purpose on page 1 needs is missing

5. Number of levels

- [ ] Four levels: no middle box; enough for most partner networks
- [ ] Five levels: only if you can evidence a separate top or middle stage

Why this number: what the levels let you tell apart

6. Levels and their definitions

A short label that says the level's intent, what is true at this level in every dimension, and what is new compared with the level below.

Level	Short label	What is true at this level	What is new compared with the level below
1			
2			
3			
4			
5 (if used)			

Write level 1 as a starting point, not a verdict: "Exploring" opens a conversation, "Deficient" ends it. Each level should build on the one below it.

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7. The descriptor grid

One observable state per sub-dimension and level. A partner is at the highest level whose cell, and every cell to its left, is true today.

Dimension	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 (if used)

8. Test each descriptor

- [ ] It names something you could see or hold: a document, a routine, a role, a number
- [ ] No adjectives: good, strong, adequate, effective
- [ ] One thing changes from the cell on its left
- [ ] It cannot be true unless the cell on its left is true
- [ ] Two raters reading it would place a partner in the same cell
- [ ] A partner at this level would recognize itself in it

9. Calibration notes from the pilot

Sub-dimension	Level	What the pilot showed	New wording

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10. Evidence plan

Light at the lower levels, heavier at the top. Ask only for evidence someone will read.

Sub-dimension	Evidence that shows the level	Provided by	Confirmed by

11. Validation plan

Step	With whom	When	Done
Partner review workshop			
Pilot with 3 to 5 partners			
Two raters, same partners			
Calibration and sign-off of version 1.0			

12. Versions and reassessment

Reassess every

Change window

Who approves changes

Current version and date

Version	Date	What changed	Why	Approved by

Never change a descriptor during an assessment round. When a new version changes a cell, write down how positions from the old version carry over, so no partner drops a level because a sentence was rewritten.

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