FREE TEMPLATE

# Capacity Strengthening Indicator Bank

Six capacity domains, three levels of change, and the evidence that makes each indicator believable.

## 1. How to use this indicator bank

1. **Start from the result.** For each domain, decide which organizational result matters, then which practice leads to it.
2. **Choose with partners.** Tick one or two indicators per domain you are actively strengthening, and adapt the wording together.
3. **Agree the evidence first.** Write down what will count as proof, and who will confirm it, before the baseline.
4. **Baseline now, review in 6 to 12 months.** Same indicators, same evidence, the partner's view and yours side by side.

## 2. The capacity ladder

**1 Activity**
What you did: trainings, visits, coaching. Count it for management; it is not capacity.

**2 Output**
What people received or learned: staff trained, a policy drafted, a tool installed.

**3 Practice change**
The outcome: what the partner now does differently, routinely, without you in the room.

**4 Organizational result**
What the organization achieves because of the new practice.

What we did: easy to count

What changed: what donors believe

## 3. The indicator bank

### 1. Governance and leadership

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Board members trained in their roles; a board charter drafted | Attendance list; the dated draft charter | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | The board meets as scheduled, with a quorum, and follows up its decisions | Signed minutes of the last four meetings; the action log | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | Strategy reviewed against results every year, and the plan changed where needed | Minutes of the annual review; the revised plan | ☐ |

### 2. Financial management

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Finance staff trained; written finance procedures approved | Training records; the board minutes approving the procedures | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | Bank reconciliations and budget-versus-actual reviews done every month | Three consecutive months of signed reconciliations and reviews | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | External audit with no major findings; donor financial reports accepted without rework | Audit report and management letter; the donors' acceptance in writing | ☐ |

### 3. Program management

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Project staff trained in planning; work plan and risk register templates adopted | Attendance list; the templates, dated | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | Every active project has a work plan and a risk register updated at least monthly | The current plans and registers, with their update dates | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | Projects delivered on time and on budget, or adapted with the donor's agreement | Final reports against the plan; the agreed changes in writing | ☐ |

Activities and outputs help you manage the support. Report practice change and results, each with its evidence.

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## 4. MEAL

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Staff trained in data collection; a MEAL plan with baselines and targets | Attendance list; the MEAL plan | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | Data checked for quality and discussed at a learning meeting every quarter | Quality checks; minutes of two meetings in a row | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | At least one program decision a year changed by data or community feedback | Minutes that link the decision to the data; the feedback log | ☐ |

## 5. People and safeguarding

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Staff and volunteers trained in safeguarding; a code of conduct signed by all | Training records; the signed codes of conduct | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | Safeguarding checks in every recruitment; concerns handled under the policy | A sample of five recruitment files; the case log, anonymized | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | Concerns raised and closed within agreed times; staff and communities trust the channel | Case log with dates; a short survey of staff and community members | ☐ |

## 6. Partnerships and advocacy

| Level | Indicator | Evidence that makes it believable | Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Output** | Staff trained in proposal writing and advocacy; a funder and stakeholder map drawn | Attendance list; the map | ☐ |
| **Practice change** | Takes part in a network regularly; proposals submitted to new funders | Meeting records; the proposals submitted | ☐ |
| **Organizational result** | More than one funder and none above half of income; a local policy or practice influenced | Income by funder in the audited accounts; the policy text or an official letter | ☐ |

## 4. Five tests for believable evidence

1. **It comes from the routine,** not from the assessment: last year's minutes, not a policy written last week.
2. **It repeats.** One reconciliation is an event; three consecutive months is a practice.
3. **Someone else can see it:** an auditor, a local authority, a community committee, a peer partner.
4. **It is dated and sits next to the claim,** not in an e-mail thread.
5. **It is proportionate:** what a small organization already produces, not a new reporting job.

## 5. Your program's indicators

| Domain | Indicator chosen | Evidence agreed | Baseline (date) | Target (date) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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Report counts of partners, not averages of levels: “9 of 12 partners reconcile monthly” says more than “2.7”.

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