

A resource for reporting under Standard Indicator CBLD-9



KEY TERMS

CBLD-9: "Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance."

CBLD-9a (Numerator): Number of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance.

CBLD-9b (Denominator): Number of USG-assisted organizations receiving capacity development support.

To count an organization in the numerator or denominator, it must meet the criteria outlined in the CBLD-9 PIRS, including: *"Using a performance improvement metric for which the organization will monitor and measure changes in performance."* This resource provides guidance concerning, and examples of, performance improvement metrics.

Jump to examples from:

- [Democracy and Governance \(p.3\)](#)
- [Economic Growth \(p.6\)](#)
- [Education \(p.7\)](#)
- [Health \(p.9\)](#)
- [Resilience and Food Security \(p.11\)](#)
- [Cross-sectoral \(p.12\)](#)

INTRODUCTION

The CBLD-9 indicator measures whether USG-funded capacity development efforts have led to improved performance in organizations receiving capacity development support. As outlined in the [Performance Indicator Reference Sheet \(PIRS\)](#), the criteria for counting an organization under this indicator includes "Using a performance improvement metric for which the organization will monitor and measure changes in performance."

When planning your measurement approach for this indicator, it is critical to:

- Select a measurement approach that captures performance, not latent capacity. Capacity is a form of potential; it is not visible until it is used. Therefore, performance is the key consideration in determining whether capacity has changed.
- Measure organizational performance results, not activity implementation. Performance improvement takes time, so simply implementing planned capacity development support does not imply improved performance.

Keeping these considerations in mind, USAID Operating Units (OUs) have substantial flexibility in selecting a measurement approach. OUs and implementing partners should consider the objectives of the supported organizations and engage local organizations to identify key performance metrics in line with those objectives. These metrics may be quantitative or qualitative, but should reflect a clear objective for performance improvement. Measurement of quantitative or qualitative metrics may occur through a variety of methods, including observation, surveys, interviews or focus group discussions.

This resource begins with a brief overview of common capacity assessment tools and discussion of when their use is appropriate. It then provides examples of capacity development activities and their measurement approaches, organized by sector. These are not prescriptive, nor do they represent a comprehensive catalogue of performance metrics; rather, they are intended as a starting point for OUs. Lastly, this resource provides a list of high-level "DOs and DON'Ts" in measuring performance improvement, intended to assist OUs in determining whether their measurement approach captures performance (not implementation or latent capacity), reflects a clear metric, and aligns with local performance improvement priorities.

Questions? We're here to help!

Reach out to the Agency CBLD-9 Support Team at CBLDSupport@usaid.gov for individualized support in choosing metrics and a measurement approach appropriate for your activity.

UNDERSTANDING COMMON CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

There are many questionnaires and assessment tools that assess an array of organizational and/or technical competencies. They may cover internal processes (e.g. financial controls, human resources, etc), sector-specific competencies (e.g. metrics around quality of care in the health sector), or capacities related to an organization's connections and influence within its network. Before discussing how to measure performance improvement, it is important to understand the types of tools that are not appropriate for this purpose:

- **Risk mitigation tools:** Some tools, such as the Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS), exist to assess an organization's financial and managerial capacity to manage donor funds. These tools primarily serve a risk mitigation function for USAID. As such, they are not appropriate choices for measuring improvement in areas of performance that advance an organization's own goals.
- **Tools to catalyze action:** Other tools, such as the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Organizational Performance Index, among many other sector-specific and activity-specific index tools, are very helpful for identifying areas for performance improvement. They can be useful to guide discussions with supported organizations when identifying priorities and selecting performance improvement solutions. However, they are not the best choices for measuring performance improvement. Measurement metrics should align with an organization's own objectives, not the predetermined areas included in an index tool. Additionally, completing the questionnaires or assessments involved in these indices can take hours or days to complete, making them burdensome for supported organizations.

While it is usually not appropriate to subject an organization to repeated assessments to measure performance improvement, some of these tools can serve as a starting point for identifying metrics. For example, the [Organizational Performance Index \(OPI\)](#) measures four domains of performance: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability. An organization might consider its performance in all domains of the OPI for the purpose of identifying gaps and focusing capacity strengthening efforts, but select a more limited set of indicators for measuring improvement.

- For example, an organization delivering meals to elderly citizens might select a metric of "Percent of meals delivered while still hot" as a measure of effectiveness, or "Number of meals delivered per \$100 in donations" as a measure of efficiency.
- An organization advocating for clean water might select a metric of "Percent of provincial policy decisions on which our comment is sought" as part of relevance, or "Change in number of quarterly volunteers for river clean-ups" as part of sustainability.

The OU or implementing partner (IP) should assist organizations in selecting a limited set of indicators that are most relevant to the focus of performance improvement.



A note on certifications and accreditations

In very select cases, passing an assessment that probes several areas of capacity may be required to attain a national or international certification. See, for example, the example of GlobalG.A.P. (certification of good agricultural practices), or the example of higher education institution accreditation, in the sectoral examples in the following sections. When performance improvement activities focus primarily on equipping organizations to pass such assessments because such a certification or accreditation would help the organization advance its own goals (not USAID's goals), it may be appropriate to use the assessment at multiple points in time to assess performance improvement.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT: SECTORAL EXAMPLES

This section provides examples of measurement approaches used in sectoral programming. Note that these examples are not prescriptive. Additionally, examples from one sector may easily translate to another. As such, we recommend you look across sectors to generate ideas of measurement approaches that may be appropriate for your activity.



DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Revenue Mobilization

- *Activity Overview:* A municipal strengthening program provides training and ongoing coaching to municipalities to increase effectiveness and legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. One aspect of this is improving revenue mobilization to fund local services such as waste management and youth recreational programs.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies (sub-national)
- *Performance Goal:* Municipalities aim to increase local tax revenue.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity monitors “Percent of municipal budget funded by local tax revenues.” These data are collected by the implementing partners, and cross-checked by municipal level data in national statistics.
- This approach was employed by USAID/Kyrgyz Republic: [Read the full example here](#) (USAID internal only).

Prosecution Support

- *Activity Overview:* An activity provides technical support to district and provincial prosecutors’ offices to improve the prosecution of wildlife crime cases perpetrated by organized criminal syndicates. This support centers on support for collecting and handling evidence and building cases.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies (sub-national)
- *Performance Goal:* Prosecutors’ offices wish to improve their performance in prosecuting wildlife crimes.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity monitors the conviction rate and average sentence length of poachers and traffickers for each district prosecutors’ office. This serves as evidence of improved performance in building and prosecuting cases.

Public Financial Management

- *Activity Overview:* An activity aims to strengthen several aspects of public financial management in municipal governments. It uses the [Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability \(PEFA\)](#) assessment tool, which covers 31 components of public financial management, to identify focus areas of support for each municipality. It then provides coaching in those areas.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies (sub-national)
- *Performance Goal:* Performance goals vary by municipality, and include improving transparency of public finances, increasing predictability in budget execution, or increasing the robustness of macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts upon which budgets are based.
- *Measurement Approach:* While support may focus on many areas identified as needs in the assessment, each municipality selects one focus area (such as budget preparation or financial data integrity) for measurement purposes. The activity tracks the 2-4 PEFA indicators within the chosen focus area, and uses these as the basis for assessing performance improvement for CBLD-9 reporting. Choosing only one priority area to measure (even when support includes a broader area of topics) keeps measurement manageable and meaningful for the targeted municipalities.

Civil Society Strengthening

- *Activity Overview:* An activity works to improve the performance of Umbrella Civil Society Organizations - which provide backbone support to networks of smaller CSOs - in the areas of advocacy and network building. The activity provides these umbrella CSOs with consultants, who provide continuous coaching in areas that the CSOs have identified as priorities.
- *Supported Organization Type:* NGOs
- *Performance Goal:* Specific priorities vary by CSO. For example, CSOs may wish to establish new partnerships with private sector actors, or to improve the quality of policy briefs produced for advocacy purposes.
- *Measurement Approach:* The consultants who coach the CSOs in the priority areas use direct observation to assess improvements. Based on their observations, they report back to USAID on the CSOs' improvements in line with identified priority metrics (e.g. new partnerships with the private sector, quality of policy briefs). These qualitative metrics are used as the basis for assessing performance improvement to be reported under CBLD-9.

Local Advocacy

- *Activity Overview:* An activity coaches the leaders of small, informal organizations in the areas of citizen and government engagement. Initiatives gain communication skills to better attract citizens to their cause, and learn how to use legal channels to lobby against planned government actions. Using these skills, one initiative organizes citizen protests and submits formal complaints against construction of a new hydropower plant, which would worsen environmental pollution. Afterwards, the government abandons the construction plans.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Other
- *Performance Goal:* These grassroots initiatives wish to increase the numbers of citizens engaging in their cause and improve the ways in which they engage local governments, toward the ultimate goal of incentivizing higher levels of government responsiveness.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity team conducts in-depth interviews with leaders of the informal initiative to understand specific changes in their communications, citizen engagement, and advocacy skills, and to understand their perspective on the link between their improved capacities and the government response. Based on these data and observation of the government response, the activity considers this organization to have demonstrated improved performance.

Judicial Strengthening

- *Activity Overview:* An activity supports the federal government in improving the efficiency and transparency of its judicial system. It provides accompaniment support to the Judicial Council in developing a screening process to improve disposition times in civil cases, and provides training opportunities to law clerks to increase their preparedness and job engagement.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agency (National)
- *Performance Goal:* The Judicial Council wishes to decrease the case backlog as part of its work to increase judicial transparency and accountability to the citizens it serves.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity tracks the number of cases waiting to be heard by the Judicial Council. It observes a 30% reduction in its case backlog in the first two years of the activity, which serves as evidence of performance improvement.

Equipping Provincial Governments

- *Activity Overview:* An activity provides targeted technical assistance to provincial government bodies in Amazonian provinces to equip them to tackle environmental issues. Through a series of conversations with representatives of one provincial government, the activity team discovered a desire to boost federally-funded investment in environmental restoration projects in the region. They also identified that the provincial government had low capacity to design public investment proposals that met the standards of the central government ministry that oversees investment. In response, the activity hired a consultant with expertise in training regional governments on preparing successful proposals for public funds.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agency (sub-national)
- *Performance Goal:* The goal of this particular provincial government was to increase federally-funded investment in environmental restoration projects (through improving the design of investment proposals).
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity monitored the number of proposals accepted and funded by the central government. These are posted in the national public investment online system, enabling the activity team to directly observe evidence of performance improvement.
- USAID/Peru uses this approach: [Read the full example here](#) (USAID internal only).

Municipal Procurement

- *Activity Overview:* As part of a municipal strengthening activity, USAID supports governments to mitigate procurement corruption vulnerabilities and increase procurement effectiveness. The activity developed a Municipal Graduation Readiness Measurement Tool (MGRMT), which includes 25 quantitative and qualitative achievement measures related to procurement processes. This tool guides municipalities and project advisors in working together to design custom work plans to improve procurement performance. The activity then provides support in alignment with these work plans.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies (sub-national)
- *Performance Goal:* The municipalities who choose to participate in the program have a desire to improve effectiveness and reduce corruption in their procurement processes. They work toward this through incremental goals such as regularly publishing financial and procurement documentation on their public websites, adopting improved records management systems, implementing audit recommendations, and creating opportunities for citizens to provide feedback.
- *Measurement Approach:* Guided by the MGRMT tool, partner municipalities participate in a collaborative assessment process annually, resulting in a quantitative score which serves as the basis for measuring performance improvement under CBLD-9. It is important to note that the utility of the tool goes far beyond the score: due to its effectiveness in identifying improvements and weaknesses in municipal administration, municipal leadership has adopted it as their own management and institutional assessment tool to inform their decision making going forward. This indicates that municipal governments do not see the MGRMT as a checklist of donor-mandated competencies, but rather as a helpful tool to manage and monitor their own improvement.
- USAID/Kosovo used this approach in its Transparent, Accountable, and Effective Municipalities (TEAM) Activity: [Read more about the approach here](#).

Program-Based Budgeting

- *Activity Overview:* An activity strengthens the capacity of central government ministries to carry out macroeconomic reforms, toward the ultimate goal of private sector growth. They develop work plans collaboratively with the supported ministries. For example, the Ministry of Finance requested support in improving budget efficiency through improving program-based budgeting competencies. In response, the activity provided training for staff in program-based budgeting (PBB), and launched a Training of Trainers Program to equip staff to train others in this approach.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Government agencies (National)
- *Performance Goal:* In the case of the Ministry of Finance, the performance goal was to implement program-based budgeting. This provided an opportunity to understand the unit cost of programs and reallocate resources to programs that provided the greatest return on investment.
- *Measurement Approach:* The implementer and supported units agreed on key performance indicators to be tracked throughout assistance. These were tailored to the goals of each unit. For example, the Ministry of Finance chose to monitor the unit cost of programs, as it expected this approach would allow it to divert resources away from the most expensive programs that did not provide a strong return on investment. Additionally, since the activity equipped the Ministry through a Training of Trainers program to help other ministries implement PBB, it tracked the number of other units implementing this budgeting approach. The activity monitored for incremental progress along these measures, and when supported units showed improvement in KPIs - even if they did not reach ultimate activity targets - these units were counted as “improved” under CBLD-9.
- USAID/Egypt used this measurement approach in its programming: [Read the full example here](#) (USAID internal only).



ECONOMIC GROWTH

Private Sector Productivity

- *Activity Overview:* An activity coaches private firms in business skills to help improve their productivity and boost growth.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Private Sector Firms
- *Performance Goal:* Firms want to improve their managerial skills, which they expect will lead to higher production efficiency and enable them to expand their operations.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity captures firms’ performance improvement - evidenced by business growth - by monitoring “Value of sales” and “Number of jobs created.”

Reducing Barriers to Trade

- *Activity Overview:* An activity works with the Central Revenue Authority to reduce barriers to trade by streamlining customs procedures. This includes coaching government officials as they improve guidelines for border posts, and providing support to strengthen training programs for customs officials working on its borders.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies (at both national and subnational levels)
- *Performance Goal:* The Central Revenue Authority wants to increase the competitiveness of its country for trade and investment by reducing the long border wait times and incidence of customs officials demanding bribes. It also wants to increase certainty among businesses by bringing more consistency to the way its officials carry out procedures.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity conducts quarterly surveys with a sample of vehicles crossing the border to monitor typical wait times and incidence of bribery. Additionally, it monitors the ‘Trading across borders’ indicator of the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business Report, which draws on data obtained through a questionnaire administered to customs brokers and other trade actors.

University Career Centers

- *Activity Overview:* An activity establishes career centers to help address the mismatch of youth skills and employer needs. It works with partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and vocational training centers to sustain these career centers past the end of the activity.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Educational Institutions and NGOs
- *Performance Goal:* The HEIs and NGOs each choose their own areas of focus for performance improvement. These include: securing funding to sustain the career centers, establishing working relationships with potential employers of youth, and developing resources for students in particular areas (i.e. networking, interviewing).
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity measures performance improvement for each supported HEI or NGO in line with that organization's own expressed goals. For example, for the organization focused on financial sustainability, the activity monitors, "Number of full time career counselors funded independently of USAID support," which is assessed through periodic reviews of career center staffing.

Youth Workforce Development

- *Activity Overview:* A youth workforce development activity seeks to improve economic opportunities for conflict-affected, out-of-school youth by strengthening a network of city-based Youth Development NGOs.
- *Supported Organization Type:* NGOs
- *Performance Goal:* Individual NGOs identify areas for capacity development that will allow them to better advocate for youth economic opportunities in their respective cities.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity tracks partnerships secured with local employers (calculated as established partnerships with employers as a percentage of the total number of employers approached), as well as number of policy proposals approved by municipal government councils. To gain a more holistic picture of performance improvement, the activity also monitors annual changes in standard foreign assistance indicator EG. 6-12, "Percent of individuals with new employment." While many factors may affect employment numbers (e.g. macroeconomic changes, poor harvests push people to seek work in cities, etc), the activity can make a reasonable assertion that a larger incidence of new employment among youth who participate in programming is, in part, a result of the improved performance of Youth Development NGOs in securing new employer partnerships.



EDUCATION

Early Grade Reading

- *Activity Overview:* An early grade reading program works with the Ministry of Education to create and roll out a new curriculum complete with student and teacher guides and supplementary reading materials. The activity develops the capacity of district-level education offices to roll out the curriculum through the provision of curriculum content training and local network strengthening.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Educational institutions
- *Performance Goal:* The Ministry of Education's goal is to provide an improved early grade reading curriculum and adequately equip teachers to adopt and implement it.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity assesses improved performance of the district education offices by monitoring the percent of Grade 2 classrooms that have adopted the new curriculum in each district by the end of the school year.

Higher Education Accreditation

- *Activity Overview:* An activity supports Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to achieve regional accreditation by providing technical assistance and coaching to improve the quality of education they offer.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Educational institutions
- *Performance Goal:* The Higher Education Institutions aim to achieve regional accreditation. To do this, they must meet specific quality standards.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity adopts a standardized self-assessment tool approved by the regional accreditation body. The selection of this tool is strategic, helping to achieve a high level of commitment from partner HEIs who have interest in achieving and maintaining accreditation. Additionally, the tool aligns well with the steps enumerated in the CBLD-9 PIRS, as it helps guide the process of identifying areas for improvement, implementing solutions, and measuring improvement. Performance improvement of participating HEIs is tracked through improvement in self-assessment scores, as validated through an external quality review by the accreditation body.
- **Important note!** When an organization aims to meet specific national or international standards (e.g. for the purpose of achieving accreditation) then repeating an assessment at multiple points in time may be appropriate to assess progress toward those goals. However, caution is needed to ensure that USAID activities do not subject organizations to lengthy assessment processes that reflect our vision of an “ideal” or “mature” organization, rather than standards which the supported organization itself wants to attain. In many cases, it is more appropriate to use an assessment tool to identify needs, but track performance improvement through 1-2 specific metrics.

Innovation in Higher Education

- *Activity Overview:* A higher education partnership activity works to increase the innovation capacity of local universities. It supports these institutions to adopt human centered design (HCD) principles and approaches at the university administration and department levels.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Educational institutions
- *Performance Goal:* Participating universities wish to increase use of human centered design principles in administrative policy, curriculum, and faculty practice.
- *Measurement Approach:* HCD trainers apply the [Program and Policy Change Framework \(PPC\)](#), a scoring rubric to assess the extent to which different entities such as government institutions, international organizations, and activity implementers-- are adopting research-based approaches. The rubric measures two domains: Influence (geographic reach of organization/entity adopting evidence-based approaches) and Implementation (stage of uptake from commitment to design to piloting to implementation at scale). The activity team applies the PPC scorecard pre-intervention, at mid-term, and at activity close-out to assess the use of human centered design principles in administrative policy, curriculum, and administration and faculty practice. While each participating university aims to achieve a combined score of 5 by activity close-out, the activity considers any annual improvement to be evidence of improved performance for reporting under CBLD-9.

Don't Miss: The Career Center program working with HEIs and the youth workforce development activity, both listed in the Economic Growth section, may be useful in planning your performance measurement approach in education programming.



Financial Sustainability of Health Clinics

- *Activity Overview:* An activity assists local health clinics to improve cost recovery by setting up processes for patients to pay all or part of their healthcare fees.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Health organizations
- *Performance Goal:* Clinics wish to mobilize more resources for health (to ensure financial sustainability and improve and expand services), and to improve equity in healthcare.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity monitors “Average percent of costs recovered by local health clinics.”

Community Health Services

- *Activity Overview:* An activity works across 30 clinics to improve the quality of community health services. To inform their key priorities, the activity holds community meetings in each clinic catchment area, where facilitated discussions produce priorities for performance improvement. These may include cleanliness of the health facility, punctuality of care, fairness of the order in which individuals receive care, or frequency and quality of communication between clinics and village health committees.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Health organizations
- *Performance Goal:* Improved quality of health services in specific areas identified by each community (e.g. cleanliness, punctuality of care, etc.)
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity uses a community score card approach to co-develop indicators with the community, which capture the priority areas identified. Both the community and service providers assign scores to each indicator (from 1-5), then come together to decide on a final score through facilitated dialogue. The scoring is conducted at the beginning of the performance improvement process, then repeated annually with the same indicators to measure improvement. (For an example, see [CARE's Community Score Card Toolkit here.](#))

Social Marketing for Public Health

- *Activity Overview:* A local social marketing business brands and markets low-cost family planning information and products including oral contraceptives, condoms, and cycle beads. The activity supports this organization to use its innovative social marketing initiatives to boost demand for these products, and facilitates connections between this firm and the local distribution network to improve potential customers' access to the products.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Private sector firm
- *Performance Goal:* The firm wishes to expand uptake of family planning products in the areas it serves.
- *Measurement Approach:* The organization tracks “Total reported annual sales” and “Annual couple years of protection (CYP),” both of which provide information on the effectiveness of its marketing and distribution efforts.

Supportive Supervision of Health Facilities

- *Activity Overview:* An activity works with the Ministry of Health to conduct On-site Training and Supportive Supervision of hospitals and health clinics at the national, provincial, and community levels. To guide the supervision process, and areas of needed support for each facility, they develop a questionnaire. This tool guides supervision teams (made up of IP staff and MoH officials) in observing and interviewing health providers and patients to understand performance of each facility in areas such as:
 - Cleanliness of facilities
 - Availability of supplies and equipment
 - Provider capacity to identify symptoms of particular conditions
 - Provider communications with patients
 - Technical skills specific to maternal care, services for victims of gender-based violence, and pharmacy and lab services.

Supervision teams hold discussions with providers to reflect on and synthesize the supervision findings with each visit, and create action plans based on the identified performance gaps.

- *Supported Organization Type:* Health organizations
- *Performance Goal:* Performance goals vary for each facility based on the supervision team's observations and discussions between the supervision team and providers. They include areas such as provider communication with patients and availability of supplies, among many other areas.
- *Measurement Approach:* The supervision questionnaire generates a numeric score, which forms the basis for assessing performance improvement. Note that in supportive supervision programs, in which supervision of service delivery points is combined with coaching and technical assistance, periodic assessments may be used to monitor and document performance improvement. As with all assessments or questionnaires, it is important to ensure measurement focuses on performance, not latent capacity.
- This approach is used in USAID/Benin's health programming: [Read the full example here](#) (USAID internal only).

Municipal Health System Strengthening

- *Activity Overview:* An activity provides technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to municipal governments to strengthen health service delivery. Engagement with each municipality begins with an assessment of current health system performance as it relates to quality standards released by the Ministry of Health. Support is then tailored to the specific performance gaps of each municipality.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies
- *Performance Goal:* Performance goals vary by municipality, but include items such as increasing vaccination rates, ensuring sufficient buffer stocks of essential medicines and supplies, development of health action plans, and integration of health action plans into municipal budget-making processes.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity measures improvement based on health systems assessment scores for each municipality. The activity team developed the assessment based on Ministry of Health quality standards, in conjunction with USAID guidance on health system strengthening. Note that when an organization aims to meet specific governmental or international standards (i.e. to achieve a certification, or access government resources by achieving certain quality benchmarks) then repeating an assessment at multiple points in time may be appropriate to assess progress toward those goals. However, caution is needed to ensure that USAID activities do not subject organizations to lengthy assessment processes that reflect our vision of an "ideal" or "mature" organization, rather than standards which the supported organization itself wants to attain. In many cases, it is more appropriate to use an assessment tool to identify needs, but track performance improvement through 1-2 specific metrics.
- This approach is used in USAID/Nepal's programming: [Read the full example here](#) (USAID internal only).



Cooperative Production

- *Activity Overview:* An activity organizes exposure visits for cooperatives to learn about improved production practices.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Cooperatives
- *Performance Goal:* The cooperatives wish to expand their production volume by employing farming practices that generate higher yields on their members' existing acreage.
- *Measurement Approach:* The activity conducts farm-level observation to monitor the number of hectares under improved management practices and technologies (F indicator 3.2-25). As this indicator captures the extent to which the cooperative has applied better farming practices, it demonstrates improved performance in line with this objective.

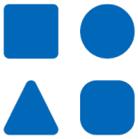
Agricultural Certifications

- *Activity Overview:* An activity provides technical assistance, consultation, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities to cooperatives and small- and medium-sized firms producing fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Assistance is geared toward helping these organizations meet the requirements for international certifications of the quality and safety of their products and practices (including HACCP, ISO, and GlobalG.A.P.).
- *Supported Organization Type:* Cooperatives, Private sector firms
- *Performance Goal:* To improve their competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets, these cooperatives and firms aim to achieve international certifications of the quality and safety of their products and practices. They wish to improve their quality management systems in order to achieve these certifications.
- *Measurement Approach:* As the certifications are evidence of improved quality management, the activity counts an organization as having improved performance when it becomes certified.

Collaboration for Improved Water Service Delivery

- *Activity Overview:* An activity works to improve water service delivery in rural areas by strengthening the collaboration of many actors, including local and national government bodies, local NGOs implementing donor-funded programming, and community leaders.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Government agencies, NGOs
- *Performance Goal:* The supported government agencies and NGOs wish to improve their coordination processes, which they expect will improve the quality of water service delivery.
- *Measurement Approach:* Using an adapted outcome mapping approach, the activity identifies several progress markers for each actor, which contribute to the ultimate goal of sustainable water service provision led by a local coalition. These progress markers include items such as, "The organization is consistently attending and participating actively in coalition meetings" and "The organization is demanding high quality information on local water infrastructure problems to guide decision-making." Twice per year, the implementing partner team selects a Low, Medium, or High rating for each progress marker, justifying the rating with documented evidence (such as public remarks from organizational leaders documented in meeting minutes, or notes from interviews with supported organizations). The change in the Low/Medium/High scores for selected progress markers serves as the basis for assessing performance improvement. [Read more about this approach applied in USAID's Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership.](#)¹

¹ This example is adapted from the approach described in Hollander, Daniel, Brittany Ajroud, Evan Thomas, Shawn Peabody, Elizabeth Jordan, Amy Javernick-Will, and Karl Linden. "[Monitoring Methods for Systems-Strengthening Activities Toward Sustainable Water and Sanitation Services in Low-Income Settings.](#)" Sustainability 12, no. 17 (2020): 7044.



CROSS-SECTORAL MEASUREMENT APPROACHES

There are countless indicators that may be used across sectors to capture an organization's growing capacity to function efficiently and effectively and maintain its role in the system past the end of a USAID activity.

Financial Sustainability

- *Activity Overview:* USAID coaches a local implementing partner in strengthening its internal financial and governance systems and strategic planning processes. This equips the local partner to apply for government funding and form partnerships with the private sector.
- *Supported Organization Type:* NGOs, Research institutions, Educational institutions, and Faith-based organizations
- *Performance Goal:* The organization aims to secure government grants and form partnerships with the private sector. It invests in improving its internal financial and governance systems to earn credibility and legitimacy which will help attract these resources and partners. It invests in its strategic planning processes to ensure any funding partnerships it enters align with its own goals (not those of a partner) and help it advance its mission.
- *Measurement Approach:* USAID assesses the organization's improved performance by monitoring its diversified funding sources, as measured by (1) the number of government grants provided to the organizations, and (2) dollar value of private sector funds leveraged.

Responding to Local Demand

- *Activity Overview:* An IP assists local service providers - agricultural extension agents, electrical utilities, community health councils, and others - to improve responsiveness to evolving community needs. The service providers receive coaching in setting up structured community consultations to understand local demands for specific services or perceived gaps in existing services. After these consultations, the IP accompanies these organizations in developing action plans for adapting their services in response to community feedback.
- *Supported Organization Type:* Governmental agencies, Health organizations, Private firms, Other
- *Performance Goal:* Each supported organization aims to better understand the needs and demands of the communities it serves, and adjust its services in response to those demands. Improved responsiveness enables each organization to remain relevant within its local system.
- *Measurement Approach:* The IP conducts surveys among a sample of community members, which ask respondents to rate (on a Likert scale) the extent to which various local service providers are responsive to their expressed priorities and needs. This metric captures the extent to which the supported organizations improved their performance in the area of responsiveness to community demand.



STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN NETWORKS

Network analysis may be an appropriate measurement approach when performance improvement goals center on building relationships or strengthening trust among network actors. For example:

- An activity focuses on strengthening a health referral network in which primary, secondary, and tertiary health care providers must share information to improve continuity and consistency of patient care.
- An activity works to streamline processing of individuals across different organizational actors within the justice system to improve efficiency and individuals' experiences, from initial screening with one office to subsequent engagement with other offices.

In these types of activities, network analysis can reveal whether referrals are overly dependent on one broker, or whether certain types of clients drop out despite being referred for further services more than other types of clients. Analytic scores such as centrality, network density, and average reach can be used from iterative samples to measure change in flows of information, resources, or individuals throughout the network over the life of an activity.

One helpful resource is PACT's [Organizational Network Analysis \(ONA\) Toolkit](#), which draws on a survey and participatory feedback to generate a network map (with associated metrics). While there are several ways to collect data for a network analysis, data validity is much stronger when data are collected based on actual interactions of network actors (for example, by clients handing in a referral sheet), rather than through self-reported interactions.

MEASURING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT: DOs AND DON'Ts



DO identify a specific goal of capacity development. Think: "increased frequency of engagement with government officials" or "improved quality of policy briefs," NOT "improved advocacy capacity."

DO choose metrics that reflect supported organizations' own goals.

DO choose a specific performance metric as the basis for measuring performance improvement!

DO consider data validity: would your measurement method pass a Data Quality Assessment? If not, revise! (Reach out to CBLDSupport@usaid.gov for help!)

DO supplement your performance metric with methods that tell you about the "how" and "why" behind your observed results.



DON'T measure latent capacity; measure performance. Think, "Improved clarity of provider communication with patients," not "Clinic has developed a patient communications manual."

DON'T use assessment tools with dozens of questions to measure performance improvement! These are burdensome for supported organizations, and put too much emphasis on OUR priorities (not theirs!).

DON'T choose quantitative metrics for types of performance improvement that aren't countable, but **DO** choose a specific *qualitative* metric (Think: quality of policy briefs, level of trust between providers and patients, success of a specific policy proposal).

DON'T rely only on organizational self-assessment, as this threatens data validity. But **DO** engage local organizations in reflecting on their own progress!

DON'T count organizations as improved just because they received capacity support. Implementation is not equal to results! Instead, use a specific (qualitative or quantitative) metric to assess performance improvement.