



SWP Institutional Capacity Assessment Process

Tool Description and Purpose

This tool provides guidance to the Sustainable Water Partnership (SWP) and other organizations involved in improving capacity in water security on how to define goals and track changes in institutional performance to address or mitigate water security risks. This guidance builds on recent USAID guidance and methodologies on monitoring organizational capacity development by focusing on measuring performance, engaging stakeholders to co-define and validate performance outcomes, indicators, and targets, and using qualitative research methods to monitor both expected and unexpected changes in performance. For SWP, this guidance supports data collection for the indicator “Number of water and sanitation sector institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply and sanitation services as a result of USG assistance”.

This tool uses a facilitated, participatory approach to determining institutional performance goals and metrics to measure institutional performance. By working with institutions to co-define desired water security outcomes, their role in the process, and appropriate milestones or indicators to track progress, SWP will ensure that institutions are committed to improving institutional performance. At the same time, SWP will have the opportunity to provide guidance and support to ensure that performance improvement goals are logical, relevant, and reasonable. As such, this tool contains a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of possible water security functions, sub-functions, and tasks.

The guidance in this institutional performance assessment tool is intentionally broad in recognition of the fact that SWP will work with diverse institutions ranging from local NGOs to national-level government ministries. Institutions will have varying mandates, existing baseline capacities, and ability to invest in improving institutional performance. Following the steps below, SWP staff will identify target institutions and key individuals within these institutions, assess baseline performance of water governance functions, and collaboratively define achievable outcomes, indicators, and timelines.

The process should follow the following steps:

1. Identify key individuals responsible for guiding water security institutional improvement
2. Determine areas for capacity development in collaboration with identified staff considering organizational mandate and anticipated SWP assistance
3. Determine objectives or desired end result of capacity development process
4. For each objective, establish final goals, intermediate milestones
5. Establish monitoring mechanisms and schedule
6. Identify and allocate resources to support and monitor the capacity development process
7. Evaluate and reiterate

1. Identify or assign key individuals in the institution responsible for guiding water security institutional improvement

These individuals should be responsible for guiding water-security related activities and will be engaged in the institutional improvement process. They will lead and/or be the primary contacts for the institutional performance assessment and monitoring so should have adequate authority and access to information and data. Depending on the institution these individuals may be mid-level professionals or group/unit leaders.

2. Determine areas for capacity development in collaboration with identified staff, considering organizational mandate and anticipated SWP assistance

The table below is an illustrative list of the main governance functions and sub-functions that water institutions may provide. Institutions should feel free to add any relevant sub-functions if not listed. An institution may have a broad mandate that encompasses many of these sub-functions or may only cover one or two. Selecting relevant sub-functions will depend on priorities as determined by the institution, and on the type of support, the budget, and the timeline for improving institutional performance.

Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities Ensuring internal and external Coordination Raising Public and Political Awareness Communicating with water users (notably customers or members when relevant) Securing, Managing, and Allocating Funding Developing Staff Capacity on Technical Water Issues Improving Leadership and Management Skills Financial Management
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting, Managing, and Using Data Projecting Future Supply and Demand Designing Long-Term Strategies Developing Climate-Sensitive Scenario Assessments Developing Planning and Management Tools for Decision-Making
Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awarding and Recording Water Rights and Responsibilities Establishing Rights Transfer Mechanisms Developing Cost and Fee Collection Mechanisms Adjudicating Disputes Assessing Third Party Impacts
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructing, Operating, and Maintaining Public Water Infrastructure Forecasting Seasonal Supply and Demand Integrating Climate Risks into Management Forecasting and Mitigating Impacts from Floods, Droughts, and other water-related events Ensuring Water Source and Ecosystem Protection Enforcing Fee Collection
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorizing Private Infrastructure Issuing and Monitoring Operating Concessions Monitoring and Enforcing Water Service Standards Regulating Quality
Other	Other

3. Determine the objective(s) or desired end result of capacity development process

For each water sub-function that is identified as needing improvement, specific objectives has/have to be defined and spelled out. Objectives should be reasonable given the time and resources available both internally at the organization and from SWP.

The table below provides an illustrative list of objectives aligned with the illustrative water governance sub-functions. Institutions should feel free to add or modify the illustrative objectives as needed.

Organization	<p>Developing Organizational Structure: Adequate legal framework to organize, fund, and empower water governance</p> <hr/> <p>Establishing Roles and Responsibilities: Organizational mandates clearly defined within agencies and between national/regional/local offices; Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and annual goals/targets</p> <hr/> <p>Facilitating Coordination/Integration: Awareness and explicit coordination with other water agencies to enhance efficiencies and reduce duplication</p> <hr/> <p>Raising Public and Political Awareness: Reports prepared and disseminated, annual targets</p>
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Organization

Securing, Managing, and Allocating Funding: Funding defined and budget information accessible

Workforce Capacity on Technical Water Issues: Staff have skills to fulfill their responsibilities

Improving Leadership and Management Skills: Institution leadership has management skills to lead the institution

Planning

Collecting, Managing, and Using Data: Regular data collection, data publicly available

Projecting Future Supply and Demand: Adequate information available for projections; projections made and disseminated

Designing Long-Term Strategies: National/Regional/Local plans completed; Plans include flood, drought, water quality, ecosystem protection, environmental flows; Plans include input/hearings from public (especially marginalized groups); Plans have adequate monitoring

Developing Climate-Sensitive Scenario Assessments: Plans developed that explicitly consider climate risks and vulnerabilities into consideration

Developing Planning and Management Tools for Decision-Making: Plans available to stakeholders for use

Allocation

Awarding and Recording Water Rights and Responsibilities: Rights clearly defined; clear processes for awarding and enforcing rights; rights records available; water use groups can bid

Establishing Rights Transfer Mechanisms: Processes and responsibilities defined for transfer mechanisms

Developing Cost and Fee Collection Mechanisms: Tariffs developed to reflect allocations

Adjudicating Disputes: Processes transparent and publicly presented; penalties are clear and fair; rights are equally applied

Assessing Third Party Impacts: Impacts for marginalized groups, ecosystems are accounted for

Management

Constructing, Operating, and Maintaining Public Water Infrastructure: Clear roles and responsibilities to manage with adequate capacity to do so; O&M policies and reports established; water users can build and operate small-scale infrastructure; budget management

Forecasting Seasonal Supply and Demand: Forecasts communicated; Water users involved in communicating allocation demands and communicate when actual allocations don't align with forecast; allocations adjusted for needs and weather

Integrating Climate Risks into Management: Allocations adjusted to be sensitive to anticipated climate impacts

Forecasting and Managing Floods, Droughts, and Impacts: National flood protection policy/strategy established; EWS in place and communicated; Drought response policy established

Ensuring Water Source and Ecosystem Protection: National ecosystem protection policy/strategy established; Behavior change programs on ecosystem protection; Environmental flows enforced

Enforcing Fee Collection: Tariffs implemented; fees collected on a regular and timely basis

Regulation	Authorizing Private Infrastructure: Clear roles and policies for private water infrastructure
	Issuing and Monitoring Operating Concessions: Quality and service regulations
	Monitoring and Enforcing Water Service Standards: Adequate monitoring capacity with indicators, targets, and penalties; Data collected and disseminated to public
	Regulating Quality: Reporting mechanism for quality issues; Pollution incidents and offenders publicized; Polluter penalties established
Other	Other

4. For each objective, establish final goals and intermediate milestones

Defining the final goals of a performance improvement process articulates what goals the institution hopes to achieve by the end of the capacity development process. Intermediate milestones track progress towards reaching the goal and are used as check-in points to assess if capacity development interventions and results are on schedule or need to be adjusted. Goals and milestones should be ambitious but reflect the type of support, the budget, and the timeline.

Goals and milestones should align with the SMART methodology:

1. Specific: A clear target is stated using straightforward language
2. Measurable: It is feasible to collect information on it
3. Accurate: The milestone is a direct indicator of progress towards the final performance goal
4. Reliable: The information is credible and is the same no matter who assesses the milestone
5. Time-Bound: There is a time frame associated with the milestone

For example, a water agency with the objective of improving flood forecasting and mitigation under the Management sub-function could have the final goals of improved information capture and use on rainfall and river level monitoring, improved land use planning in flood prone areas, and deployment of early warning systems over a three-year period from March 1, 2018 to February 28, 2021.

EFFECTIVE FLOOD FORECASTING AND MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE	MILESTONE	COMPLETION DATE
Institution collecting timely and accurate rainfall and river monitoring data by November 30, 2018	Installation and operation of 5 rain gages	June 30, 2018
	Installation and operation of 2 gaging stations	July 31, 2018
	Accuracy testing of gauges completed	August 31, 2018
	Regular data collected	November 30, 2018
	Data used for management and planning	March 31, 2019
Institution completing mapping of flood prone areas	Acquisition and operationalization of river flow model	July 31, 2018
	Collection of past flood information	September 30, 2018
	Mapping completed for key watersheds	November 30, 2018
	Maps distributed to community risk managers	January 30, 2019
	Maps used for land use planning and site selection for infrastructure	June 30, 2018

OBJECTIVE	MILESTONE	COMPLETION DATE
Deployment of early warning systems	Definition of key water-related vulnerabilities	December 15, 2018
	Thresholds defined for deployment of early warning systems	March 31, 2019
	Definition and testing of communication chains	May 31, 2019
	EWS used in emergency	TBD
Development and adoption of flood protection policy	Drafting of policy	October 31, 2018
	Policy approval and dissemination	March 31, 2019
	Implementation of flood protection actions	June 30, 2019
	Reduced impact from flooding	September 31, 2019

5. Establish Monitoring Mechanisms and Schedule

At each meeting SWP and the institution will review the capacity development plan and collect data against milestones through semi-structured interviews, primary document review, and other qualitative research methods. Where appropriate, SWP may use other data, such as customer satisfaction surveys and utilities data to assess performance. Data quality will be ensured by triangulating information using multiple data sources to counterbalance strengths and limitations and ensure that data meets data quality criteria of validity, reliability, timeliness, integrity, and precision. Monitoring will be an iterative process and progress will be shared with the institution on an ongoing basis following monitoring meetings. While many of the planned milestones may be binary (e.g. completion of an activity or deliverable), institutions may also use a percentage such as proportion of milestones completed against the anticipated schedule. In other situations, it may be appropriate to use more traditional monitoring indicators. If a utility has the goal of increasing piped water coverage by a certain number of households, the institution should track changes in the number of households with piped water.

6. Identify and allocate resources to support and monitor the capacity development process

Determine what steps and resources (financial, technical, human) are necessary to reach the goal(s). Illustrative steps include:

- Drafting of specific roles and responsibilities or mission statement for agencies, departments or individual staff
- Dedicated technical training for staff on water topics
- Provision of technical information or data (hydrologic, climate-related)
- Provision of financial/accounting software and training
- Provision of water monitoring equipment
- Drafting or updating of long or short-term planning documents
- Strategic planning consultation or training
- Inventory and/or training on monitoring of water rights
- Public engagement and/or conflict resolution training

Resources can be internal or external to the institution. Internal resources, such as staff time or budget, must be clearly allocated while external resources should be defined in terms of type, duration, and source.

7. Evaluate and reiterate

Based on the capacity building objective(s) and goal(s) identified at the onset and the milestones established, SWP will work with the institution to conduct a mid-term and final evaluation at the mid-point and end of the capacity building period to assess if they have achieved their objectives, or at least demonstrated capacity improvement constraints on achieving the goal – for example, early warning system example, the institution may be unable to test the early warning system mechanism and protection actions if no flooding events occur. Evaluation methodologies will include surveying documentation and data produced as a result of the identified milestones or indicators and qualitative methods including key informant interviews and focus group discussions with relevant institution staff or members to better understand the successes and challenges of the capacity building process. The evaluation should be documented in a report and filed along with any accompanying documentation (e.g. a flood protection policy).

Results from the evaluation should directly lead to a new and improved iteration of the institutional capacity improvement process whereby the institution will identify new objectives and goals to continue improving its performance.