

POPULATION-BASED SURVEY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING TOOL

Implementation Manual

Population-based Survey Capacity Strengthening Tool

DONOR SUPPORT AND DISCLAIMER

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OVERVIEW

The Population-based Survey Capacity Strengthening Tool (CST) was developed by the Center for International Health, Education, and Biosecurity at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, a PEPFAR funded Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (PHIA) implementing program. The purpose of the tool is to systematically support the transition of population-based household survey implementation, analysis, and dissemination from international partners to local implementing partners (IP). The design of the tool enables the local IP, survey funder, and government institutions to objectively identify areas in need of strengthening to enable a methodologically and ethically sound locally implemented survey is conducted with efficiency and quality. The tool should be administered, and capacity strengthening plan developed, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, National Public Health Institute, and National Statistics Agency alongside PEPFAR and CDC within a partnership framework (Figure 1).

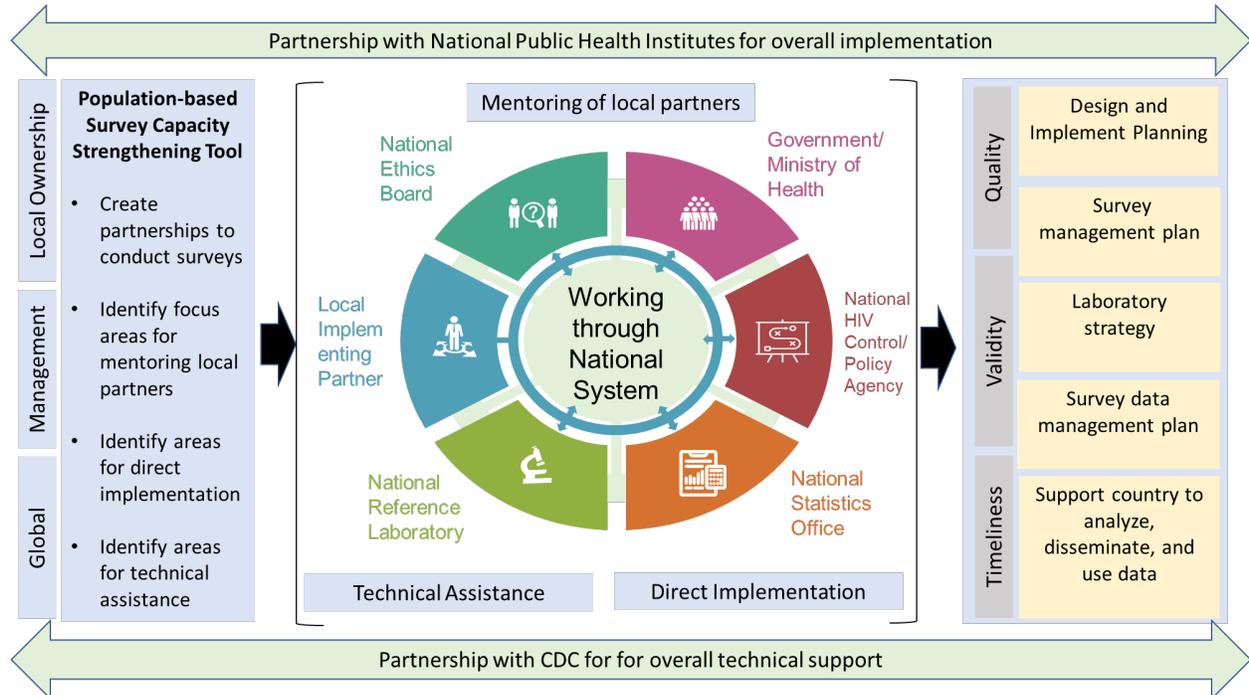


Figure 1. Operationalization of the capacity strengthening tool and targeted survey outputs

TOOL DESIGN AND COMPONENTS

Purpose

The CST is designed to give country leadership, national institutions, the funding agency, and local partner a useful tool to assess the overall capacity to deliver a quality survey from planning through dissemination. The information from the tool is used to prioritize activities to strengthen capacity when a need is identified and/or identify areas of strong capacity that could be used to exemplify a best practice. The information from the tool may also be used to identify portions of the survey that may require technical assistance for survey implementation while capacity strengthening is ongoing.

Design

The CST is organized by 9 capacity objective areas grouped into three sections: 1) Country survey environment, 2) IP business capacity, and 3) Survey management and implementation technical capacity. Each objective includes a set of indicators under thematic areas that are representative of the systems and activities that are critical to plan and implement a population-based household survey. Each indicator has a set of observable statements that are scored on a scale of 0-3 (Figure 2). A rating of 0 represents no capacity or system and a 3 represents highly developed capacity. The use of observable statements enables stakeholders to see what is needed to move to a higher level with respect to each indicator and serves as the basis for the development of specific and measurable capacity strengthening plans.

Figure 2. Design and score interpretation of the capacity assessment tool

Objective area						
Thematic area						
Activity number	Indicator	0	1	2	3	Score
X	Illustrative statement representing the capacity needed for the activity	No capacity – significant strengthening needed	Some capacity – significant strengthening needed	Moderate capacity – some capacity strengthening needed	Excellent capacity – no capacity strengthening needed	

Table 1. Population-based survey capacity strengthening tool structure and component areas

Section Number	Section Focus	Objective	Thematic Areas
1	Country survey environment	National infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory/Ethics • Legal structure • Security
2	Business capacity	Business capacity of local IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial policies and procedures • Budget development and management • Financial management • Payroll management • Cash management and internal controls • Accounting system on payables and reconciliation • Procurement operations
3	Technical capacity	Mobilization, community engagement, median, and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Advocacy • Community sensitization and awareness • Publicity and engagement with public • Social media and branding • Dissemination
3	Technical capacity	Survey planning and readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping and listing • Questionnaire development and CAPI testing • SOPs • Workplans • Survey preparation
3	Technical capacity	Field implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment planning • Implementation of field work • Monitoring of field work
3	Technical capacity	Data collection and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection • Live transmission • Processing • Analysis • Security
3	Technical capacity	Health safety, security of human and physical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infectious disease risk mitigation • Staff safety • Ethics • Security of field operations
3	Technical capacity	Supply logistics and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply specification • Procurement • Shipping logistics • Warehouse inventory and distribution

Section Number	Section Focus	Objective	Thematic Areas
3	Technical capacity	Laboratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities • Equipment • Commodities shipment and management • Storage and inventory • Biorepository and sample storage post-survey

Tool objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT: The country implementation situational assessment is expected to assess the implementing environment in the country including the regulatory infrastructure, legal environment, and security situation. This section does not contribute to the overall scoring of the tool and is not included in the capacity strengthening plan. The purpose of this section is to provide information to the NPHI and MOH for awareness of potential challenges within the implementing environment.

OBJECTIVE 2: BUSINESS CAPACITY: This section of the CST has been modeled after the US CDC business systems review which are conducted with USG funded IPs annually. There are seven thematic areas in this section which include financial policies and procedures, budget development and management, financial management, payroll management, cash management and internal controls, accounting systems on payables and reconciliation, and procurement operations. The purpose of this section is to determine the capacity of the IP to manage the non-linear cash-flow lifecycle of a population-based household survey and ensure cost efficiency.

OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: A key aspect of most surveys is the ability to engage with communities and garner sufficient interest and commitment to elicit maximum participation. The purpose of this objective is to assess the capacity of the IP to advocate to community stakeholders, sensitize and create awareness of the survey within communities. Five thematic areas are addressed in this section: community advocacy, community sensitization and awareness, publicity and engagement with the public, social media visibility and branding, dissemination. It is likely that these activities will be implemented by more than one IP. For example, one IP or government agency may be engaged to implement the community mobilization and sensitization activities while the lead implementing IP would be responsible for publicity, social media and branding, and dissemination. The appropriate sections of the tool objective area should be administered to all IPs identified for participation in the survey.

OBJECTIVE 4: SURVEY PLANNING AND READINESS: The purpose of this objective is to determine the capacity of the IP to manage and complete all preparatory activities in advance of field practice and survey implementation. This objective covers five thematic areas including mapping and listing, questionnaire finalization and computer-assisted

personal interview programming and testing, standard operating procedure development, workplan development, survey staffing and operations infrastructure. In most countries, the National Statistics Agency that conducts census activities performs the mapping and listing while the IP would be responsible for the other thematic areas in this section. The appropriate sections of the tool objective areas should be administered to the agency and IP identified for these activities.

OBJECTIVE 5: IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & SUPERVISION OF FIELD IMPLEMENTATION

ACTIVITIES: The purpose of this objective is to determine the capacity of the IP to efficiently implement a household survey with quality including coordinating and managing the implementation of field and laboratory activities. This section includes deployment planning, training, return of results of biological tests, linkage to care, and monitoring and supervision of all survey activities and staff.

OBJECTIVE 6: CAPACITY FOR DATA COLLECTION, TRANSMISSION, PROCESSING, ANALYSIS & SECURITY

The purpose of this objective is to determine the capacity of the IP to securely and ethically collect, store, transmit, monitor in-real time, process, and analyze questionnaire and laboratory data from human subjects.

OBJECTIVE 7: HEALTH SAFETY & SECURITY OF HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES:

The purpose of this section is to determine the capacity of the IP to mitigate infectious disease transmission risk (e.g., SARS-CoV-2) among field and laboratory teams and between survey staff and community members during survey implementation, ensure protection of human subjects, and provide for the security of field staff and survey assets.

OBJECTIVE 8: CAPACITY TO ENSURE TIMELY SUPPLIES, LOGISTICS AND STORAGE:

The timely supply of commodities and materials can be the difference between a failed survey and a successful one. This objective determines the capacity of the IP to procure laboratory consumables in a timely fashion and according to precise specifications. It also assesses the pipeline for commodity storage and distribution throughout the survey life cycle.

The sections, objectives, thematic areas, and activities have been designed to represent the core components needed to take a population-based household survey from planning to dissemination.

OBJECTIVE 9: This component of the tool should be implemented in collaboration with the local organization who will be responsible for implementing the survey. This objective is meant to supplement the standard population-based survey laboratory assessment tools and is intended to strengthen the capacity of the local organization to assess the laboratory infrastructure, staffing, security, equipment, stock management, and storage capacity at both the central and satellite laboratory levels.

ADMINISTERING THE TOOL

The intention is for this tool to be implemented through a partnership framework where the entity being reviewed is an equal partner in its completion to the organization performing the review.

Formulation of the tool implementation team

The implementation team should include representatives from each of the entities represented in figure 1 as well as subject matter experts with prior experience managing and implementing a population-based household survey. It is a best practice to identify one person to coordinate the team and be responsible for ensuring the tool is implemented in a timely manner. For example, a full team may include a representative from the Ministry of Health, National Public Health Institute, National Ethics Board, National Reference Laboratory, National Statistics Agency, National HIV Control/Policy Agency, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, PEPFAR Coordinating Office, and subject matter experts with previous experience in survey project direction, technical implementation, program administration, supply chain and logistics, field planning and management, laboratory, community mobilization, and data.

While this sounds like a large team, keep in mind that not all members will be involved in each section of the tool implementation. An interdisciplinary team allows for sections of the tool to be administered in parallel with sufficient content expertise to validate the documentation provided for accurate scoring of each indicator.

Implementing the tool

STEP 1: ENGAGEMENT

The representative on the implementation team from the national institution designated to lead the survey contacts the institutions that will be engaged in survey processes and local IP identified to implement the survey to introduce the tool implementation team. A site visit is scheduled for tool completion. The tool should be sent at least two weeks in advance of the visit with a list of the sections that apply to that entity to allow time for documentation gathering. It may be helpful to provide a description of the relevant focal person by objective, thematic area, and indicator who should be available during the site visit to engage with the tool implementation team.

STEP 2: TOOL ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

The CST should be completed in a collaborative fashion in partnership with the entity being reviewed. Begin with an orientation to the team and the tool. While it is important that the most senior leadership of the entity being reviewed is part of the site visit, it is unlikely they will be the person providing all of the documentation and responses to the indicators. The reliability of the scoring will depend on participation from staff who will be performing the activity represented in the indicator during the survey.

The scoring has been designed to clearly identify the documentation needed to objectively achieve a particular score.

Provide feedback and discussion around the scoring during the process. Transparency from all parties will be important for capacity strengthening plans as well as identification of existing best practices.

Include an exit meeting with senior leadership to summarize high level observations.

STEP 3: CAPACITY STRENGTHENING PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Capacity strengthening plans should be developed collaboratively with the organization, national leadership, and the survey funder. It will be important to include timelines as well as what the objective measurement will be used to demonstrate increased capacity. For example, some plans may include hiring an individual with the necessary experience to achieve the indicator, others may require training or mentoring. Strengthening plans should be documented and provided to the organization as well as the national organization responsible for leading the survey and the funder and monitored with a tracker.

Expected timeline

