Making Sense of Capacity Development

Discussion paper for the seminar on International Capacity Building – Recipes for Success, 28 January 2010, The Hague

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Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BOCI	LNV Policy Support Cluster International
CD	Capacity Development
CDI	Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DGIS	Dutch Directorate General International Cooperation
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HLF	High Level Forum
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research
LenCD	Learning network on Capacity Development
LNV	Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OIE	World Organization for Animal Health
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBI	World Bank Institute
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WUR	Wageningen University and Research Centre

Preface

This paper was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality to inspire discussions during a seminar on International Capacity Building – Recipes for Success, 28 January 2010, on the occasion of the formal farewell to Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Peter de Leeuw.

Since many studies and guides have been written already, this paper focuses on providing an overview of the state-of-the-art thinking on capacity development while loosely exploring this in the context of animal health. Rather than being a comprehensive study, it intends to provide a quick insight into current discussions and it assesses trends in prevailing thinking on capacity development.

The seminar has a (purposefully) thought-provoking title of 'recipes for success'. It will be interesting to see what conclusion readers will draw after reading this paper - whether there are such recipes, and if so, what the ingredients are.

Our appreciation goes to Peter de Leeuw, Frits van Vugt, Niek Schelling, Martijn Weijtens, and Hans Schiere for sharing their valued ideas and comments on earlier drafts. The authors are responsible for the remaining shortcomings.

Wageningen, 20 January 2010

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Summary

Capacity development (CD) is not a new phenomenon, and yet we can observe an increasing interest in the subject. Over the past five years, more guidelines, manuals and papers have been written on capacity development and capacity building (we will use the term capacity development to cover both of these labels) than in the preceding two decades. Part of this relates to a change in paradigm, where what we used to call technical cooperation (TC) and technical assistance (TA) has been replaced by what we call capacity development. However, capacity development approaches could be traced back as far as the 1950s; it is just that what was meant by it, has changed significantly over the years. The current focus on capacity development could be characterised by an emphasis on processes of participation, continuous learning and adaptation, systemic thinking and the quest for being strategic in the face of complexity.

The evolving approaches of capacity development have led to a situation in which the label of CD by itself does not explain very much. This may be one of the reasons for the surge in documentation on the subject by a range of organisations and agencies. Making sense of capacity development therefore requires unpacking core concepts to understand what different individuals and organisations actually have in mind.

Establishing a shared understanding will need to include shared perspectives on the nature of development (and change processes), of capacity of capacity development, of capacity development support, and of assessing change in view of CD efforts. Capacity is then found to be a multifaceted and dynamic concept that encompasses many elements and exists at various levels. Similarly, capacity development could be viewed as a container concept that involves several interactive and dynamic components. Understanding the nature of capacity development leads to a realisation that it is essential to distinguish between processes of (endogenous[1]) capacity development and interventions in/support to such processes. Much of what is generally described as capacity development, should therefore be phrased as *support to* capacity development.

The above understanding clarifies the role and functions of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In the first place, it points to the fact that M&E should distinguish between assessing capacity development and assessing support to capacity development. In the second place, it points to the fact that a distinction should be made between assessing a change in potential and a change in performance.

With the increased interest in getting to terms with capacity development, there appears to be an emerging new paradigm for capacity development. Rather than developing yet another new approach, a growing group of theorists and practitioners opt for something we would call 'situational capacity development support' or configuring 'best-fit' approaches. This involves making use of the experience of the last few decades, not so much looking for 'right and wrong', but for 'best fits' given the characteristics of a particular setting, while borrowing from previous good practice in view the specifics of an encountered situation. This may do more justice to the proverbial 'standing on the shoulders of giants as well.

Though situational capacity development support seems to contradict a search for 'recipes for success'[2], arriving at a best-fit approach does involve principles of good practice.

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[1] Endogenous in this context implies 'originating from within'.

[2] The summary of the recent report "Minder pretentie, meer ambitie – ontwikkelingshulp die verschil maakt" (WRR-rapport nr. 84, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) reads, "Development aid is and will remain a difficult activity. There are no simple recipes and successes are certainly not guaranteed." Since the report does

Moreover, a number of generally agreed principles of good practice would apply in any situation and are therefore shared in this paper.

Loosely exploring the above in the context of LNV's domain, in particular in animal health, leads to a (selected) number of interesting fields of study:

- Can endogenous ownership always be established in CD (support)?
- What is involved in establishing future-oriented (support to) capacity development, which is preventive in its focus rather than curative and which strengthens resilience?
- How to fine-tune a particular CD support intervention to the specifics of a situation given the many variables and differences in context?
- To what extent do service providers of CD support seriously consider their internal capacity for providing such support?
- How geared towards immediate performance should CD support interventions be?

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arrive at a number of recommendations, perhaps we can say that we can at least learn what is involved in developing non-simple, situation-specific recipes.

1. Introduction – what is the issue?

Capacity development (CD) is not a new concept. Like many organizations and agencies, LNV has incorporated a CD focus in much of its work. Key areas in which LNV has actively supported CD processes internationally, are the work on meeting EU requirements for EU accessory countries and increasingly the work of agricultural counsellors in embassies around the world. This paper will explore the state-of-the-art of current CD thinking and practice. It will put some challenging discussion points on the table in relation to the search for principles of good practice.

Capacity development is a core concept in development cooperation. It can be viewed as a broadening of a development focus from catering to direct needs and provision of technical assistance, to the inclusion of addressing more structural causes of poverty and establishing sustainable development prerequisites.

Capacity development is also a subject that has been high on the list of priorities for many organizations involved in international development, especially in recent years. Extensive studies were carried out, most notably by ECDPM (2008). Manuals and guidelines were written by a range of organizations and agencies, as different as ADB, UNDP, SIDA, FAO, OECD and EuropeAid.

Is it that we don't know what capacity development encompasses? Is there serious disagreement on what it is meant to encompass? Is there a need or desire to develop specific 'flavours' of capacity development? Do we continuously run into a mismatch between CD theory and practice? Are many of these organizations and agencies merely communicating that they are taking the subject seriously? Or could it be that there is no such thing as confirmed general good practice in CD and that this needs to be spelled out specifically for different organizations and different contexts?

Whatever may be the case, it is useful to have so many documents on the subject available. They distinctly show the different interpretations of the practice of capacity development, as well as the emerging consensus on core principles underpinning meaningful capacity development. Recent discussion papers by ECDPM and OECD seem to indicate a growing agreement on what relates to good practice in CD.

Recent international agendas have put CD more strongly and coherently on the table, most notably the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in 2008[3]. The resulting Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) mentions capacity development (CD) not less than 16 times. The preparatory Bonn workshop on "Capacity development: Accra and beyond"[4], which took place in May 2008, suggested a number of principles, which in broad lines have been adopted in the AAA:
- integration of CD as a core element in all development efforts
- developing countries taking the lead in addressing key issues that undermine CD
- developing countries exercising ownership of CD
- inclusion of civil society and the private sector in CD
- tailoring and coordinating CD specifically to situations of fragility
- expansion of CD knowledge and application of good practice.

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[3] Over 1700 participants including more than 100 ministers and heads of agencies from developing and donor countries, emerging economies, UN and multilateral institutions, global funds, foundations, and 80 civil society organizations attended the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness hosted by the Government of Ghana in Accra, 2-4 September 2008. The HLF reviewed progress in the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

[4] "Capacity development: Accra and beyond". Summary conclusions of the Bonn workshop, 15-16 May 2008. OECD (DAC) and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Another impetus for increased interest in the subject of CD relates to the approach of 2015 and the MDGs that were aspired to be achieved by that year. Focusing neither on technical assistance, nor on its successor, capacity development, has brought the momentum that they were hoped to bring. Resulting frustrations are also expressed in relation to e.g. twinning projects that LNV has been involved in (see annex). Threats of deepening poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger have led to a growing concern about development aid effectiveness and the need for collaborative action towards sustainable development through capacity development[5]. When donor harmonization is on the agenda, necessarily it needs to include harmonization of CD support efforts.

With this in mind, it makes sense to create frameworks that enable finding common ground and define agreed principles of good practice. The next chapter will reflect on this.

A major reason for increased attention for capacity development is a widespread confirmation that a CD focus should replace the outdated technical assistance focus. Though such widespread recognition is not new, many organizations only recently realized the need for a CD framework and that a mere shift of focus away from TA would not suffice[6].

The following table provides a rough idea of how the capacity development focus evolved:

Table 1: Capacity development in a historical perspective

Term	Decade	Capacity development approach
Institution building	1950s and 1960s	Provide public sector institutions Focus on and design individual functioning organisations Models transplanted from the North Training in Northern universities
Institutional strengthening and development	1960s and 1970s	Shift to strengthening rather than establishing Provide tools to improve performance Focus still on individual organisations and training in the North
Development management and administration	1970s	Reach target groups previously neglected Focus on improving delivery systems and public programmes to reach target groups
Human resource development	1970s and 1980s	Development is about people; emergence of people-centred development Key sectors to target are: education, health and population
New institutionalism	1980s and 1990s	Capacity building broadened to sector level (government, NGO and private) Focus on networks and external environment Attention to shaping national economic behaviour Emergence of issues of sustainability and move away from focus on projects
Capacity development	Late 1980s and 1990s	Reassessment of the notion of technical cooperation (TC) Stressed importance of local ownership and process Participatory approaches as the key Seen as 'the way to do development'
Capacity development/ knowledge	2000s	Increased participation in capacity building Emphasis on continuous learning and adaptation Balancing results-based management and long-term

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[5] The recent report "Minder pretentie, meer ambitie – ontwikkelingshulp die verschil maakt" (WRR-rapport nr. 84, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) concludes that it is time to review the current mode(s) of development aid, given local capacity development dynamics, changing global dynamics and the current (disappointing) success rate of such aid.

[6] *Technical cooperation (TC)* is the provision of know-how in the form of short and long-term personnel, training and research, twinning arrangements, peer support and associated costs. *Technical Assistance (TA)* refers to the personnel involved (individuals as well as teams of consultants) in developing knowledge, skills, technical know-how or productive aptitudes. (*EuropAid, 2009 (2)).*

Term	Decade	Capacity development approach
networks		sustainability Systems approach and emerging talk of complex systems Emphasis on needs assessment/analysis Spread of ICT-based knowledge networks Increased donor coordination
Perhaps situation-tailored capacity development with an increased role for the private sector and civil society.	2010 -	Perhaps capacity development in the light of the Paris declaration and Accra Agenda for Action as the HLF on Aid Effectiveness (2011, Seoul) and 2015 (MDGs) draw closer, with a focus on good governance prerequisites.

(Adapted from Blagescu, 2006)

In this paper, we use the term capacity development. Yet, many prefer to talk about capacity building or capacity enhancement. Though semantically different, we consider them to be mere labels, which relates to differences which are not useful to discuss as such. We rather focus on what people say about what they think capacity development/capacity building should be about and what should be considered as good practice.

Nevertheless, some basic common understanding does help. In general, the following definitions by OECD are widely accepted:

> **Capacity** is the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.
> **Capacity development** is the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unlock, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.
> **Promotion of capacity development** refers to what outside partners — domestic or foreign — can do to support, facilitate or catalyse capacity development and related change processes.   (*OECD, 2006*)

Over the past decade, organizations have increasingly come to realize the limitations of linear models[7] of how change supposedly happens. This realization needs to be reflected in a redefinition of good practice. This may be seen as a reason for the recent surge in guidelines, reports and other documents on capacity development. The following chapter will explore this redefinition of capacity development in broad strokes.

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[7] "If we intervene in this (predefined) way, it will lead to the following (predefined) results".

2. Unpacking the concepts and practices

The core concepts used in capacity development will need to be loaded with meaning before the processes involved can be discussed and acted upon. This includes considering some serious questions about how we understand the nature of development, of capacity, of capacity development, etc. (Gosses, 2007). Subsequently, we will explore how concepts become practice, some differing views on what is considered to be 'good practice' and an emerging broad agreement in this respect.

Understanding the nature of capacity

Capacity is a multifaceted concept. It is primarily not a phenomenon that we can analyse or even observe. We realize that there is capacity through what this capacity does. Capacity relates to a potential. Capacity outcomes/performance is about seeing this potential coming into action. E.g. Training for example, often produces a potential, which has to be used, before we know what difference this potential makes.

Capacity is a 'potential state of performance' (Horton et al., 2003: 18), which means that capacity can be seen as a latent state whose potential energy is intended for use in performance. But what exactly should focus on then? Should we be focusing on positive changes in latent capacity, the application of that capacity, or the results (outcomes and impacts) that the application yields—or a combination of all three? (Ortiz & Taylor, 2008)

Capacity is not a passive state, but part of a continuously changing state of affairs. We could say that capacity embedded in a flow of life that includes the following elements:
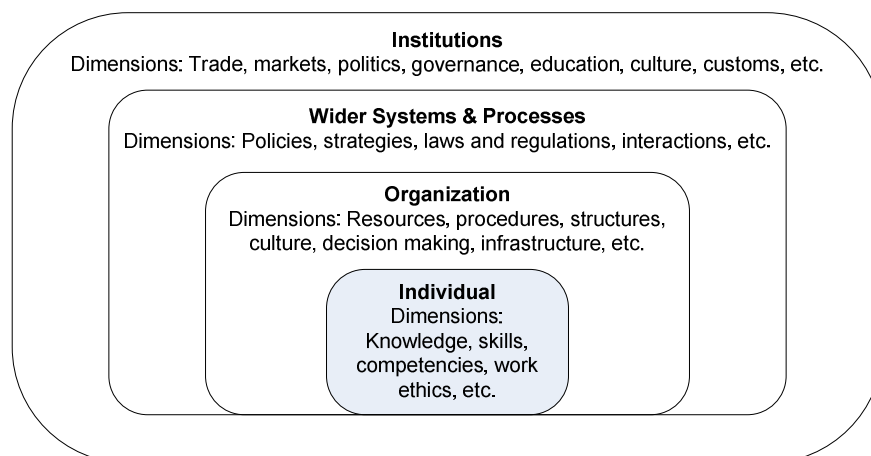
  The realization → the desire → the will → the freedom → the ability → the opportunity → the action

In other words, capacity cannot be isolated from other processes of life. Addressing the capacity for 'action' cannot be done without attention for preceding elements, such as 'desire' or 'opportunity'. CD support will need to consider all these elements and not merely the 'ability'-part of capacity.

It is difficult to isolate one capacity from another. Impact of CD support is therefore not always easy to assess. Capacity is a rather fluid concept. Capacity of one entity is difficult to assess in isolation from the capacity of other entities.

Capacity exists at different levels and relates to different dimensions at those levels:

Figure 1: Levels at which capacity exists

Institutions
Dimensions: Trade, markets, politics, governance, education, culture, customs, etc.

Wider Systems & Processes
Dimensions: Policies, strategies, laws and regulations, interactions, etc.

Organization
Dimensions: Resources, procedures, structures, culture, decision making, infrastructure, etc.

Individual
Dimensions: Knowledge, skills, competencies, work ethics, etc.

(Adapted from FAO, 2006)

Some have made a distinction between tangible and less tangible aspects of capacity (see table 2).

Table 2: Two Types of Capacity (selected examples from Nepad, 2009)

More evident capacity elements	Less evident capacity elements
Institutional and structural capacity-including organizational structures,	Capacity to learn, focus and strategise;
hierarchies, mandates, procedures, rules and regulations etc;	Capacity to predict, adapt and respond to the volatile and ever-changing environment;
Financial and material capacity;	Capacity to motivate and inspire personnel;
Human resources capacity number of employees and skills levels;	Capacity to communicate effectively with internal and external audiences;
Capacity to monitor and evaluate output.	Capacity to learn and apply lessons learnt to improve performance for effective service delivery;

Understanding the nature of capacity development

Capacity development is a container concept. Unless it is loaded with meaning, it does not express that much. It is also a comprehensive concept, which covers so much that it is easy not to see the forest for the trees, unless its aspects are well articulated.

Generally, capacity development is accepted to be an endogenous process, not an externally induced process. It is a dynamic that exists with or without external intervention.
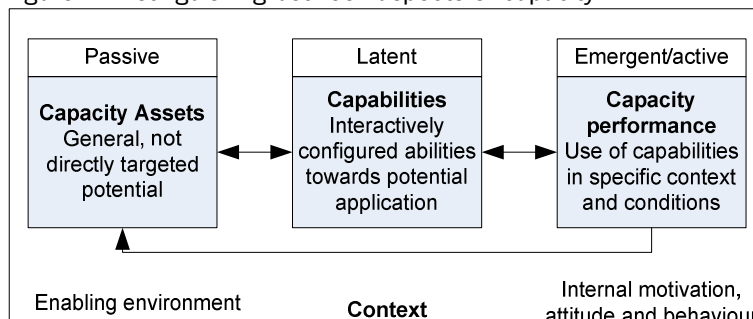
This is a simple statement with significant consequences. It acknowledges that support to capacity development is only of relative importance and that any such support will need to link up with endogenous capacity development processes.

The following figure summarises key components of capacity development processes and their interaction. It makes a distinction between three core components of capacity:
-   Capacity assets
-   Capabilities
-   Capacity performance

As George Fox already pointed out, "all models are wrong, but some are useful". A static picture cannot adequately show a dynamic. An animated picture would probably be a better instrument for showing that the endogenous process of capacity development involves a constantly changing picture of interactive capacity assets, capabilities and capacity performance.

Figure 2: Distinguishing between aspects of capacity

To illustrate this, we can take the example of cooking. **Capacity assets** relate to ingredients, recipes, knowledge about how to use different ingredients in general, available cooking utensils, etc. **Capabilities** then relate to all that needs to be in place to cook a specific menu item (say a casserole), which will be a selection, a sequencing and the interactive
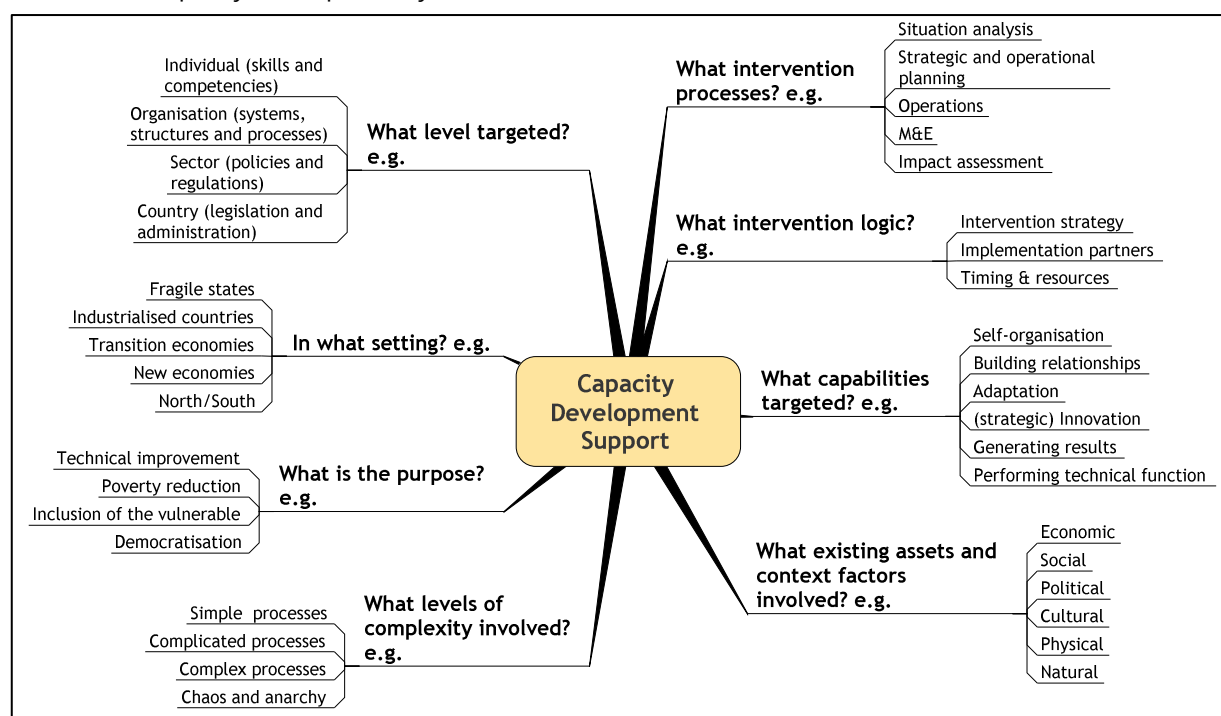
configuration of the available capacity assets. **Capacity performance** is about the actual cooking process, how it leads to a certain product that ends up on the consumer's plate and how it is appreciated in view of an anticipated taste and experience. All three components of capacity operate within a **context** which can be either enabling or disabling for the cook's capacity to produce casseroles. It relates to e.g. the availability of utilities (gas, water, and electricity) and the cook's motivation to really put an effort into the cooking process, and to carry on when there are setbacks.

Without wanting to read too much into this metaphor, it does point to the intricate dynamic of capacity development[8].

Understanding the nature of capacity development support

It may help to create categories of capacity development to understand relevant processes and to be able to identify good practice. Good practice in capacity development is in a way not saying anything. It needs to be specified: capacity development at what level, for what purpose, involving what processes, in what context, and under what conditions?

Figure 3: Multiplicity of capacity development support aspects (adapted from internal guidance note on capacity development by DGIS (2008)
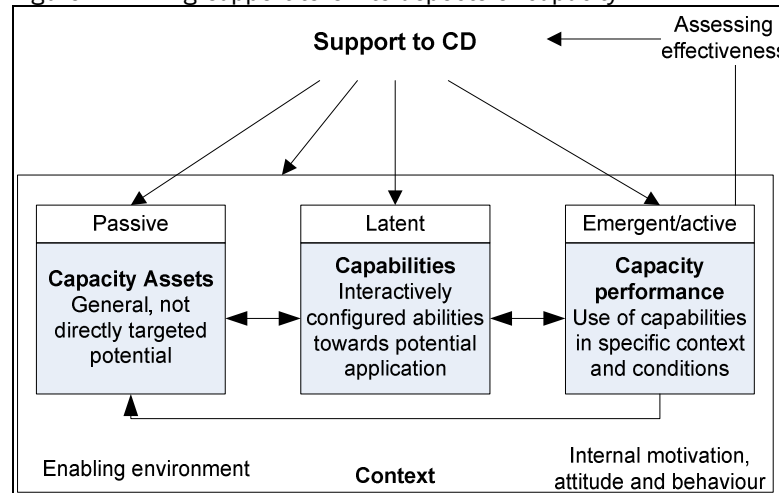

Once you start making such categorizations, it provides a clearer and more specific picture of the complex dynamic of a particular CD support process. It allows for being more specific in defining principles of good practice (e.g. in what setting, involving what level of complexity, targeting which kind of capabilities, etc.), because it will link good practice to a certain context with certain conditions, rather than defining generic blueprints.

Applying this to the earlier picture of capacity and capacity development, support to CD then encompasses a broad range of possible entry points for intervention.

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[8] Applying the distinctions made to animal health: Capacity assets of a country would relate to trained veterinary doctors, laboratories, medicines, etc. Capabilities would relate to e.g. the ability to address issues related to a particular disease. Capacity performance would relate to e.g. the eradication of occurrence of a certain disease.

Figure 4: Linking support to CD to aspects of capacity

Approaches to and interventions in capacity development support

Many organizations and agencies have developed their own specific approach to capacity development when writing manuals, guidelines and other reference documents. However, there has been a substantial copying of core thinking so that we may conclude that there are two main movements of approaches:

- Project cycle & management inspired and oriented, assuming plannable change in predictable environments.
- Change process inspired and oriented, assuming emergent change in complex environments.

The first movement focuses on functional capacities for getting a job done. Capacity is usually defined *within* the context of a particular programme or project. Such focus is evident from the way in which the concept of capacity is unpacked. E.g. Wignaraja (2008) lists those as:
- Capacity to engage stakeholders
- Capacity to assess a situation and define a vision and mandate
- Capacity to formulate policies and strategies
- Capacity to budget, manage and implement
- Capacity to evaluate

The second movement takes a broader look at change processes, change agents and other change factors in which capacity development is embedded. Baser and Morgan (2008) have developed a list of capabilities that together and interactively determine that state of capacity. By doing so, it links the concept of capacity to a more generally defined ability:
- Capability to commit and engage
- Capability to relate
- Capability to achieve coherence
- Capability to adapt and self-renew
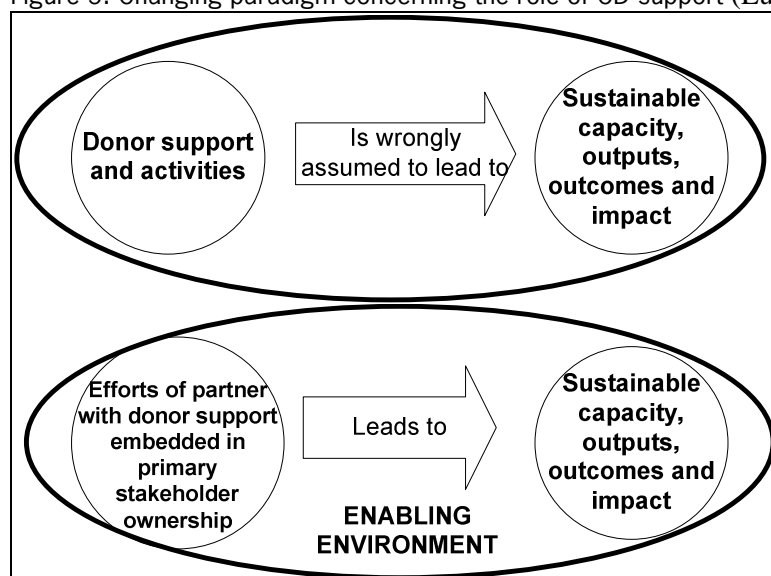- Capability to deliver development objectives
This movement appears to be trying to look more behind functional capacities to see what underpins such capacities. It also recognizes more explicitly that capacity already exists and develops – sometimes regardless of project or programme interventions.

There are important differences in what these approaches spell for actual practice. It is evident that those inspired by the first movement will find many practical applications: the promise of manageability of the CD process; and clear methods for measuring results. A pitfall may be that often the ideas of this approach get translated into 'instrumentalist'

practices, creating an illusion of control of effectively un-controllable parameters. Those inspired by the second movement will more often be cautious in applying 'blueprint' methods, recognizing diversity in context and complexity. But the practical use of this approach for managing and monitoring CD processes is still debated, and practical applications are in the early days. Despite these differences, which may appear as false opposites for clarity's sake, there is also significant agreement in a number of important areas, among which:

- Being results-oriented. For many agencies and organization, a results-focus in capacity development is of fundamental importance. However, what 'results' mean, and what this spells for relevant CD processes, is yet another story.

- Differentiating between capacity development as an endogenous process and capacity development support (which relates to that which in the past was capacity development). The significance of making this distinction relates to a paradigm shift that is illustrated in the following figure.

- Understanding that CD support to go beyond "machine building" (ECDPM Policy Management Brief 21, 2008), and that those providing CD support can only contribute to capacity development processes as illustrated in the following picture.

Figure 5: Changing paradigm concerning the role of CD support (EuropeAid, 2009)

Monitoring and evaluation of capacity development and its support

M&E is an important function in any effort and CD is no exception. Major challenges in impact assessment of capacity building relate to (Hailey & James, 2003):
- Meeting donor needs for quantifications;
- Demonstration of attribution;
- Measuring intangible changes (e.g. in relationships and the ability to address potential issues that are not an issue yet[9]);
- Ensuring sufficient skill and infrastructure to both collect and analyse data;
- Overall cost-effectiveness of the processes.

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[9] E.g. assessing the ability to timely recognize and respond to trends and developments. This is of notable importance in the field of animal health and addressed by OIE in, a.o., its Global Early Warning and Response System for Major Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses (GLEWS), 2006.

These are rather generic concerns that apply to many development efforts. It helps to distinguish between five main aspects of CD that can be monitored and evaluated along the lines of figure 4:

Changes in terms of strengthened potential:
- Changes in (passive) **capacity assets** (of individuals, organizations, sectors, etc.);
- Changes in (latent) **capabilities** (of individuals, organizations, sectors, etc.);
- Changes in the **context** (enabling environment) of capacity development;

Changes in terms of the actual difference this makes:
- Changes in (active) **performance** resulting from changes in capacity assets and capabilities;
- Changes in (active) **performance** resulting from changes in the context changed.

The achievements are called "outputs" by some, and "outcomes" by others. The focus of M&E should be on such achievements (or performance). Boesen (2005) sees such outputs (as he calls the achievements/performance) as proxy indicators of changes in capacity (which is in itself difficult to measure). Capacity, particular intangible capacity, is not always easy to assess. This may lead to a situation where capacity development support is carried on and on without knowing whether it makes a difference or not. And, on the other side, if it can be assessed, it may lead to an M&E overload of organizational assessments. M&E of CD should therefore be about understanding what is *worth* measuring than about what *can* be measured simply by applying comprehensive M&E tools and indicators (Ortiz & Taylor, 2008).

There are, however, some examples of good practice. They include the use of (organizational) self-assessments[10] both at the beginning, during operations and at the end. Agriterra has developed extensive experience in "profiling" producer organizations and using this as a basis for M&E (http://www.agriterra.org/en). Being more explicit about how (capacity) change is expected to happen also helps in providing clearer reference points and milestones of anticipated and unanticipated capacity development among key stakeholders. Participatory methods and more recent M&E methods such as Outcome Mapping and the Most Significant Change technique help to get more to grips with less tangible aspects of capacity development.

> **Box 1: Dangers/limitations of organizational assessment tools**
> 1. Do not capture the dynamic and true non-linear nature of change;
> 2. Focus on the visible and formal and may miss what is below the surface;
> 3. Standardised tools do not recognise contextual differences in organisation;
> 4. Very easy to become tool for judgement (funding decision) and thereby undermine capacity building aim;
> 5. Tools often become the focus of the capacity building efforts, losing sight of the thinking behind it or the ultimate capacity building aim;
> 6. Difficult to simplify and keep useful;
> 7. Not able to describe change in relationships and power;
> 8. Misses out on how changing context affecting organisational change.
> (Adapted from James, 2009: 6)

M&E can play a more strategic role if there is a clearly outline intervention logic (also referred to as a *theory of change[11]*) for the capacity development support process, which makes assumptions in relation to an anticipated capacity change process more explicit. Such explicit assumptions allow for monitoring the extent to which anticipated change processes materialise, making it possible to adapt management decision-making on the basis of actual change processes rather than on the basis of (ex-ante) anticipated (or merely hoped-for) change.

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[10] In the context of animal health, the OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS Tool) is noteworthy (OIE, 2009).

[11] See e.g. Reeler, 2007.

Usually, a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators is needed to capture the different dimensions of capacity and capacity development (ECDPM, 2008). M&E needs to involve processes of self evaluation and triangulation, using a balanced set of tools and methods focused on utilization rather than academic correctness. In terms of assessing impact, direct attribution may often be difficult to achieve and plausible association, confirmed by key stakeholders, may need to be accepted (James & Wrigley, 2007).

In the above, we have not yet included an important distinction. Though obvious to some, it is important to be clear about what the focus of M&E is. M&E of capacity development ***support*** is not the same as M&E of capacity development as such.

Emerging new capacity development paradigm?

Though there are still different approaches to capacity development and to M&E of CD, there is an interesting movement among CD (support) theorists and practitioners. This movement relates to the incorporation of complexity thinking, particularly in terms of sense-making. This is not an attempted move towards some kind of new approach to CD (support), but more an attempt to make sense of different approaches to CD (support) in view of application contexts. The result is a suggestion to consider principles of different approaches and focus on finding a 'best fit' for the given situation. We may call this situational CD (support).

What this roughly means is that opposing approaches can be seen as part of a continuum where one approach fits well in a particular kind of situation and the other fits better in another kind of situation. This asks for tailor-making a CD (support) approach to find the best fit, where practitioners may borrow elements from different approaches. Table3 reflects such way of viewing different approaches. Rather than stimulating polemics on approaches, it stimulates exploration and discussion of what spells good practice in what kind of situations. By doing so, it takes the focus away from the approach, and puts it on actual situations and stakeholders involved.

Some progress has been made in characterizing different approaches, particularly by not showing them as right or wrong, but as fitting in different types of situations. Perhaps this could be seen as a significant emerging paradigm where pictures no longer show a "from paradigm A to paradigm B", but rather showing approaches on a continuum in relation to the context.

ECDPM has done some helpful work here, which (adapted) provides the following overview of CD approach range. It is not about choosing for one or the other, but rather fine-tuning a CD approach in a particular context, where the slide may go more towards the "planned change" side or more towards the "emergent change" side.

Table 3: CD approaches in relation to CD variables (adapted from Land et al., 2009)

	CD (support) approach range	
	PLANNED　　　　　　INCREMENTAL　　　　　　EMERGENT	
	Focus on plannable change in predictable environments	Focus on emergent change in complex environments
CD Variables		
Ownership (and leadership)	• Recognises formal authority; legal and administrative. • Emphasises the importance of the local partner taking ownership of CD interventions supported or funded by external partners.	• Understands ownership as a function of identity, volition and motivation of different stakeholders. • CD is driven by local initiative and circumstance. It is a process of its own separate from external intervention.
Context analysis	• Focuses on formal aspects of context, e.g. legal, institutional and economic, that impact	• Organisations are understood as belonging to multiple, evolving systems. Relationships are

	CD (support) approach range	
	 PLANNED INCREMENTAL EMERGENT	
	directly on targeted organisation(s).	unpredictable and include informal and intangible dimensions. An historical perspective is critical.
Capacity assessment	• Focus is primarily on aspects of organisation that respond to human intervention and that contribute directly to tangible results and outputs. • The whole is understood to be the sum of individual parts. • Based on normative, a priori assumptions about what capacity is and how it is composed. Emphasis placed on gap analysis.	• Greater emphasis is given to non-tangible aspects of capacity, i.e. relationships, values, etc., and aspects of capacity "conferred" from outside, such as legitimacy. • Accommodates multiple interpretations of capacity that are culturally and socially defined.
Design	• Robust problem analysis, clear definition of inputs, actions, outputs and outcomes. Focus on what is feasible and concrete. Linear view of cause and effect. Logical framework approach.	• CD as an emergent process that is not formally designed. Emphasis on learning and iteration, without necessarily any formal design elements. Notion of evolving design.
Intervention logic	• Intervention is purposeful. Emphasis on efficient and effective mobilisation of resources (human and financial) so as to perform agreed actions within a stipulated time limit. Varies from more direct (hands-on) to indirect (process facilitation) approaches, but with emphasis on achieving pre-determined results.	• Capacity development emerges from the on-going learning, actions and interactions of organisational actors. It does not necessarily depend on a purposeful intervention. • There are no simple cause-and-effect relationships. • Multiple processes can stimulate different aspects of capacity.
Context match	Fits when following type of issues are important: • Formal incentives, rewards and sanctions • Skills and technical know-how • Formal structures and systems • Assets, resources and financial flows • Demand-side stimulation	Fits when following type of issues are important: • Values, meaning and moral purpose • Informal structures and systems • Relationships (internal and external) • Legitimacy, confidence and identity
Risk	• Robust design aims at risk mitigation, ensuring that the intervention is not undermined by extraneous factors. Focus on value for money and timely achievement of agreed results. Low tolerance of failure.	• Risk is an intrinsic part of change and CD. Outcomes are unknown and intentions can be influenced by unforeseen events. Risk of failure provides opportunity for learning and adaptation.
Monitoring and evaluation	• Seeks to compare results and outcomes with intention to determine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, etc. • Often with an accountability focus, but can also focus on improving management and design.	• M&E focused more on learning by participants themselves. Learning viewed as basis for self-awareness and continuous improvement.

The appropriate position of the pointer in the middle of the continuum between 'planned' and 'emergent' can be fine-tuned in a particular situation for each of the variables separately to arrive at a best-fit configuration CD support.

Agreement on good practice in capacity development support

Though making a case for situational CD support, nevertheless a number of principles of good practice have been identified and widely agreed upon, which can guide preparation for and design of CD support efforts. This relates to processes of ownership, dealing with complexity issues, stakeholder participation, the role of assessments, the realization of effects on power differentials, and to processes of assessing effectiveness. Such principles may sometimes be phrased differently and same concepts may be interpreted differently.

The following lists a number of key learning areas from experience in CD (Land, 2009, Blagescu, 2006, Ortiz & Taylor, 2008 and Gosses, 2007). These could also be used as a checklist in evaluating CD, both formatively and summatively[12]:

<u>CD foundations</u>

Ownership (involving motive, means and drive) is critical to any capacity development process, requiring demand-driven support that builds on existing capacities. Invest in **relationship**-building and establish CD support on the basis of good relationships, which includes staying engaged under difficult circumstances.

<u>Flexibility</u>

A capacity development support process involves **experimentation**, **(action) learning and … time**. Allow **design** of capacity development processes to evolve over time. Accept appropriate **risk** levels in relation to the levels of complexity involved. CD does not go well with strictly planned targets.

<u>Stakeholders</u>

Engage local **stakeholders** in determining needs, priorities and strategies, requiring much effort put into high quality facilitation as well as establishing shared understanding among stakeholders about envisaged capacity development support processes. Remain **accountable** to the intended beneficiaries.

<u>Understanding the setting</u>

Allow for **capacity diagnostics[13]**, whenever (culturally) feasible, through self-assessment processes to develop a good understanding of possible entry points, and focus on strengths and opportunities. Invest in understanding the **context** in terms of political, social and cultural norms and practices. Do pay significant attention to **less visible aspects** of capacity, such as values, legitimacy, identity, etc.

<u>Finding a "best fit" approach</u>

Consider the **nature of change** involved in an envisaged CD process and the implications for **best-fit** approach including change management processes. Creatively explore a range of **options** to arrive at CD support tailored to the specific characteristics of a situation. **Be realistic** about what external interventions can achieve. CD is largely an endogenous process that takes place inside people, organizations and societies and it is not neutral – do consider implications of challenging mindsets and **power** differentials;

<u>Keep an eye on performance</u>

Put in place appropriate (based on agreement among key stakeholders) **M&E** mechanisms to maintain focus, motivation and adaptation and to help keep the purpose of CD clear: making a difference (performance), which goes beyond creating potential. Communicate performance wins to support motivation and endurance.

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[12] i.e. in the process of designing (before/formative) and evaluating (after/summative).
[13] Such as the OIE PVS Tool.

3. Discussion and food for thought

Reflections in the domain of LNV and animal health in particular

Exploring principles of good practice in CD support in the domain of LNV and of animal health in particular, brings a number of issues to the table.

Ownership and participation concerns in capacity development (support)

For LNV, the nature of capacity development will pose some serious challenges. Capacity development efforts easily mingle with self-interest (e.g. trade volumes, food quality, and prices). To what extent can ownership for CD really be left outside the Dutch borders, i.e. to the stakeholders in the recipient country? Or, to what extent can such ownership be expected, even in the case of international agreements, when the felt interest of a 'recipient' country in fighting a disease (e.g. Avian Flu in Indonesia) is less than the interest of those providing capacity development support?

In animal health, lengthy CD processes sometimes are just not acceptable because of an impending outbreak. In the earlier-used analogy, there may not always be time and opportunity for applying a recipe or even cook a proper meal, and where "fast food" (though not good for long-term 'nutrition') is the only option due to the urgency of an issue. Should this mean that ownership is then totally foregone or could it still be a significant factor in the process?

With all complications, if capacity development support is to lead to sustainable results, it cannot bypass the issue of endogenous ownership and sometimes much more efforts may need to be invested in strengthening such ownership before (or during) capacity development support interventions.

Capacity development for the future

When we look at animal health, we realize the increased need for forward-looking capacity in order to be ready 'when disaster strikes'. Emerging diseases [14] and other trends and developments connected to this are:
  - Processes of privatization of animal health services;
  - Animal-human disease transition;
  - Irreversible transitions of rules of the game (e.g. in view of globalization processes);
  - Increasing number of invasive diseases from (sub)tropical areas (e.g. blue tongue, rift valley fever, east coast fever);
  - Effects of climate change.

All of these relate to the importance of not waiting until something becomes a problem, but anticipating change and preparing capacities for dealing with it. This includes distinguishing between CD for curative capacity and CD for disease preventive capacity. It requires an ability to recognize trends, including more intangible processes, such as changing attitudes of consumers and civil society towards:
  - Large scale culling related to disease outbreaks;
  - Industrial/intensive animal production systems;
  - Animal welfare in general;

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[14] A very relevant document in this respect is Ensuring Good Governance to Address Emerging and Re-emerging Animal Disease Threats (OiE, 2007).

- Environmental concerns;
- Consumer preferences.

All of this may have implications for the political arena, disease control programmes, animal production systems, demand for animal products, etc. An example is the trend of an increased demand for locally produced products induced by concern for environmental issues as well as fear for unsafe "foreign" products.

Pursuing adaptive capacity is crucial - not just building capacity for a certain situation, but for a dynamic situation, which tomorrow will be different from today). This requires scenario thinking and futures thinking, looking beyond the present, and recognizing trends, development, flows, and emergence. And, with all limitations, learning about how change happens and may happen.

Whose capacity and whose problem?

Another issue relates to the choice of whose capacity is to be strengthened in view of a particular capacity development objective. A current dynamic in animal health is that, increasingly, capacity is expected from the private sector. Whose capacity should become stronger in view of trends and developments? Can the private sector adequately address requirements for formal official functions in animal health?

Simple diseases like mastitis and fertility problems can be dealt with by the private sector. For diseases with a threat to public health (zoonoses), more is needed (see e.g. what is happing in relation to the Q-fever). There are international obligations for reporting and taking measure to control the disease. Ultimately, the government remains responsible, but there is much (political) debate on the extent to which public-private partnerships could play a role in the implementation. Clearly, there is a reluctance by quite a few countries (even when there is a weak government) to transfer responsibilities to the private sector.

At the same time, public health threats can be local or widespread, which may also mean a different

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Box 2: Capacity Development for HPAI Prevention and Control in Indonesia

The overall objective of the Indonesia – Netherlands Partnership on prevention and control of Avian Influenza is to strengthen the Indonesian authorities and poultry sector in policy making and operational capabilities to enable them to take the necessary measures to reduce Avian Influenza in a sustainable way.

Capacity development takes place at various levels to improve the veterinary infrastructure through e.g.:
- In cooperation with provincial and district authorities through training field staff (ToT, refresher training, supporting village campaigns) in contact with farmers and the eyes and the ears for the official veterinary infrastructure to raise awareness (of the farmers) and to report on field situations (outbreaks, surveillance programmes, sampling; provide first line animal health);
- In cooperation with provincial and district authorities regional/provincial diagnostic capacity through training of laboratory staff, provision of equipment and creating a demand for diagnostic services through development of surveillance programmes and practical field experiments
- In cooperation with the unit responsible for the control of HPAI in the central government, NGOs, Research Institute and Veterinary Faculty to develop capacity for policy supporting studies (through field and laboratory research);
- In cooperation with private sector (vaccine producing industry, poultry producers, poultry breeders) to work on quality assurance programmes (vaccine productions) and training of auditors for farm certification (improved biosecurity).

scale of (potential) effect on the economy. And related to this, it will be a more or less politically relevant issue.

Targeting CD to a specific group is a relevant issue for LNV as well. In Eastern Europe, much can be done in terms of building on ready knowledge, while at the same time the level of available technology and organization may be more problematic. In fighting BSE, in some countries one can build on adequately organized veterinary services. In Indonesia, the question is who actually asks for CD support in relation to Avian Flu. Russia is not very interested in public-private partnerships, but other countries have good opportunities for this. Foot and mouth disease is not a real internal issue for some countries, even though internationally there may be pleas to build capacity to fight it. Afghanistan has a dynamic of its own.

Control of contagious animal diseases (e.g. FMD) is often not an important issue for non-exporting countries, but following international obligations/agreements[15] or pressure from neighbouring countries there may be half-hearted efforts to develop capacity to fight those. Ownership is a core issue in such situations.

All of this points to the importance of context/conditions-specific CD support.

Endogenous CD

Throughout its history (particularly in the decades after WWII), LNV has been instrumental in the capacity development processes in Dutch agriculture (through the triangle of research-extension-education). One may wonder what part of the credit should go to endogenous processes that created space for transition of farmers and to the sense of urgency created by economic processes such as industrial development creating job opportunities for surplus agriculture labour, where the government from a national food security point of view guaranteed minimum prices for agricultural products.

CD and ownership relates to interests. Some countries may have no interest in fighting a certain disease that other countries may want to control or should be controlled based on international agreements. This points out the importance of finding mutual interests. Frustration with the slow pace of processes, obstructing practices of 'recipients' (such as in preparation processes for EU accession) and other 'non-cooperative' practice may sometimes have to do with a lack of acknowledgement of the fact that CD is essentially an endogenous process that can not easily be induced from outside. CD support specialists may need to spend more time on understanding such endogenous CD processes before endeavouring in CD support interventions.

Systemic understanding of capacity and capacity development

In the previous chapter we explored the dynamic of capacity and capacity development processes. We may add to that the dimension of multi actors. Getting to grips with this dynamic requires addressing CD systemically rather than piece-meal. Training individuals (whether veterinarians or paraveterinarians) without working on a conducive environment may seriously reduce the effect of that training. The same applies to the way in which key institutions work together, such as in the case of veterinary services and public health agencies working together in view of threats to human health. But it also relates to paying sufficient attention to intangible capacities such as motivation. Capacity development without

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[15] Such as OIE's terrestrial animal health code (2009) and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius, also used as benchmark for regional/national legislation and in WTO disputes.

real endogenous motivation, (maybe only for compliance with external standards such as EU accession), will challenge sustainable capacity development.

Distinguishing between the simple and the complex

Some part of CD support may be more straightforward, such as learning to perform a standardized task like immunization, checking occurrence of a known disease, etc. Training and education can address these. Even for known diseases, there is a capacity problem to address (e.g. foot and mouth disease). However, when capacity development of (country-wide) systems is at play, mere training of individual veterinarians or paraveterinarians, usually will not do the job. Therefore, each individual case of CD support asks for developing a situation specific "recipe" for success, where that which is simple is not unnecessarily complicated, and where that which is complex is not oversimplified.

Resilience capacity

LNV recently launched the BO-10 theme of Robustness and Resilience of Systems. It is recognition of the need for resilience capacity.

"All kind of global production and management systems face increasing pressure that these systems are not able to buffer against, leading to system overload. The challenge is to increase the robustness of our systems, making them more resilient to shocks and crises. Achieving this requires insight in the operation of systems and in the impact of individual interventions on the whole, in order to better manage supplies and resources that are essential for the functioning of societies worldwide.

Animal diseases increasingly pose a threat to human and animal health due to globalization of trade and climate change. Increased vigilance is needed to counter this. Biophysical and institutional conditions increase the risk for developing countries to become sources of epidemics. This includes increased threats from both vector born pathogens that spread farther due to climate change and product-born pathogens spread through trade. The latter links to [another] theme: food safety.[16] Emerging diseases form a good example of the need for resilience capacity and strategic agility.

> **Box 3: Resilience capacity and robust systems**
> "Managing complex, coevolving social-ecological systems for sustainability requires the ability to cope with, adapt to and shape change without losing options for future development. It requires resilience - the capacity to buffer perturbations, self-organize, learn and adapt. When massive transformation occurs, resilient systems contain the experience and the diversity of options needed for renewal and redevelopment. Sustainable systems need to be resilient. Management can diminish or build resilience. (…) Erosion of the sources of resilience leads to fragile social-ecological systems, with consequences for human livelihoods, vulnerability, security and conflicts. (…) Resilience-building policy attempts to increase the range of surprises with which a socio-economic system can cope." (Folke et al., 2002)

A key question to ask is what specific type of capabilities need to be in place to enlarge resilience and to strengthen the robustness of systems. Similarly, innovation capacity relates to resilience capacity, and its role in development is widely acknowledged. However, strengthening such capacities without strong endogenous ownership and drive, may be a recipe for failure.

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[16] BO Cluster International Work plan 2010

Food for thought

The following are selected critical reflections on the practice of capacity development.

1. To own or not to own

It is good to critically assess the role of donors in terms of ownership of a capacity development process, but it is naïve to assume that local ownership will be isolated from local power structures. We may call this the myth of local ownership.

Quite some CD support that LNV is engaged in (e.g. in relation to EU accession), directly or indirectly relates to Dutch interests (e.g. disease control). This creates an obvious tension between endogenous ownership and external interests. At international level, despite all good intentions in the Accra Agenda for Action, it will always be difficult to separate ownership from donorship, because donors will have back donors to whom they are accountable for results (or even impact).

Ownership is a dynamic concept. Who "owns" the CD process is a question that is difficult to answer. More appropriate questions in this respect relate to levels of influence in decision making and access to benefits.
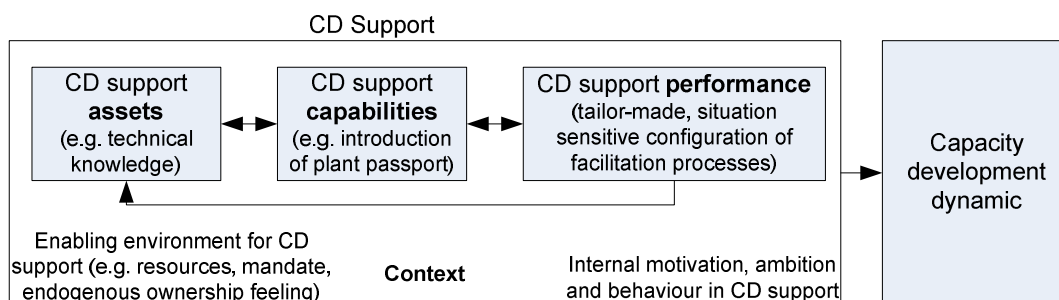
2. Recipes and the process of recipe development

Guidelines, manuals, praxis notes: in the end it will be people who take principles of good practice to a particular situation, explore optional 'ingredients' and there and then, with main stakeholders, develop a 'recipe' that 'tastes' good in that particular setting. CD support asks for situational sense making, and experimenting (just as much as is the case in our practice of cooking in the kitchen). To a certain extent, CD support needs to be reinvented in every situation.

This relates to the issues of capacity to provide good capacity development support. Getting to a 'best fit' approach to CD support for a particular situation requires among others strategic competences. Do we assume such competences to be in place when assigning people to capacity development support efforts?

Applying the earlier figure that explained capacity development dynamics, to CD support, provides the following picture. We may argue that those providing CD support are often more concerned with the dynamics of capacity development of 'recipients', than with their own internal capacities for providing CD support. However, finding best-fit approaches requires working on these dynamics as well, if only to prevent blaming all setbacks on the 'recipients'.

Figure 6: What it takes to be prepared for providing CD support services

It may be worthwhile to map to what extent different organizations treat CD support as a dynamic that requires a capacity strengthening process of its own and to what extent own capacities for supporting capacity development are assumed to be in place.

3. Immediate performance vs. long-term expectations

How geared towards ***immediate*** performance should CD support interventions be?

Increasingly, the ability to point out the impact of interventions is requested. Is the impact question still relevant in more complex situations, or is it more a question of checking the ability of key actors to strategize amidst complexity, leading to different results every time? Everyone wants results, but how to get there is the big question. Focusing on results may not lead to results for the very reason of being focused primarily on (quick) results, rather than on the process that will determine outcomes.

Allan Kaplan pointed to the limitations of capacity development when he wrote that "(…) development does have a pace of its own. There is an absolute limit to the extent to which it can be speeded up through the application of increased resources and developmental interventions." (Kaplan, 1999: 10)

4. From capacity development to capacity development support

To what extent has the acknowledgement really been embraced that CD is essentially an endogenous process and that much of what is now called CD/Capacity Building, can be seen as no more than support to that? Are we in actual practice perhaps often still trying to 'develop' and 'change' others (whether at individual, organisational or country level), thereby constantly undermining the establishment of solid endogenous ownership?

As long as we keep using the term capacity development or capacity building for that which is actually agreed to be **support to** capacity development/building, our efforts may be seriously hampered through constant misunderstanding about the role of external support.

5. Crises help in speeding capacity development

When there is a disease outbreak, or when water rises to just below the top of our dykes, then we are quick to act. This relates to a fundamental principle of change management: the need for a sense of urgency. As long as climate change was not considered to be an urgent issues, no capacity was invested in understanding how we can prepare for it (build resilience capacity).

Though a fact of life, a key question is how we create a sense of urgency and build resilience capacity when there is no crisis yet. It also relates to CD support in the sense that it may not be useful to start this (e.g. in Eastern Europe), unless there is an endogenous sense of urgency.

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Good resource portals on capacity development

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Annex 1: Experiences with complexity and capacity development in Twinning and EU-Accession processes in brief

Politicized government structures
After each election a broad layer of the management of government organizations is changed. This lack of continuity prevents the development of a collective memory and hampers the learning capability of the organization. Another effect from this politicized system is that the managers may give priority to short-term (political) goals rather than aiming for long-term development strategies.

No culture of learning organizations:
In many of the Eastern European administrations a blame culture exists, which prevents meticulous evaluation and reviewing the way in which a case has been handled. The person who makes the "mistake" is fired, the case is closed and unfortunately nobody will learn from the experiences.

Government personnel policy
Salaries in the government are generally low and promotion policy is not transparent and consistent. This results in lack of commitment to the job.

Capacity of recipient organization
Capacity development in twinning projects requires sufficient absorption capacity and manpower of the recipient organization. It happens that the number of visiting consultants exceeds the number of available counterparts. Knowledge cannot be transferred and is lost. This may at the same time also point to donor driven interests and lack of local ownership.

Language issues and internationalization
Most countries want to continue working in their own language; this leads to delays, loss of efficiency and high cost due to translations. More training in English would help in the process of strengthening capacities.

Interpretation of EU legislation to national level
The strict application of EU measures alone will not eradicate a disease or lead to the acceptance of animal welfare regulations for transport. The national government needs to convert the EU measures into a local strategy and legislation in a coherent and sensible way. Training of e.g. inspectors in EU legislation is nice but useless when there is no coherent policy for e.g. welfare in transport (licensing systems of vehicles and of transporters, registration system of transports).

Needs for future capacity development in the new Member States
This need relates to a deeper level of capacity, which is the strengthening of strategic capabilities. Capabilities to put in practice and integrate the instruments and procedures that have been provided in the first phase of accession cooperation, so that they can be applied in a coherent manner and that they can function in the whole of governments' role as a director and instigator in the system to guarantee human and animal health and welfare. Essentially it means the change in the reflexes of a centrally planned hierarchical system to a more dynamic democratic and market-oriented system. Strengthening strategic capabilities (competencies) requires a specific type of support to capacity development, which does not focus on the ability to comply with external standards, but on the ability to think and act strategically.

(Adapted from Frits van Vugt (personal communication 2010)).

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