



# **RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (RAC)**

**A non-invasive approach to assess Capacity  
Development in the current programming cycle**

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## Why a RAC?

There are important areas not covered by current evaluations:

- Aid effectiveness evaluations: did policies change? did institutional set up improve? did service delivery improve?
- Policy impact evaluations: did employment grow and why? did diarrhoea cases and other hygiene-related diseases decrease?
- There are very few questions like: did the people and their relations in the involved institutions evolve? did the involved institutions gain in independence, initiative, resilience, etc?

*Actually it is difficult to respond to such questions unless you have a specific instrument (INVISIBLE - see the Iceberg - quotation from ECDPM)*



# Focus on people and institutions!

One might say: the actual results are the best proxies for CD assessment. E.g.: a successful School for All programme means you have a solid education institutional system.

This might be true in the longer term, if results prove to be sustainable and replicable.

In the short-medium term, the success may be determined in large part by extra-institutional factors: funds shocks; economic booming; external TA. This happens often especially in aid.

# The RAC scope and value added

To assess people and institutional change:

It is as if we were to open a parenthesis in the normal logical flow of a development action to look at the issues behind, which are typically overlooked or just ignored.

As if on a long journey we wanted to open the bonnet of the vehicle that leads us to destination, to check how the engine and the other mechanical parts are behaving and whether they need any intervention and maintenance to guarantee that the car safely arrives at the end and continues for next trips.



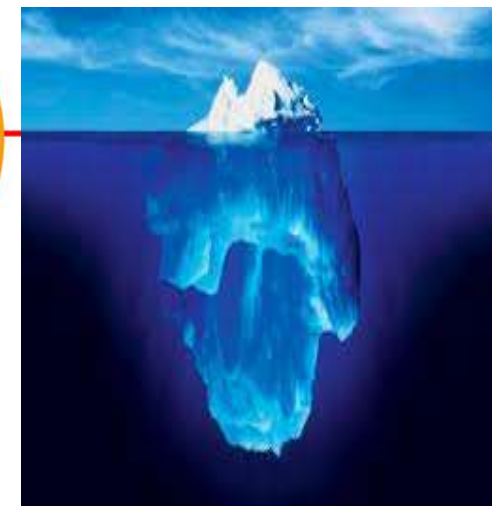
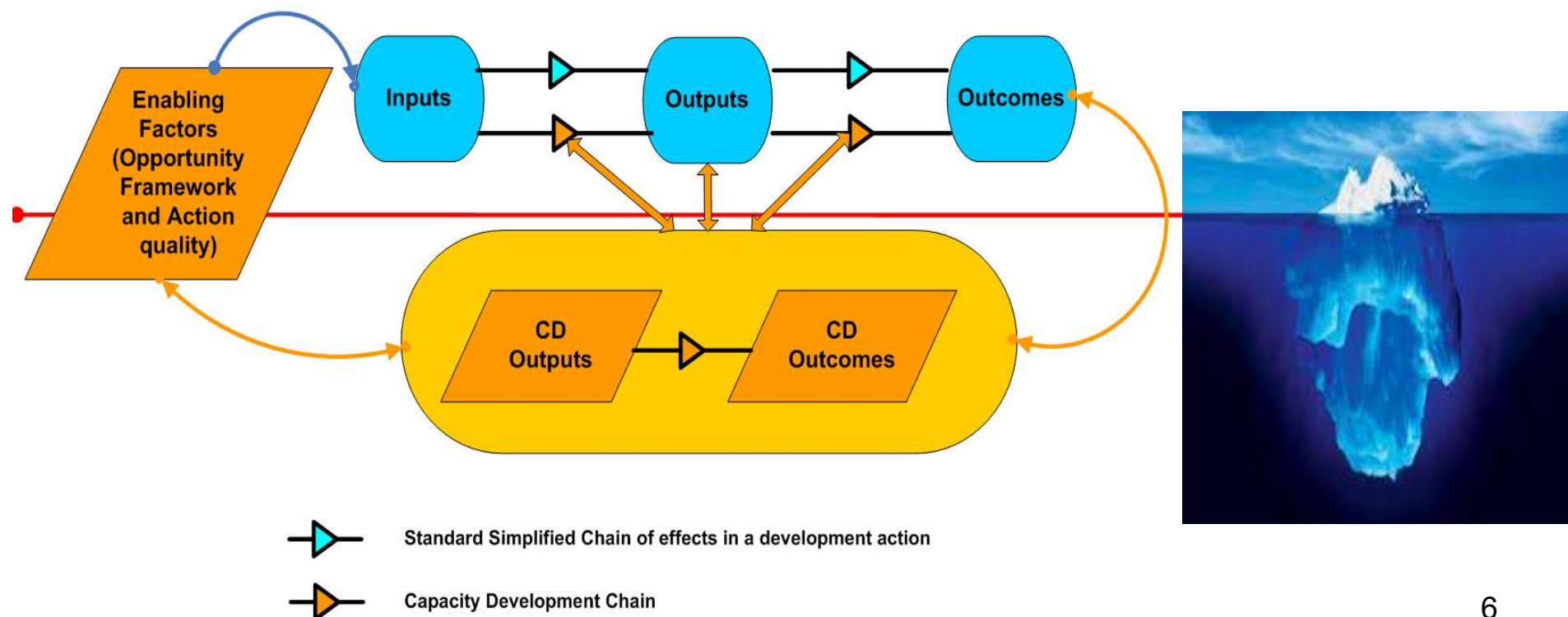
## What and How

What do we expect to find within the parenthesis, or under the bonnet - in the submerged part of the iceberg - and how we can assess it?

Indeed, there are complex processes that respond to internal dynamics and external stimuli that we want to try to better understand.

This interest has been a general priority (from Paris to Busan): similar issues addressed in the same months (in 2010-11) by other agencies with convergent responses: UNDP (June 2010), WBI (June 2011). In the mean time the ECDPM developed the 5Cs methodology.

# Integrating Capacity Development in the IL of a standard development action





# **An assessment tool: Non-invasive, Light & Replicable, and Pragmatic**

## **WHICH FEATURES?**

- ✓ Non-invasive: to respect political sensitiveness and avoid rejection.
- ✓ Light: that may complement the existing M&E tools of both donors and governments and may be embedded in the ordinary management processes.
- ✓ Immediate feedback/information: that can lead both parties to a greater awareness.
- ✓ Useful for participants: within the institution it can lead to a better understanding of the learning processes and career paths, both individually and as members of an institution.
- ✓ Useful for Gov. and donors: It may help improve design and management of development actions, through a stronger consideration of the CD processes involved.



# **RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (RAC)**

## **Its 4 Steps**



# A participative exploration of an institutional system in 4-steps

## STEP 4

Capacity outputs & capacity outcomes' correlation and final validation (final workshop)



## STEP 2

Assessment of capacity outputs (guided interviews and/or coaching sessions)



## STEP 3

Assessment of capacity outcomes (guided interviews and/or coaching sessions)



## STEP 1

Assessment of the Opportunity framework (OF) & Quality criteria (desk work and interviews)





**STEP 1**

# Desk work to assess the Opportunity Framework

This is NEW:

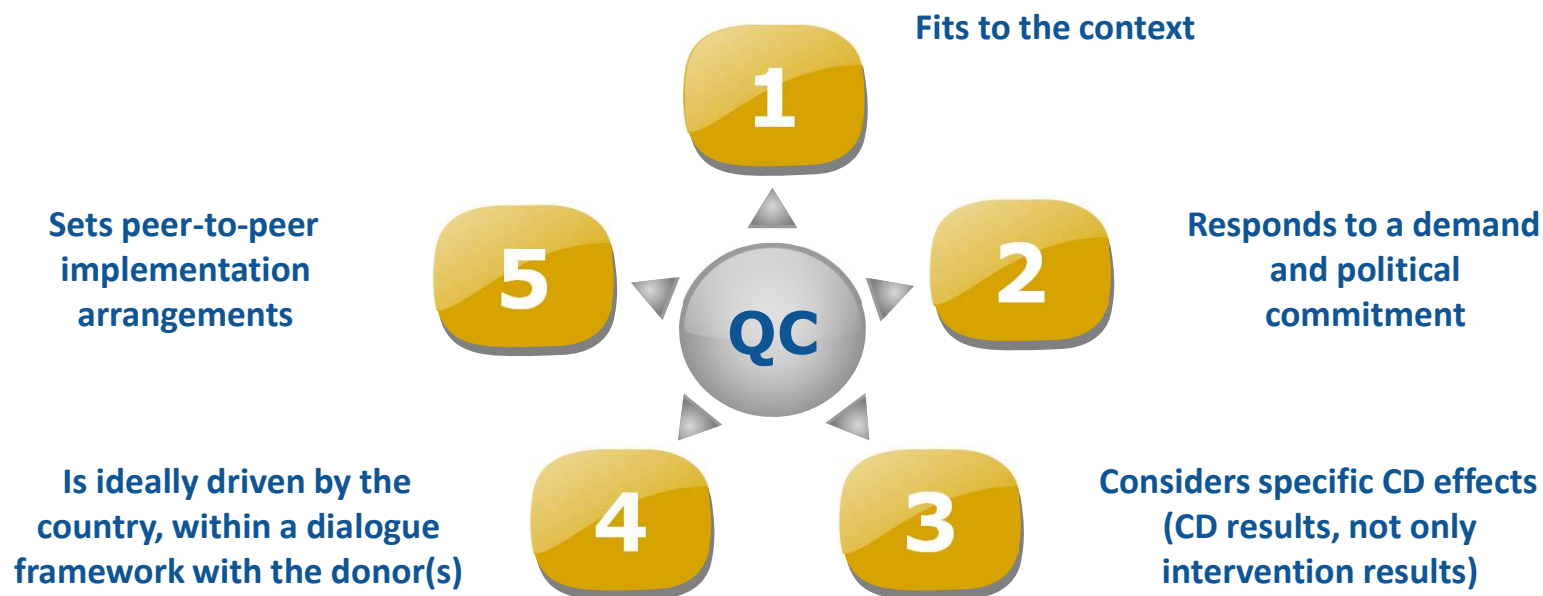
- ✓ The regional and international opportunities and the way the existing partnerships and the related political dialogue affect the CD processes: example of Ukraine - the EU association process.
- ✓ The political momentum at country and sectoral level, and the way it enhances or limits the opportunity for institutional change in the targeted areas: example of Bolivia - the new Morales government: “desarrollo con coca” strategy.



## STEP 1

# Desk work to assess the Quality Criteria

It should tell if, and to what extent, the development action (including its design, quality and delivery methods) fits a set of conditions (Europe-Aid QC) conducive to capacity development , such as:





## STEP 2

**People are asked what specific changes have occurred during the implementation of a development action in terms of: skills, competences, functions and structures**

Method: structured Questionnaire and Coaching

Logic: These changes do not represent new institutional capacities by themselves, but they identify areas that -if adequately appropriated and metabolised- may contribute to global institutional change.

*Examples:*

“ Change in skills of Staff (specialisations created/ consolidated: e.g. policy analysis, sectoral strategies, specific analytical tools)

Change in functions (responsibilities, sectoral competences, practices and rules including career: e.g. strategic planning, M&E, accountability measures, etc.)

Change in structures (reorganisation: new Dpts and respective relationships)” 12



European  
Commission



### STEP 3

## People are asked what changes have occurred in the comprehensive behaviour of their institutional system, using a scheme of 5 basic capabilities

Method: structured Questionnaire and Coaching

Logic: the 5 Cs are global features essential for the accomplishment of the institutions' mission. They are labelled according to the Dutch/ECDPM 5Cs (AidCo decision). One could adopt slightly different definitions (see UN, etc.), provided that the global and essential dimensions are ensured. Capacity to:






## STEP 4

# RAC validation workshop: people are met together and asked to identify causality links between the 5Cs, the CD outputs and the Enabling factors

*Analysis of the causal links between the capacity outputs and outcomes or other factors relating to the opportunity framework.*

*This exercise takes place in a final validation workshop.*

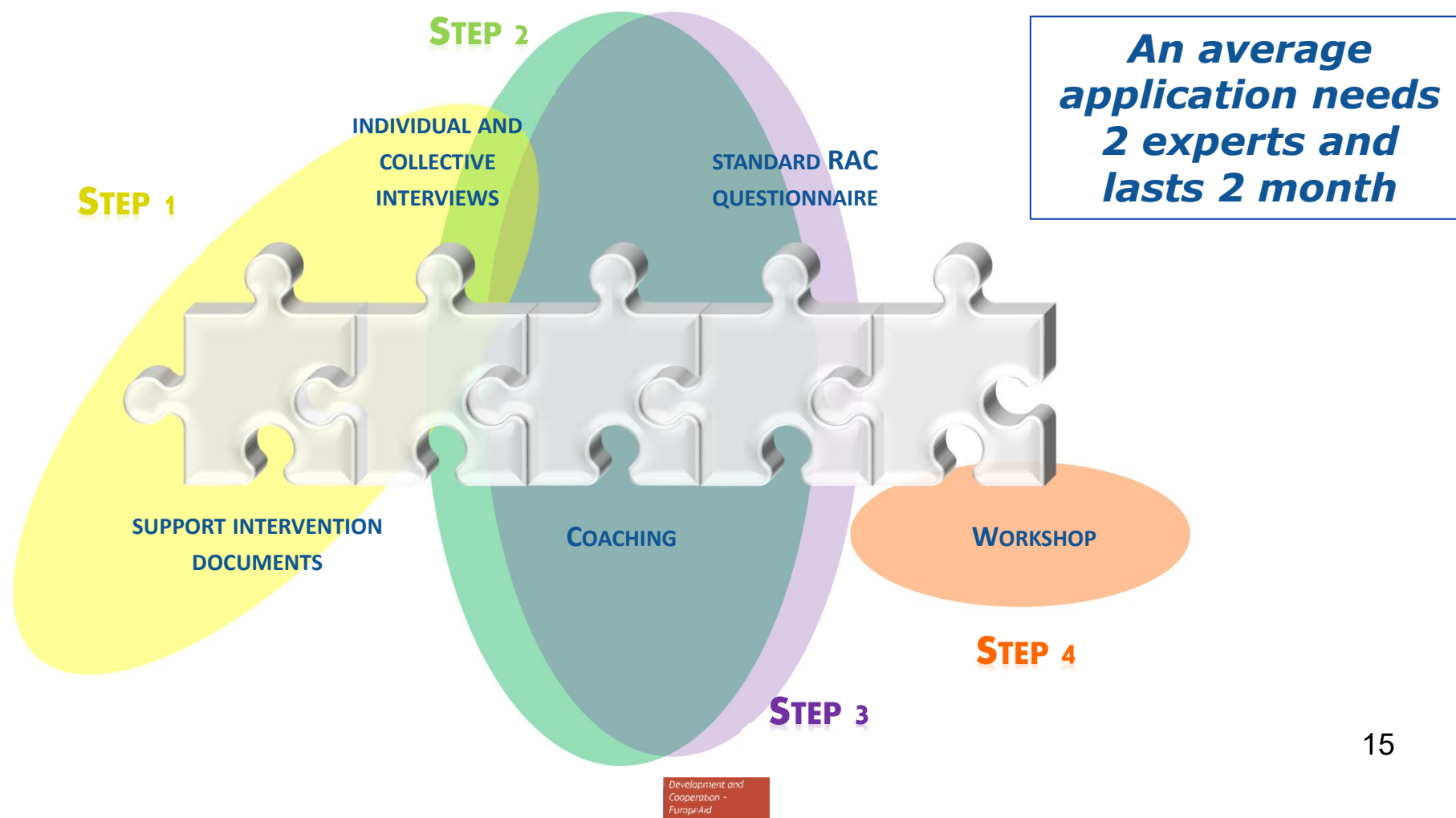
*Examples:*



| Capacity-output                | Capacity-outcome   | Enabling Factors |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| - New skills of Staff          | Have allowed a more transparent career path and new initiatives OR have pushed trained people outside of the institution, because....                    | .....            |
| - New M&E systems              | Implementation results are integrated into the policy processes OR M&E unit is institutionally marginalised, because....                                 | .....            |
| - New decentralised structures | Increased transparency and accountability toward local partners and CSOs OR not effective and the decision process has become more difficult, because... | .....            |



## Data collection and processing tools used in each Step





# **RAPID ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (RAC)**

**Three tests in 2011: Ukraine, Bolivia, Tchad**





## RAC test: Ukraine (2011)

### ***SWAP in Agriculture***

**OF:** program identified in 2007 when GoU wanted to join the EU and acquire European rural development strategy. Program implemented in 2010, when the government had opposite priorities.

**QC:** relatively good design (ownership, flexibility, training), but NO policy dialogue in agriculture (excluded from the AA), and NO flexibility!

**CAPACITY OUTPUTS:** trained technical staff, created new functions (eg, donor coordination) and structures (unification phytosanitary services). But weak consolidation and integration in the life of the institution. Volatile outputs.

**OUTCOMES:** institutions weakened by GoU political patronage and hidden policy agenda. Decreased independence, decisional and relational capacities. Loss of good staff.



## RAC Test: Bolivia (2011)

### ***Budget Support to the then new GoB Strategy on Desarrollo Integral con Coca***

**OF:** high political priority for GoB of Evo Morales. Importance of partnership with the EU compared to the reluctance of US. High level of coordination and institutional dialogue.

**QC:** owned by the institutions concerned. Good dialogue structure between GoB and EC.

**CAPACITY OUTPUTS:** high correspondence between individual training and organizational restructuring; improved skills and systems in financing, transparency, strategic planning and monitoring.

**OUTCOMES:** transformation of acquired skills into institutional strengthening: definition and implementation of plans, autonomy of decentralized units and beneficiary communities, transparency and corporate accountability.