

# **CAPTURING CAPACITY BUILDING: A FRAMEWORK**

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Capacity building is a buzzword of international politics. It is a concept through which very diverse activities geared at assisting countries are described. The Sustainable Development Goals rely substantially on the idea that least developed countries require improved capacities to address poverty and other issues. As Venner (2015:85) notes, “capacity building has thus become something that any development assistance organization must do if it is conducting its programmes according to the current ‘state of the art’.” Many observers have noted the considerably conceptual confusion around what the term might mean, while sceptics have argued that the term is little more than a recent fashion (Kühl 2009).

In SAFE SEAS we are interested in what organizations actually do when they claim to conduct capacity building work. Our goal is firstly to open the “black box” of capacity building in the case of maritime security and policy in order to capture the variety of work done under this heading. This allows to more systematically organize the experiences of organizations in that domain. Secondly, this provides the starting point for reflecting what kind of effects different types of capacity building projects have and where the practical challenges lie. Thirdly, it allows collation of success stories of capacity building in order to formulate best practices for future programming and implementation.

This concept note presents a basic framework for data collection that allows for capturing maritime security capacity building activities in the SAFE SEAS country cases. It provides guidelines for how we aim at gathering data through desk research, interviews and participant observation in order to study how capacity building is carried out in practice.

## **A WORKING DEFINITION**

Capacity building is a broad concept and no clear definition of the term has emerged. Various aid organizations and academics have aimed at developing definitions as well as ideal typical frameworks (see Hosono et al. 2011). This is not the intention of SAFE SEAS. We are interested in the practice of capacity building. This nonetheless requires a broad working definition that provides us a starting point. Within SAFE SEAS we work with the following definition of maritime security capacity building as:

“activities which are directed at the empowerment of governments and coastal communities to efficiently and efficaciously govern and sustainably exploit the maritime domain, including territorial waters and exclusive economic zones” (Bueger 2014).

This definition firstly stresses that capacity building is not only about governments and the state, but also about communities. Secondly, it emphasizes the overall goal of capacity building, that is to work towards efficient and efficacious governance of the sea and a sustainable use of maritime resources. This is a goal that goes beyond immediate maritime security concerns and is meant to emphasize the

importance of seeing maritime security as part of the broader picture of maritime governance (see the discussion of maritime security in Bueger 2015).

In SAFE SEAS we however limit our initial empirical scope to capacity building which is explicitly carried out under the frame of maritime security - that is activities which make a direct link to maritime insecurities - in particular, maritime crimes, such as piracy, armed robbery, fishery crimes, pollution, marine safety, or maritime inter-state disputes. Our focus is on the past ten years, which reflects roughly the time span from which piracy brought attention to the problem domain and the number of projects in the Western Indian Ocean was significantly extended. The next section details our framework for data gathering structured around core questions.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR DATA GATHERING

This framework has been designed for gathering data on maritime security capacity building and capturing the experience of actors involved in capacity building. It is structured around a number of core questions and indications of data initially available for desk research.

### Who does capacity building?

The first basic question to be asked is **what kind of actors** are involved in capacity building assistance. This can be firstly international donor organizations. A number of organizations are known to be very active. This includes the work of the *UN Office on Drugs and Crime* and its counter-piracy and maritime crime programmes headquartered in Nairobi; the work of the *International Maritime Organization* and its maritime security division, headquartered in London, with a field office in Nairobi; the *Food and Agricultural Organization* and its work in the fishery sector, with headquarters in Rome and field offices in Nairobi and other countries; another main actor is the *European Union* and its projects and missions, *EUCAP Nestor*, *EUCAP Somalia*, *EUNAVFOR Atalanta*, *MARSIC*, and *CRIMARIO*. While these are the main organizations active in the Western Indian Ocean, a range of other international organizations contribute to capacity building, including the *UN Development Programme* or the *UN Environmental Programme*. A second type of actor are African regional organizations. These include the *Indian Ocean Commission*, the *Intergovernmental Authority for Development*, the *Southern African Development Community* or the *Port Management Association of Eastern & Southern Africa*. A third type of actor are individual states which provide capacity building in the frame of *bilateral agreements*. For instance in Kenya, the governments of the U.S., Denmark, and the UK are known to carry out such work. In the case of Seychelles, countries such as India, UAE, France, UK and U.S. have provided support. The fourth type of actors are *NGOs and civil society organizations* potentially active in the area. For instance, the PEW Charitable Trusts Fund is active in funding the illegal fishing project Fish-I.

The starting point for gathering data on these actors is the Ocean Beyond Piracy database on capacity building project in the region which has data until 2013. A further source are the annual reports and websites of the respective organizations, such as the UNODC newsletter.

### **What are the concrete projects that they deliver?**

The next step is to gather an overview of what kind of concrete projects the capacity building actors are delivering. The goal will be to do this as fine-grained as possible and then ask a series of concrete questions about each project. Given resource constraints, a sampling strategy will be required once the overview is gathered. The following questions will be asked for each project.

### **What kind of capacity is delivered?**

This implies to ask what distinct type of capacity is actually built. We distinguish between the following basic types of capacity: 1) *knowledge and skills*, 2) *institutional infrastructures, procedures, and rules, as well as* 3) *material equipment and technology*. The first domain of knowledge refers to the human resource dimension of capacity building and work such as the practical training of officers, personnel or professionals. Examples include navigation, boarding or fishing skills. The second domain refers to the institutional dimension, that is, assistance in the organization of administrative bodies (such as the police, courts or community enterprises), the development of bureaucratic procedures, rules and laws, or of education programs. Finally, the third domain consists of the provision of equipment and technology, ranging from computers, radars, information sharing technology to coast guard vessels or weapons.

### **Who are the primary beneficiaries of the capacity?**

This question implies to ask with whom the project is working and to identify the primary beneficiaries. This can be firstly the state, that is, governmental bodies, such as ministries, courts, state security forces or maritime authorities. Secondly, it can also be non-state beneficiaries, such as local communities, for instance, coastal villages, or the fisher folk.

### **What are the approaches used to identify needs, program and implement projects?**

This question concerns the approaches used in project design, programming and implementation. How are needs identified that justify the project? How are the projects designed? How is ownership considered? What tools are used in the project (for instance, workshops, trainings, mentoring, etc.)? What understanding of knowledge transfer and learning is adopted?

### **What are the effects?**

The final set of questions concern the effects of projects. This will imply to argue counter-factually. In what state would the beneficiary be if the project would not have been carried out? What are the unintended consequences? What are the short-term gains compared to the mid-term or long-term benefits? Are there success stories? When and how has this success been achieved? What are the main challenges that projects are facing to have effect?

## CONCLUSION

The framework sets out a broad set of questions that will allow us to gather data on the practice of maritime security capacity building. As indicated, this will imply to further fine-grain the questions asked and also develop a sampling strategy once a sufficient overview of the projects is developed. The framework allows us to open the “black box” of capacity building and to capture the variety of work done under this header. This systematic review of the experiences of organizations in the domain will provide the basis for developing a best practice tool kit that details what kind of effects what types of capacity building projects have, where the practical challenges lie, and how success stories allow to provide guidance for future programming.

## LITERATURE

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