



Measuring community capacity: An electronic audit tool

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Objective:

To develop an electronic instrument that people in a community can use to rate the strength of the community with respect to various community capacities (e.g. leadership) in all sectors (e.g. business).

3 Components of regional growth and development

Economy

Environment

Social

What is this 'social' thing?

The social

The 3rd component of the triple bottom line
services

an aspect of human well-being
social impacts of other activity

The relational factor that underpins,
coordinates, and integrates activity across all
sectors

The medium through which all else happens

*Social relations are the foundation of growth,
development, viability, and sustainability in all
sectors.*

What is the community factor?

Requirements

- Must be relational
- Must span all sectors: community/region
- Must be scientific
- Must be measurable
- Must be useful for all stakeholders and end-users:
communities
governments
industry
researchers

Aims

- To develop a template for rural communities to use to assess their community capacity to support the growth of local primary industries.
- To work with three South Australian communities to develop the template.
- To trial the template by conducting audits in these communities.
- For each community to do capacity-building planning using audit results.

Definitions

Community capacity

The resources a community has that potentially can be used for an identified purpose [primary industry growth], and the community's ability to use these for this purpose in changing economic, social, and natural environmental contexts.

Community of place

People interacting with each other as they live together in the same location. This comprises: (1) people and their organisations; and (2) relations (personal relationships, networks, and partnerships) between these

Definitions (contd.)

Community resource

A community resource is inherent in the people, organisations, and relations that comprise the community and external networks, partnerships, organisations, and services available to it. 'Inherent in' means produced, sustained, owned, and/or used by the people, organisations, and relations.

Sectors

Social structure (community)

Primary industries

Business

Finance

Education and training

Employment

Environment

Health & human services

Sport & recreation

Arts & entertainment

Religion

Capacities and sub-capacities

Capacity	Meaning	Sub-capacity
Mass	No. & range of programs & organisations relative to community requirements	
Programs (incl. services)	Suitability to local context	
Access	To programs/organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community access • To informal networks (employment sector)
Information	About programs/organisations	
Marketing	Of programs/organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally • Locally • Outside the community
Financial resources	Available to the sector	

Capacities and sub-capacities (contd.)

Capacity	Meaning	Sub-capacity
Human resources	Available to sector	
Facilities	Available to sector	
Equipment	Available to sector	
Management	In the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of local programs/organisations • Of external programs/organisations
Leadership	Of the sector	
Networks and relationships	Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the sector • Sector-community • Sector-outside world

Capacities and sub-capacities (contd.)

Capacity	Meaning	Sub-capacity
Government support		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General govt. support• Commonwealth/state govt. support• Local govt. support
Politics		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing diversity in the sector• Advocating for resources• Attracting resources
Social capital	In the sector - trust, reciprocity, cooperation, collaboration	

Capacities and sub-capacities (contd.)

Capacity	Meaning	Sub-capacity
Attitudes		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support for the community as a whole and each other• Priority for economic growth and social development• Cohesive, friendly, welcoming, caring community• Community support for the sector

Capacity components

- Capacity strength (CS)
- Capacity importance (CI)
- Capacity contribution (CC)

- $CC = CS \times CI$

- Means of sub-capacities of the same capacity are taken as capacity scores

The template

- Introduction
- Community contacts
- Community statistics
- Sector introductions
- Capacity/sub-capacity screens

[Demo Template.mdb](#)

Uses

- Profiles: communities → region → nation
- Strategic planning
- Community development
- Profiling funding programs
- Matching funding programs to capacity profiles

Research uses

- 'State of the nation' capacity profiles
- Capacity as a component of community viability and sustainability
- Capacity as an independent variable
 - Eg: → economic growth
 - health status
- Capacity as a dependent variable
 - Eg: community/regional income levels →
 - population change →
 - impacts of water markets →

Conclusion

- We have scientific methods for measuring and planning economic growth, regional development, and business development
- We have scientific methods for measuring biodiversity and environmental sustainability
- We can have scientific methods for measuring, developing, and growing community capacity, which is the foundation for all else.