



Using the Adaptive Management self-assessment tool

What is the self-assessment tool and why should I use it?

The **Adaptive Management self-assessment tool** has been designed to help teams assess the extent to which they have a supportive environment for adaptive management within their country program. The self-assessment tool helps you think about five different areas that have been identified as important for supporting adaptive management:

1. Culture & leadership
2. Dynamic teams
3. Appropriate analysis
4. Responsive implementation & operations
5. Enabling environment (for example donor funding and relationships)

There are seven to nine statements within each area. Read each statement and decide whether each statement is:

RED Not in place/not met/never

AMBER Partially in place/partially met/sometimes

GREEN In place/met/always

As you go through the assessment exercise, we'd like to encourage you to provide honest rankings. It is OK to have red or amber for your initial/baseline assessment in order to identify and be able to act on areas needing improvement.

The tool can assist country programs or teams to develop plans to improve the environment for adaptive management. The statements within the tool can serve as ideas of steps that can be taken to encourage adaptive management. Depending on which application option is chosen, the tool may also help uncover different opinions within the team to enable discussions about why team members may perceive things differently.

When is this exercise most useful?

The Adaptive Management self-assessment tool can be used at any time to create a snapshot assessment of the situation at that point in time. Countries piloting an ADAPT approach under Sida HFA will conduct this exercise twice: once at the beginning of the Sida HFA III Year 3 project to create a baseline and action plan for improvement; and once at the end of the project to reflect on any changes to country program ways of working. For the purposes of the Sida self-assessment we'd ask that you relate your responses to your direct experience and perception of the country program.

Who should I involve in this exercise?

The Adaptive Management self-assessment tool is designed to be an internal exercise. It is important that a diverse range of staff are asked to provide inputs into the self-assessment. Please consider the following when inviting people to be involved in the self-assessment:

- Include staff from different levels of the organization, from senior leadership team to field staff
- Include local, national and expatriate staff members
- Include staff from different teams including programs, M&E, finance and operations
- Gender balance and Power dynamics within the team

Options for using the tool

Option 1: facilitated one-to-one discussions, individual ranking, facilitator consolidation and group discussion during a workshop

- Identify facilitator within country team
- Draw up inclusive list of people to fill out the self-assessment
- Facilitator has one-on-one discussions with people around the topic of adaptive management. The facilitator can fill in the assessment tool themselves as the discussion takes place, or after a general discussion the interviewee fills out the assessment tool on their own.
- Facilitator collates the rankings that different people have given the team. Facilitator looks for trends and differences of opinions.
- Facilitator holds a workshop/meeting to discuss the picture that individual people's assessments create, why there may be similarities and/or differences of opinion, agree the final rating, decide on priority areas and then develop an action plan.

Option 2: self-facilitated workshop, individual ranking and group consolidation

- Identify facilitator within country team
- Arrange an inclusive workshop (approx. 2.5 hours) with about 10-15 participants
- Begin the workshop with a discussion of adaptive management and an introduction to the self-assessment tool
- Give individual participants time alone to complete the self-assessment (ideally using the excel version to ease consolidation)
- Facilitator consolidates individual assessments into a group document
- Facilitator encourages discussion about the picture that individual people's assessments create, why there may be similarities and/or differences of opinion, come to an agreement on a rating, decide on priority areas and then develop an action plan.

Option 3: remote distribution of tool to identified staff, anonymous aggregation by the ADAPT team, and results fed back to country program for group discussion

- Country team identifies a list of people who will complete the self-assessment tool.
- ADAPT Team distributes the self-assessment tool to individual staff members, setting a deadline for its return.
- In country staff complete the self-assessment and return to ADAPT team
- ADAPT team anonymously aggregate self-assessments and provide feedback to the country program, noting trends and differences of opinion
- In country facilitator holds a workshop/meeting to discuss the picture that individual people's assessments create, why there may be similarities and/or differences of opinion, agree the final rating, decide on priority areas and then develop an action plan.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL



Country Program

Date

Level of assessment: country program/ field office/ project/ partner/ other (circle one and state name below)

Staff Position (optional):

Instructions: Please read each statement and decide whether each statement is...

RED Not in place/not met/never

AMBER Partially in place/partially met/sometimes

GREEN In place/met/always

How was this self-assessment conducted?

Option 1

Option 2

Option 3

As you go through the assessment exercise, we'd like to encourage you to provide honest rankings. It is OK to have red or amber in order to identify and be able to act on areas needing improvement.

| 1. CULTURE & LEADERSHIP | RED | AMBER | GREEN |
|--|-----|-------|-------|
| Organizational culture needs to provide the cues, expectations and incentives that prioritize learning and adaptation – at the project, country, regional and organizational level. In this Country Team... | | | |
| 1.1 ...there is a strong vision of what success looks like, and how it can be achieved | | | |
| 1.2 ...there is a shared understanding of progress with project data, outcomes and information made accessible to all. | | | |
| 1.3 ...strategies and planning processes provide space for periodic reviews and adaptation | | | |
| 1.4 ...there is an expectation that projects/programs will not be implemented exactly to plan and will instead change and adapt | | | |
| 1.5 ...leaders create space and permission for experimentation and appropriate risk-taking | | | |
| 1.6 ...learning and critical reflection is prioritized by leaders who model this by asking difficult questions attentive listening and critical thinking skills | | | |
| 1.7 ...there is the belief that the wider organization permits and supports adaptive management | | | |

| 2. DYNAMIC TEAMS | RED | AMBER | GREEN |
|---|-----|-------|-------|
| <p>Adaptive management depends upon a respected, empowered and accountable team, equipped with the skills of critical thinking, analysis and creativity who are expected to gather and use data and information in their work. Structuring, recruiting and equipping our teams require careful leadership, planning and investment.</p> <p>In this Country Team...</p> | | | |
| 2.1 ...staff are free to share ideas and test out new practices that might fail | | | |
| 2.2 ...performance feedback is based on team members' success at learning and adapting (to improve outcomes) not just completion of activities | | | |
| 2.3 ...critical thinking skills and capacity are prioritized when considering candidates, recognizing that technical expertise can be built on the job | | | |
| 2.4 ...diversity is valued and actively encouraged through the recruitment process. | | | |
| 2.5 ...cross-team collaboration and mentoring is promoted, based on individual strengths and growth areas | | | |
| 2.6 ...the office is set up for collaborative working (e.g. open plan/ rooms mixing different teams/ whiteboards etc) | | | |
| 2.7 ...budget flexibility is built into project and country budgets to grow and shift team structures as needed | | | |

| 3. APPROPRIATE ANALYSIS | RED | AMBER | GREEN |
|--|-----|-------|-------|
| <p>Adaptive management requires processes of investigation, analysis and learning that help teams to recognize changes in context, understand the effects of activities, and make timely decisions based on diverse information.</p> <p>In this Country Team...</p> | | | |
| 3.1 ...budget and staff levels are sufficient to allow for program learning, with all team members having learning responsibilities in their job descriptions | | | |
| 3.2 ...monitoring systems are used to 'improve' programs/projects, as well as 'prove' impact, outcomes and outputs | | | |
| 3.3 ...indicators focus on collecting information that is useful for programmatic decision making, are limited in number and can evolve with the program | | | |
| 3.4 ...accountability and measurement is focused on outcomes (not activities) | | | |
| 3.5 ...changes in the context are analyzed and projects adjusted on a regular basis | | | |
| 3.6 ...informal and qualitative information (e.g. staff observations or client feedback) is valued as useful evidence for decision making | | | |
| 3.7 ...analytical tools and approaches such, after action reviews, project logs, program review meetings are used to promote team analysis | | | |
| 3.8 ...information and analysis is presented in an appropriate format that supports its use by decision makers and other staff | | | |
| 3.9 ...analysis is informed by and shared with partner organizations | | | |

| 4. RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION & OPERATIONS | RED | AMBER | GREEN |
|---|-----|-------|-------|
| <p>Programs should be designed in a manner that anticipates and expects adaptation, use devolved decision making (as appropriate) and inclusive discussion to enable responsive implementation, and be supported by agile operations and finance systems.</p> <p>In this Country Team...</p> | | | |
| 4.1 ...flexible workplans and budgets (with clear formats and time frames for updates) give teams consistent processes for adaptation | | | |
| 4.2 ...approaches focus on piloting, testing and adapting multiple ideas (rather than working to a single 'solution' identified at the start) | | | |
| 4.3 ...processes such as scenario planning are used to help work be anticipatory, not just reactive | | | |
| 4.4 ...decision making is devolved where appropriate to support rapid and context-informed action | | | |
| 4.5 ...weekly team meetings provide a regular space for sharing information, discussing progress and raising challenges when they occur | | | |
| 4.6 ...regular reviews with the whole team (including other departments such as finance, HR and operations) are used to reflect on progress against results chains and appropriateness of program strategy and tactics | | | |
| 4.7 ...there is a shared vision and good communication between program and operational teams | | | |
| 4.8 ...systems (such as finance & procurement) and human resources (recruitment, on-boarding and incentives) support and reinforce agency expectations of agility and adaptation | | | |
| 4.9 ...operations and finance teams support contextually relevant solutions and will attempt to negotiate for exemptions to unfeasible policies | | | |

| 5. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT | RED | AMBER | GREEN |
|---|-----|-------|-------|
| <p>To do adaptive management and work on the changes needed in the first four components often goes beyond the control of an agency. The ability to be lean and nimble requires buy-in and flexibility from the donor enabling environment.</p> <p>In this Country Team...</p> | | | |
| <p><i>The country program advocates at the design stage for donor mechanisms, processes and expectations that support adaptive management such as:</i></p> | | | |
| 5.1 ...funding mechanisms that enable flexibility and experimentation; | | | |
| 5.2 ...adequate budget for M&E and learning; | | | |
| 5.3 ...expectations of program review and re-design during implementation; | | | |
| 5.4 ...reporting requirements that are not burdensome; | | | |
| 5.5 ...ability to recruit staff for critical thinking and innovation skills, not just years of experience; | | | |
| 5.6 ...accountability to be focused at outcome, not output, level | | | |
| 5.7 ...relations have been established with donors that allows for indicators, budgets and workplans to be adjusted in a timely fashion | | | |
| 5.8 ...there is regular and informal communication with donors about changes to context, program learning, challenges and progress | | | |
| 5.9 ...there is an enabling environment for adaptive management with partners. | | | |

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT STATUS DASHBOARD

(If using the excel form, this will be done automatically)

In order to collate your adaptive management status dashboard from the results of your assessment, follow these steps:

STEP 1: Collate the rankings (R = red, A = amber, G = green) from the assessment tool into the table below:

| | 1. Culture & Leadership | 2. Dynamic Teams | 3. Appropriate Analysis | 4. Responsive Implementation & Operations | 5. Enabling Environment |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | |
| Overall ranking | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

STEP 2: Color it accordingly: red, amber or green.

STEP 3: Based on the number of red, amber or green rankings, allocate an overall ranking for each of the five areas. Use your judgement as you give the overall ranking. For example, four green and three red rankings will mean an amber overall ranking. Below is an example to illustrate what the final product might look like:

| | 1. Culture & Leadership | 2. Dynamic Teams | 3. Appropriate Analysis | 4. Responsive Implementation & Operations | 5. Enabling Environment |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | R | G | R | R | A |
| 2 | G | G | R | G | G |
| 3 | R | A | G | A | R |
| 4 | A | A | R | R | R |
| 5 | R | G | R | R | G |
| 6 | G | G | A | A | G |
| 7 | G | R | R | G | A |
| 8 | R | G | | G | A |
| 9 | A | G | | A | A |
| Overall ranking | | | | | |
| | A | G | R | A | A |

This table will provide a visual dashboard for how your organization is doing in developing a supportive environment for adaptive management. It can be used to identify the most appropriate areas in which to prioritize and focus efforts.

STEP 4: Once you have a sense of priority areas, discuss actions that could help tackle weaker areas and reinforce areas in which you are already strong. Please populate the planning tool and use this to track implementation of the action plan.

| | Statement ref <i>(if appropriate)</i> | Action needed | Deadline | Person responsible | Completed by deadline? If no, why? |
|---|--|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--|
| Culture & leadership | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Dynamic teams | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Appropriate analysis | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Responsive implementation & operations | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Enabling Environment | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |