Implementation Capabilities Grid
For assessing capabilities in regard to implementation

What is needed?

Time: 30 mn - 1 hour

Material support: Blank self-assessment grids (see below) You can make an assessment at the following levels:

- Individual - assessing your own personal capabilities
- Project team - assessing your project team's capabilities
- Stakeholders group - assessing the stakeholders' capabilities in implementation
- Wider city - assessing how proficient the city is at implementation overall

❱ Each grid corresponds to one of **7 implementation themes** which are groupings of capabilities supporting a specific area of implementation.

❱ For each Implementation theme, there are several **capabilities**. They are the specific skills, method, technique, tool or knowledge that supports implementation.

❱ For each capability, there are four **capability levels**. This is the proficiency in using the capability (how well people do this thing).

This simple self-assessment tool is a good way to consider local capabilities in a range of areas relevant for the implementation of actions, which are:

➢ Building Strong Action Plans
➢ Open Working & Stakeholder Involvement
➢ Conditions for Implementation
➢ Joint Delivery of Projects
➢ Project Monitoring, Evaluation & Decisions
➢ Quantifying & Communicating Progress
➢ Leadership of Change

What for?

❱ To identify skills required when delivering a strategy or action plan.

❱ To assess proficiency in a particular area whilst taking into account the local practices and activities.

❱ To guide a city to focus on areas which require particular attention.

How to use it?

Step 1   Think about the first Capability that is listed. Consider the Description for each of the four Capability Levels and think about local examples of that Capability being used in your city or within your stakeholder group.

Step 2   Decide which of the four Capability Levels the local practice in your city most looks like (it may not be an exact match).

Step 3   Describe relevant example(s) for the local use of that Capability in the Local City Description.

Step 4   Repeat Steps 1-3 for each Capability. There are between 4 and 7 Capabilities, depending on the implementation theme.

Step 5   Review your Capability Levels and Local City Descriptions for this sheet. From that, decide for each Capability if it is something that you wish to focus on (e.g. to actively make use of that Capability in your implementation work, or to develop greater proficiency in that Capability to help overcome barriers to implementation).

The themes listed below are generic to most action plans or strategies. If you feel there is a *Capability* missing then add it to the bottom of the grid. This could be an area of practice that you have used locally or seen elsewhere and would be a relevant capability for that Implementation Theme. Include a *Description of Capability* for each *Capability Level*.

Implementation Theme: **Building Strong Action Plans** - Ensuring a high quality plan, to maximise chances of successful implementation

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Building your plan around a clear results framework	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Plans are focussed purely on actions, not linked to resources or longer term results	
	Developed	Plans have a loose set of expected results described but there is no standard framework or process for defining these	
	Advanced	Plans are created around a defined results framework. Expected results are clearly defined and include success measures.	
Ensuring your plan has a robust logic model and/or theory of change	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Plans are themes or actions only, with no logic model / theory of change included – no clear rationale that actions will lead to the expected results	
	Developed	Plans have a general theory of change described, but not a clear thread through from all resources and to every result	
	Advanced	Comprehensive Logic Model used to check coherence of plan, using an iterative process to ensure actions will logically lead to the intended results	
Analysing your plan and spotting the gaps / deficiencies	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	No process for reviewing plans and QA check	
	Developed	Some quality assurance of plans happens but ad hoc	
	Advanced	Systematic process for ensuring plans are coherent and complete, including peer review	
Developing SMART(ER) actions	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Actions are in a list	
	Developed	(Some) actions have (some) specifics attached	
	Advanced	All actions are SMART - Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time bound (Evaluated, Revised)	
Prioritisation and sequencing of actions	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Actions are all treated the same in the plan	
	Developed	Priorities are known, and some actions are differentiated from others, but not always explicitly	
	Advanced	There is a clear prioritisation of activities, which can be used in decision making to resolve conflicts and tackle project issues if/when they arise	

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Implementation Theme: **Open Working & Stakeholder Involvement** - Keeping a diverse range of people involved in your project in the right way

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Selling the plan and gaining buy-in	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Stakeholders are not aware of the plan or don't explicitly support it	
	Developed	Basic one-way publicising of the plan is carried out and there is implicit / passive support	
	Advanced	Two-way engagement carried out about the plan and its benefits; Stakeholders support the plan	
Managing conflicts	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Conflicts between stakeholders are not spotted early nor resolved quickly; Tensions often continue for an extended period	
	Developed	Conflicts are resolved in some/most cases, but rarely pre-emptively and normally due to the actions of certain individuals	
	Advanced	Conflicts are systematically managed and resolved or avoided altogether	
Reconciling different objectives of different parties - compromise	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Different objectives amongst stakeholders are poorly understood and do not feature in planning or discussion	
	Developed	Different objectives are tacitly acknowledged, often understood by some stakeholders and only partially or occasionally resolved	
	Advanced	Differing objectives between stakeholders are identified early, understood and discussed in the open; Stakeholders respect each other's positions; explicit agreement on compromise is often reached	
Finding mutual benefits - the win-win	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Some stakeholders work together for benefit, but without a process of looking explicitly for outcomes that are beneficial to both / all.	
	Developed	Win-win outcomes are identified but not systematically; mutual cooperation between stakeholders happens, but is ad hoc.	
	Advanced	Implementation of projects has a continued focus on enabling multiple / all parties to achieve benefits from successful delivery. Cooperative and reciprocal roles/positions are achieved between stakeholders.	
Defining levels of involvement - decision maker, advisory input etc.	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Stakeholders contribute as they see fit.	
	Developed	Stakeholders understand the different roles and responsibilities; they have a tacit understanding of their roles and input.	
	Advanced	Stakeholders are clearly and explicitly categorised in terms of their role and type of input into the different parts of the project and that of others. They understand their role and this is reviewed at regular/defined intervals.	

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Implementation Theme: **Conditions for Implementation** - Understanding, adjusting and working with the local conditions within your city

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Diagnostics for mapping & understanding a city context and explicit local conditions	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Implicit understanding of policymakers used to provide context to local conditions	
	Developed	Collect (assumed) viewpoints and anecdotal comment on conditions	
	Advanced	Systematic approach/method for objectively mapping local conditions, using defined tools	
Assessing the required conditions for successful delivery	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Acknowledgement that pre-requisites exist; obvious omissions are noted.	
	Developed	Ad hoc method for checking there are no missing pre-requisites or false assumptions in the plan	
	Advanced	Systematic method for evaluating the required conditions for Actions in the plan to succeed	
Methods for altering the conditions to be more suitable	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Corrective action is taken when local conditions mean the plan is not proceeding as intended.	
	Developed	Reactive method for altering conditions when difficulties are spotted.	
	Advanced	Systematic and pro-active method for taking corrective action when local conditions need amending in order for actions to succeed, in sympathy with adjustments being made to the action plan	
Methods for adjusting your plan to work with conditions	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Plan is fixed and does not get altered based on local conditions	
	Developed	Reactive and isolated approach to changing plans when conditions are preventing implementation or causing problems	
	Advanced	Systematic and pro-active method for adjusting the action plan when local conditions are not suitable for actions to succeed, in sympathy with alterations being made to the local conditions	

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Implementation Theme: **Joint Delivery of Projects** - Implementing a plan where multiple departments or agencies have responsibility

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Programme and Project Management	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	No formal methodology in use for managing projects	
	Developed	A project methodology is sometimes followed or different methodologies exist; staff training in use of the methodology is patchy.	
	Advanced	Full project and programme management methodology in use for all projects; key people (city and external) are trained in the use of those methodologies.	
Designing an appropriate governance and delivery structure	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Governance structures are ad hoc; no formal review of arrangements takes place	
	Developed	Project governance is in place, but not common across all delivery partners; or clear project governance is not in place in all cases.	
	Advanced	A clear project governance structure is in place which defines roles and the decision making process and delegated authority levels, including all delivery partners. Governance structures are reviewed regularly.	
Coordination of activities	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Plan is communicated to all partners; responsibilities for respective actions are understood by partners.	
	Developed	Plan is signed off by all partners. Major issues are highlighted to all Delivery Partners, with joint effort to resolve problems where needed.	
	Advanced	Plan is agreed through joint project board. Activities, risks and issues are tracked by project team in a systematic way. Progress is reviewed through explicit, joint project management / governance arrangements.	
Defining and understanding clear roles and responsibilities	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Roles and responsibilities are understood by individuals; awareness that other partners may have their own / different roles.	
	Developed	Roles and responsibilities are mutually understood.	
	Advanced	Explicit roles and responsibilities are documented and agreed by all parties and reviewed at defined intervals.	
Dealing with issues and barriers	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Issues and barriers are tackled by each Delivery Partner as they encounter them; other partners are made aware.	
	Developed	Issues are resolved collaboratively, with Delivery Partners working together when needed.	
	Advanced	Issues are resolved systematically through joint arrangements. Re-planning happens through joint governance structures. Delivery Partners tackle barriers affecting all parties, not just their own staff/organisation.	

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Implementation Theme: **Project Monitoring, Evaluation & Decisions** - Ensuring correct structures and governance mechanisms to keep sight of the activity, give right direction and make adjustments as required

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Monitoring and reporting of activity	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Project activity is tracked by the team. Reports are provided when requested.	
	Developed	Progress of defined actions and activities in the plan are monitored and considered by the project lead / decision maker. Periodic reports are prepared for relevant decision-makers.	
	Advanced	Systematic monitoring of activity, risks and issues, as well as progress towards results, as per logic model. Includes systematic reporting to managing boards and stakeholders. Structured projects methodologies are used.	
Governance structures, decision hierarchies and levels of control	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Governance and decisions are undertaken by person with day-to-day responsibility of the project team. Meetings are convened between stakeholders when wider decisions need to be made.	
	Developed	Decision making roles are agreed between all delivery partners; some delegation of decisions exists; regular meetings are held to discuss progress and revise plan as required.	
	Advanced	Clear governance model is in place, with appropriate programme and/or project boards steering and managing the work and taking decisions in a clear framework. Delegated authority for decisions is clear and appropriate. All delivery partners are clear on their roles and level of authority regarding project decisions. Changes to plans are agreed and managed in accordance with the project's change process.	
Managing and working with risks	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Any risks are considered when they are identified and assigned to the relevant delivery partner to manage.	
	Developed	Risks are assessed and monitored throughout the project; each has a plan of action to manage/mitigate the risk and a defined owner to monitor the risk and oversee the mitigation.	
	Advanced	Full risk analysis (in terms of likelihood and impact) is carried out prior to commencement of projects and a risk register maintained throughout. Risks are monitored and mitigations (activity to manage the risk - reduce its negative impact or likelihood of occurring) are in place; each risk has a defined owner. Mitigations are actively reviewed as part of project governance processes.	
Timely identification of issues (problems with the project delivery)	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Issues are dealt with by the team when they occur.	
	Developed	Issues are notified to the project manager; some are spotted before they occur, based on risk monitoring. Someone is allocated to deal with each issue.	
	Advanced	Issues are identified promptly and logged in a timely fashion; project managers, board members etc. are made aware in accordance with the project methodology. Critical issues are escalated to higher authority when necessary. All issues have an owner and a plan to deal with them; monitoring and decisions about them happen through the governance structure.	
Keeping track of resources and allocating effectively	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Resources are allocated at project level and balanced across the project activities. The work of team members is adjusted based on project requirements and other demands. Teams do their best to cover all the project activities with the available resources.	
	Developed	Resources are clearly defined and allocated to project activities. Lack of resource is discussed with project team and decision-maker. Resources are allocated based on project priorities.	

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Implementation Theme: **Quantifying and Communicating Progress** - Being clear about what good progress looks like and how to show that progress to others and help them understand it

Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Creating a clear and defined vision, with success measures	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Vision is vague or not defined; limited or no description of how success will be measured.	
	Developed	Vision is loosely defined, or lacks a robust results framework	
	Advanced	Vision is explicitly described and accompanied by a clear and robust results framework.	
Helping people to see and understand your vision	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Stakeholders understand the vision at a basic level; sometimes struggle to communicate it clearly to others.	
	Developed	Vision is developed in small group and communicated out in a simple manner; some stakeholders grasp and support it.	
	Advanced	Systematic process for co-developing and then communicating the vision to defined stakeholders, for maximum understanding and buy-in	
Working with logic models and showing quantified evidence of progress, including progress with actions and interim results.	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Progress is described in terms of actions completed.	
	Developed	Using results framework to illustrate progress in a general way; indicating how actions that are completed or in-progress contribute towards the intended end results.	
	Advanced	Using a defined results framework/logic model to describe interim progress in terms of "distance travelled" towards the end result in an explicit/quantified way.	
Telling a story - creating an compelling narrative	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Using projects plans and milestones to describe progress; vision described in metrics.	
	Developed	Using examples and simple narrative to illustrate the vision. Stakeholders have a good understanding of progress.	
	Advanced	Using storytelling and evocative narrative to illustrate the vision and the progress towards it. Make it real for stakeholders – creating a clear understanding of what is happening in terms of examples they understand.	
Styles and methods of communication & engagement	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Simple communication tools are used, often one-way.	
	Developed	A variety of communication methods are used, loosely aligned to stakeholders, based on analysis	
	Advanced	A full range of communication and engagement tools are used, in a systematic and targeted way, which is aligned to the needs of stakeholders	

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Capability	Level	Description	Local City Description
Behaviours required for successful leadership	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Some senior managers or politicians display good leadership behaviours; leadership is delivered from senior levels.	
	Developed	Leadership behaviours are seen at multiple levels and in different departments/teams/partners, although not evenly throughout the whole organisation/partnership.	
	Advanced	Strong leadership behaviours are displayed at all levels and in all departments/teams/partners.	
Theory and practice for creating change	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Projects are created to change service provision or service structure.	
	Developed	Change is acknowledged as a discipline in its own right, with some methods and theory being applied in certain areas.	
	Advanced	Systematic approach to change is used, acknowledging and working with systems, processes, behaviours, values, vision and culture as key components.	
Creating and communicating a vision	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	A series of desired results are agreed and communicated, actions are agreed and directed to achieve those results. Those involved in the carrying out actions are aware of the desired results.	
	Developed	A description of the desired results of change is created and defined, possibly with input from a range of stakeholders. Metrics are included to help define success. A broad range of people are aware of the desired results and what that means.	
	Advanced	A clear and succinct vision is created and defined in partnership, including what success looks like. This is described as an appealing "future state" – what things should be like, look and feel like when the vision is achieved. All stakeholders understand and can visualise what that will mean for them. It doesn't prescribe the route to get there.	
Motivations and blocking	None	This capability is not used or not present locally	
	Standard	Some leaders use a limited understanding of people's motivations to inspire them. People blocking change are tackled in an ad hoc way. Some blockers are not addressed.	
	Developed	Leaders at various levels have a basic understanding of the motivations of the people involved and often adjust their approach to fit. People blocking change are tackled in a consistent way, acknowledging differing views.	

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	Advanced	Conditions are created that inspire, motivate and minimise "blocking" behaviour. Active listening supports good understanding of the motivations of the various stakeholders; systematic action is taken to lead them in a way that responds to their views and motivations. The motivations of people blocking change are understood and these blockers are tackled with deliberate strategies, in line with their views and motivations.
Failure and learning cycles	None	This capability is not used or not present locally
	Standard	It is acknowledged that benefits can come from trying things that don't work as planned. Testing new things is tolerated but risks are very tightly managed.
	Developed	Experimentation is supported in set situations, project reviews and debriefing is carried out, lessons are recorded and available. Learning is applied within teams.
	Advanced	Leaders set clear but broad boundaries and actively encourage experimentation and testing; learning from things that don't work and adapting are rewarded. Results of one initiative are actively reviewed and used in planning subsequent projects. Learning is used across teams.
Whole Systems Leadership	None	This capability is not used or not present locally
	Standard	Leaders are aware of the need to involve multiple partners and bring people together. The intricacies of solving complex problems working with many partners are acknowledged. Expects to disturb the status quo.
	Developed	Leaders look at how components in a system are connected and how to balance benefits across those within a system. Collaborative approaches are used to engage people from across the systems in solving complex problems. Influences and brings many people together to test and create forward-thinking solutions, based on good practices.
	Advanced	Leaders think in terms of relationships, connections, shared power and shared benefits. They focus on participatory approaches, influencing others, being experimental and innovative, acknowledging complexity and interdependencies whist seeking simple and novel solutions to complex problems. Comfortable working with emergent practice, on an unclear path.