The Technical Independence Indicator
An approach to assessing sustainability of project results
Project Outcome Sustainability

Without *ex-post evaluation*, it is typically not possible to measure whether project results are *maintained*

- There are, however, features that are generally accepted as conditions of success
- The Technical Independence (TI) indicator assembles objective measures to serve as a proxy for “outcome sustainability” that can be monitored over time
- GHSC-PSM has measured TI in 28 countries over 5 years
The Technical Independence Indicator

**Strategy**

For a select set of **targeted supply chain activities**...

...does the **host country entity** have **five technical capacity elements** in place

...and are they acting as the **primary technical implementer**?
The Technical Independence Indicator

Strategy

For a select set of **targeted supply chain activities**…

### Technical Sub-Categories

- Strategy and Planning
- Forecasting and Supply Planning
- Procurement
- Quality Assurance
- Warehousing and Inventory Management
- Transportation and Distribution
- Management information systems (MIS)
- Governance and Financing
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Human resources capacity development

Selection based on:

1. Project objectives and interventions
2. Consultations with host country governments
3. Agreement between Implementer and Funder
4. Resource limitations of monitoring teams
# Technical Independence

**Reporting format**

## Total number of supply chain activities targeted for technical independence by the end of the GHSC-PSM project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible host country entity</th>
<th>Health Area</th>
<th>Designation of Responsibility</th>
<th>Standardization</th>
<th>Training Approach</th>
<th>Other Resources</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Host Country Entity Implementation Role</th>
<th>Technical Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forecasting and Supply Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop/update supply plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop annual forecast</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<td>✗</td>
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<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance and Financing</td>
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<td>Integrated</td>
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<td>Human Resources Capacity Development</td>
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<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Integrated</td>
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<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehousing and Inventory Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Primary technical implementer</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Percentage of targeted supply chain activities in which the host country entity has achieved technical independence with GHSC-PSM technical assistance:

All countries aim to achieve 100% technical independence on targeted activities by the end of the project in 2023.

**USAID GLOBAL HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAM - Procurement and Supply Management**
Stakeholder Feedback

• GHSC-PSM conducted key informant interviews in five countries with
  o Government agencies
  o USAID
  o Project staff

• Conducted to identify
  • Benefits of TI indicator reporting process
  • Capacity transfer stimulated by indicator
  • Suggested improvements
  • TI indicator data use
  • Challenges/barriers
Reported Benefits

• In many but not all cases, indicator improved relationships between donor, projects, and government
  o In those cases, the *process* itself has improved collaboration with counterparts

• Capacity gaps have been identified and addressed where possible

• Most respondents acknowledged sustainability was important but not always the top priority
  o The TI indicator moves sustainability to the forefront
  o In at least one country, MOH adopted a similar indicator

• TI reporting identifies gaps in resources to inform strategy and funding

• Aligns with USAID’s current strategy to build local capacity
Validity & Usefulness

- Gap identification
- Countries and their partners reassess technical strategy
- Building confidence in GHSC-PSM’s implementation approach
- Continual assessment of implementation progress

“I believe their [GHSC-PSM’s] approach has been systematic in addressing the gaps and leading towards sustainability and technical independence of our respective departments.”

Ministry of Health representative
Reported Challenges and Constraints

• Sufficient funding is required to achieve TI, but not assessed
• Operating environment (political, economic, social) is not considered
• Requires significant resources to collect, train, and communicate
• Several aspects are difficult to measure objectively
Recommended Improvements

As part of Technical Independence assessments consider:

• Capturing resiliency
• Assessing leadership commitment to TI
• Incorporating funding gap analysis
TI achievement is a high bar

Capacity Elements Achieved

- Designation of responsibility, 91%
- Other resources, 79%
- Standardization, 79%
- Performance indicator, 60%
- Primary technical implementer, 50%
- Training approach, 40%

Aggregated across all activities, all countries (2021)
Barriers to Achieving *(not measuring)* Technical Independence

- Shortage of personnel with required skills
- High staff turnover
- Insufficient funding
- Low political will
- Bureaucratic structures within an institution may resist the structural or cultural changes sometimes required
- Training materials such as curriculums, SOPs, and support materials are not standardized

“The key barrier for [developing a] training approach is that the [MOH] agency’s human resource department is not organized…to coordinate and lead the development of such training packages and the provision of training. They mostly focus on personnel management and other human resource administrative activities. Technical units are [now] taking the initiative and leading such activities.”

Ministry of Health representative
Overall Takeaways

A majority of interviewed stakeholders agree, the Technical Independence indicator:

• Is a meaningful and useful metric that facilitates technical planning and collaboration with host countries and donors;

• Creates a compelling way to demonstrate the “impact” of technical assistance activities;

It would be valuable to assess the current financial aspects of technical independence along with capacity transfer.
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