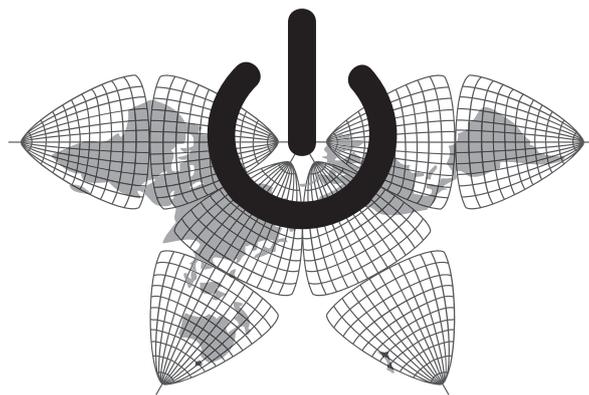


TECHSCAPE MODULES: CONCEPT NOTE

Network assessments to build capacity, strengthen ties and inform evidence-based decision-making in the use of technology by civil society.

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the engine room

TECHSCAPE MODULE

TechScape modules help networks to better understand and support the ways in which their civil society members are (and are not) using technology in their work. TechScape modules assess the contexts, capacities and opportunities for a limited sample of network members, providing strategic guidance and identifying opportunities to strengthen network activities.

For more information on the global TechScape project, see bit.ly/TechScapeFAQ.
For information on the criteria for a network module, see bit.ly/TScall.

BACKGROUND

Developments in information and communication technology are rapidly and fundamentally changing the strategic landscape in which civil society operates. While early adopters and innovators have earned popular attention, it is increasingly clear that the successful adoption and use of ICTs by civil society are entirely dependent on the environmental and strategic context in which organizations operate.

In order to help large civil society networks to understand their members' needs, ambitions and potential for using technology, the engine room is offering modular deployments of TechScape, a global research project generating empirical, comparative and actionable data on how civil society relates to technology in their work.

RATIONALE

Good programming needs good data, and this is especially true in the dynamic area of ICTs, development and advocacy. A data-driven approach helps civil society networks identify and mobilize evidence that is actionable at the level of the organization and the network. Evidence can help to identify weak spots and risks, to build capacities, and to identify opportunities.

At the organizational level, TechScape uses an action-oriented assessment model to provide organizations with granular, concrete and contextualized data on strengths and weaknesses, while building capacities and awareness through the assessment process.

At the network level, TechScape modules provide information that can be translated into targeted and efficient capacity development of network members. By identifying capacity gaps and opportunities across issue areas, geographies and organizational structure, TechScape assessments enable customized capacity investments that capitalize on a network's structure and resources. This allows the strategic selection of capacity development initiatives tailored to individual organizations or groups.

TechScape data also provides network managers with structural and comparative data to inform organizational development of networks in order to maximize communication, skill sharing, efficient granting and evaluation.

OUTPUTS

- Individual country briefs identifying trends, capacity gaps and potential synergies across organizations. Country Briefs will be concise, action-oriented documents intended to inform strategic processes. Country briefs will recommend capacity development activities based on the resources and priorities of country teams
- A single synthesized report, identifying trends, capacity gaps and potential synergies across the network. Comparative data and analysis of technology-use trends among local partners, across geographies and issue areas
- Access to the raw data, delivered securely and in usable formats for deep analysis and impact evaluation over time

In addition to network-specific outputs, the data collected in TechScape modules will be anonymized to contribute to the global TechScape data set, which will be released as a public good to the international research and policy communities.

METHODOLOGY

TechScape assessments are conducted locally by Field Researchers, using a methodology designed to minimize the demands placed on organizations, while building capacities and raising awareness on issues of strategic opportunity and digital security.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

TechScape is structured to assess how civil society organizations use, adopt and anticipate technology in their work, and to understand how these factors vary and trend across a number of contextual and organizational dimensions.

1. Tech Use

- How is technology being used by the organization?
- Which uses have been successful and unsuccessful?
- To what degree are technological tools integrated into the organization's work?
- What does technology use "cost" organizations?

2. Tech Adoption

- What factors motivate an organization to adopt new technologies?
- What factors inhibit adoption?
- Do contextual factors such as issue areas or organizational structure correlate with adoption?
- Does significant investment accompany adoption?

3. Anticipation

- When are ICTs seen as a magic bullet? As all hype?
- What contextual factors correlate with innovative adaptation?
- What are the expected costs of using new technologies?

DIMENSIONS AND VARIABLES

TechScape data is structured according to four main dimensions, only one of which is directly captured by the above research questions. The other three dimensions are contextual, and provide insight on the correlations and contributing factors to technology use, while also providing networks with structural and strategic information with which to support their members generally.

Each of the four dimensions is composed of multiple variables, which are further composed of both objective and subjective indicators, drawing from expert assessments, national and international data sources, and direct interviews.

Below is a table listing examples of variable for each main dimension.

CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT	ISSUE AREA
REPRESSION	SIZE AND ORGANIZATION
NETWORK POSITION	STAKEHOLDERS

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES	CAPACITY AND NEEDS
TYPES OF PROGRAMMING	SELF-ASSESSMENTS/ PROXY INDICATORS
ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS	SKILL SETS
INVESTMENT IN CAPACITIES	EFFICIENCY
USE OF TECH	SECURITY

SAMPLES

Since not all organizations in a given network can be surveyed on their use of technology, a sample of organizations is selected and assessed. When this sample is representative of that network's members in terms of activities, skills and contexts, the data produced is treated as representative of the network as a whole. In order for network managers to extrapolate broadly from assessment results, network-specific samples should be as representative as possible, ideally spanning multiple variables in each of the key variable areas. A diverse sample, when well constructed, will provide networks with a more solid empirical basis for decision-making to support enhanced capacities among members.

The process of identifying an appropriate sample will vary across networks, as will the size and characteristics of samples. Generally, however, the more diverse and large a sample, the more useful data produced by that sample will be in strategic processes.

IMPLEMENTATION

TechScope assessments are conducted by local field researchers, through a combination of desk research and interviews.

Field Researchers are identified by the engine room and in collaboration with networks, on the basis of their expertise, local credibility, and potential to contribute to enhanced relationships between civil society and research communities in-country.

Field Researchers are contracted, managed and trained directly by the engine room, and are responsible for liaising directly with local organizations, unless otherwise requested by networks. Field Researchers are trained in 2, 3 hour sessions, conducted virtually by the engine room over a two week period.

DATA COLLECTION

Field researchers enter all data collected into a cloud-based data collection platform, which may be used offline for conducting interviews, and then synced when an internet connection becomes available. Using a data collection platform minimizes the costs associated with data entry and quality control, while also allowing for real time analysis of results and iterative adjustments to the survey.

DATA SOURCES

The TechScope assessment instrument is structurally divided into 3 sections, each with a distinct data source.

- The first section targets contextual data that may be collected through desk research, such as the degree of human or economic development, the quality of governance or media use in countries or urban areas.
- The second section targets contextual information that requires specific familiarity and expertise, such as the ways in which the organization's peers engage with stakeholders, or are constrained by political factors. If the Field Researcher has the relevant expertise (determined by the engine room in collaboration with network representatives upon selection) then this data may be entered directly by the Field Researcher. If not, the Field Researcher will be responsible for identifying, contacting and interviewing an appropriate expert. Such experts will require approval.
- The third section targets organization-specific information, which requires direct interviews with representatives of the organization being assessed.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The engine room analyzes assessment data on an on-going basis, as it is entered onto the data collection platform. This allows for correspondence with Field Researchers for adjustments or clarifications as necessary. When all of a module's assessments are completed, a preliminary analysis is discussed with network managers, before reports and country briefs are drafted and disseminated to countries.

When draft reports and country briefs have been submitted to networks, identifying trends, capacity gaps and potential synergies across organizations, the engine room may assist networks, network country teams or network members in developing and implementing capacity development strategies.

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