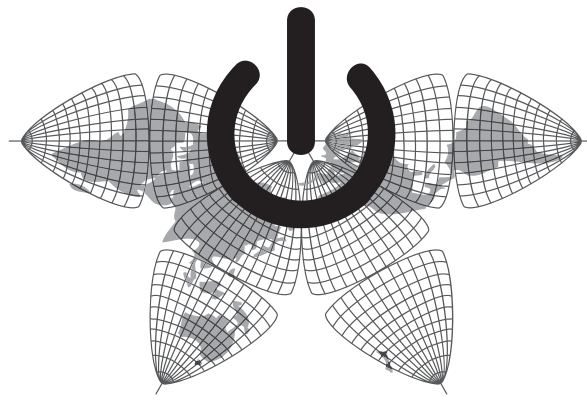


TECHSCAPE MODULES: HANDBOOK FOR COUNTRY TEAMS

This document outlines country-level implementation steps for TechScape modules.

Prepared June 2012



the engine room

TECHSCAPE PROJECT

TechScape is a global research project, leveraging multiple partnerships to gather empirical data on how civil society uses, anticipates and adopts technology. Over a two year period, TechScape will draw empirical data from a sample of 2-4,000 civil society organizations, distributed multiple dependent and independent variables.

TechScape modules are designed with specific networks in mind. These modules are designed in collaboration with a network and provide grantors and capacity building organizations to better understand how to strategically support technology adoption by local partners.

ROLE OF COUNTRY TEAMS

TechScape Modules are designed to allow the scaled participation of country teams. In contexts where there are no cultural, political or security-based factors inhibiting direct contact with organizations, TechScape modules may be implemented directly and independently by the engine room. In many contexts, however, input from local focal points can play a critical role. Bridging the concerns of overarching strategy and the local realities, country teams, officers and representatives will often be uniquely positioned to contextualize assessments and capacity development.

In order to accommodate this valuable input without placing undue burdens on country teams, TechScape modules solicit and facilitate the input of country teams at several key milestones, without requiring reporting, research, or participation beyond the country team capacities.

Similarly, the TechScape assessment methodology relies heavily on the use of local field researchers and experts. This helps to minimize the demands that assessments place on participating organizations. All aspects of outreach and communication in country can be adjusted in consultation with country teams.

OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

TechScape modules produce actionable data for networks to better understand and support their members' tech capacities. This data is also anonymized, and contributes to a global open data set, released as a public good to inform the work of international support organizations, donors, policy makers and researchers.

At the modular level, a synthesis report helps networks to understand broad trends among network members, identifying opportunities to develop capacities across countries and issue areas, as well as sustainable mechanisms for strengthening capacities and coordination between members over time. Country briefs target priority issues in specific countries, as identified by country teams, and with an eye towards direct support towards individual organizations.

MODULE OVERVIEW

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	OPPORTUNITY FOR NETWORK INPUT
Select organizations	<i>the engine room, network focal points, and country teams</i>	Network focal points and country teams are invited to propose organizations and approve the final list. Country teams are also invited to provide input on any cultural, political or security issues that should be considered when making contact or corresponding with organizations.
Select & hire field researchers	<i>the engine room</i>	Country teams are invited to propose candidates and approve the final selections.
Train field researchers	<i>the engine room</i>	
Select and secure local experts	<i>Field Researchers, with engine room approval</i>	Country teams are invited to propose candidates and approve the final selections.
Assess organizations	<i>Field Researchers</i>	
Preliminary analysis	<i>the engine room</i>	Network focal points and country teams are invited provide input on preliminary analysis, which will be used to structure and refine the Synthesis Report and Country Briefs.
Country Briefs and Synthesis Report	<i>the engine room</i>	
Anonymize and incorporate data into global data set	<i>the engine room</i>	
Review opportunities for capacity development	<i>Based on recommendations provided in the Synthesis Report and Country Briefs, the engine room will assist network focal points and country teams in identifying, evaluating and prioritizing appropriate follow-up activities.</i>	

1 IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATIONS

It is not possible to assess the tech use and capacity of all civil society organizations in a given network or country. In order to identify trends and commonalities among organizations, it is necessary to assess organizations that as a group are representative of networks, at both the country and network level.

Generally, the representivity of the organizations being assessed (the sample) will increase with greater diversity within the group, which in turns implies more organizations. For this reason, larger samples desirable, and TechScape has been designed to impose minimal cost increases for additional organizations.

Diversity is the most important factor to assess when selecting a sample. In small, country-level samples, this may involve selecting a handful of organizations that may be different from each other in virtually every way. In such situations, it is important to review this selection in the context of the larger network sample, to ensure the organizations selected contribute to the balance of the larger sample.

When considering this (as when composing larger samples), it is important to explicitly map the characteristics of organizations across the key variables and dimensions of the TechScape data set (see below). The engine room provides an analytical tool for this process, and will take primary responsibility for composing samples in consultation with network focal points and country teams.

2 ROLE OF FIELD RESEARCHERS

TechScape assessments are conducted by local field researchers, with expertise in local civil society and the use of technology. Field researchers report directly to the engine room, by whom they are hired, trained and managed, in consultation with network focal points and country teams when desirable.

Field researchers are responsible for collecting all assessment data, through desk research as well as interviews with local experts and civil society organizations. The use of field researchers is intended to lower the demands placed directly on network member organizations.

3 DATA AND INDICATORS

TechScape data is structured according to four main dimensions, each with a number of variables, composed of objective and subjective indicators, collected from multiple data sources. These four dimensions are displayed in the below table, with illustrative variables. The first dimension, on organizations' tech capacity and needs, represents the assessments main focus, and is structured to identify how civil society organizations use, adopt and anticipate technology in their work. In order to understand how these vary and trend across a number of contextual and organizational factors, the assessment also canvases the other three dimensions in the table below. These four dimensions are integrated throughout the assessment instrument, but may be disaggregated for deep analysis in the resulting database.

4 DATA SOURCES

The TechScape 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, and may be collected either through desk research or through interviews with approved local experts, depending on field researcher expertise, as determined at point of hire.
- The third section targets organization-specific information, which requires direct interviews with representatives of the organization being assessed.

5 DATA COLLECTION

All assessment data is entered directly by field researchers into a cloud-based data collection platform. Data entered while offline will be automatically synced with the cloud-based servers when a connection is re-established, allowing for real time analysis, and minimizing the resources demanded by data entry and quality control.

CONTACT AND GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENGINE ROOM

The engine room is dedicated to investigating & supporting the effective use of digital media and mobile phones by advocates around the world.

Applied Research: The engine room is founded on the belief that evidence has a critical and under-appreciated role to play in supporting digital advocacy. We gather information to inform programming and policy.

Strategic Support: The engine room directly supports advocacy initiatives in the process of integrating technology in their work and helps them to access international resources and expertise.

For questions about or suggestions for a TechScape module, contact:

techscape@theengineroom.org