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Guide to „Thematic Experience Capitalization“

Contents of Guide to “Thematic Experience Capitalization”

1. Why do we need a guide on “experience capitalization” and to whom is it addressed?
2. Using experience capitalization to prepare the way for change processes
3. Why capitalize on experiences?
4. How does one capitalize on experiences?
5. Participants and roles

APPENDICES

- 1 Methodological tips for experience capitalizations
- 2 Case studies of successful experience capitalizations

1. Why do we need a guide on „experience capitalization“ and to whom is it addressed?

1.1 Purpose of the guide

With this guide the SDC has an instrument to support experience capitalizations, especially their initiation, planning and structuring, as well as their implementation and/or support. The following paragraphs provide information on **what** experience capitalization is (1-3), and **how** it can be realized (4-5). Practical tips on applicable resources and case studies describing successful experience capitalizations concretize the definitions, limitations and methodological tips, and illustrate possible procedures (appendices).

This guide is designed to aid individuals and organizations in organizing the process of experience capitalization and includes specific procedural suggestions. It thus supplements the key process of "experience capitalization" as defined by the SDC and the services provided by the F Department. Nevertheless, it is not a magic recipe or a simple checklist showing just how single experience capitalizations must be realized in detail. This is not possible (or even desirable) because the contents, rather than the method, determines their structure. Experience capitalizations do not always follow the same pattern: depending on the theme and how the question is formulated, their structures vary, or the significance of certain aspects may warrant the use of other methods and instruments.

1.2 Whom does the guide address?

This guide is an internal SDC document, directed primarily at **F Department employees**. Its purpose is to reinforce them in their advisory roles to the operational divisions and to support them as they participate in experience capitalizations. In addition, the guide should enable F employees to organize their own, F-specific experience capitalization processes. It thus joins the ranks of various other supportive instruments which the SDC makes available to F employees (materials and specialized training, e.g., to enable them to assume advisory roles, etc.).

Its secondary purpose is to serve those **SDC geographical divisions** who carry out experience capitalizations independently, i.e. without the enlistment of specialist and methodic-specific resources from the F Department.

2. Using experience capitalization to prepare the way for change processes

2.1 Understanding experience capitalization

Knowledge capital refers to the knowledge of employees and an organization's ability to draw from this knowledge in order to fulfill its tasks, and to improve its products and processes.

Experience capitalization is one method of reviewing experiences in order to produce knowledge. It is a **learning process** which brings about **changes** by reverting to existing but latent experiences. Capitalizing on experiences paves the way for change – or is a partial step in a process of change already in progress. It supplies a basis for the planned and purposeful sequence of changes. Although experience capitalizations are performed by experience holders, they can be used by anyone desiring to change a practice.

Experience capitalizations can be directed at both the **strategic orientations** of organizations and activities and their conceptual basis, as well as at improving **operations** and processes. In both instances the initiative may stem from the geographical divisions or from the F Department.

Experience capitalization refers to the transformation of (individual and institutional) Knowledge into capital by those directly involved in order to change a collective, institutional practice. It aims at changing one's own practices or structures and is not the same as **experience documentation**.

All of us continually undergo a learning process in the scope of our activities so that capitalizing on experiences is an ongoing process. But only when individual knowledge is made relevant to the organization is it **capitalized institutionally**. Only when experience capitalizations are configured as planned and collective events, when a procedure is agreed upon by all participants and is directed towards achieving a pre-defined goal, do they exhibit a useful and communicable form or become processes with controllable results which can be implemented methodically in order to improve a practice.

In addition to archiving and accountability functions, **experience documentation** is directed at „*learning in the future*“ and making information available to third parties. The objective is to create a retrievable memory.

2.2 Conceptual differentiations

By comparison, **experience capitalization** aims at changing one's own practices or institutional structures, while external evaluations are codetermined by an “external agenda” and are thus not exclusively controlled by the experience holders.

Experience capitalization is a form of institutional learning¹. It overlaps with a variety of other procedures, with the documentation and exchange of experiences, with evaluations, case studies, cross-section analyses and other methods used to evaluate, present and apply experience. One important difference is the fact that in the process of experience capitalization, available experience is collected from the “stakeholders”, from the persons and organizations directly involved, and then assimilated and used to plan and implement changes.

As concerns contents, the experience capitalization process does not require the involvement of third parties. The processes and results of experience capitalization belong to the participants themselves – although its results can be made available to other organizational units or third parties.

Experience capitalization cannot be delegated. External players will only be called in when those directly involved – the experience holders – ask them to participate. In such case, they are delegated a specific role, such as that of structuring processes.

¹ This guide does not differentiate between the terms "institutional" and "organizational" learning.

3. Why capitalize on experiences?

3.1 Objectives and purpose

Experience capitalization is aimed at **changing a practice** – within projects or programs (country programs, sectorial or thematic programs, etc.), or within concepts, strategies and policies. The accumulated and structured experience capital is then to be invested and implemented in order to achieve improved performance.

Each project designed to capitalize on experience must be precisely defined and, to the extent possible, should aim at answering specific questions. An essential prerequisite for success is that participants share joint responsibility for formulating the objectives and questions. They should also agree on a mutually identified need to change a partially unsatisfactory practice. Ideally, there should even be a consensus on the difficulties diagnosed in the practice to be improved, or the type of problem to be solved.

Since experience capitalization aims at changing a practice, the objectives of the respective processes should not be formulated retrospectively (past) – “What do we already know?” or “What have we learned?” or “What is not functioning well enough?” – but rather **prospectively**:

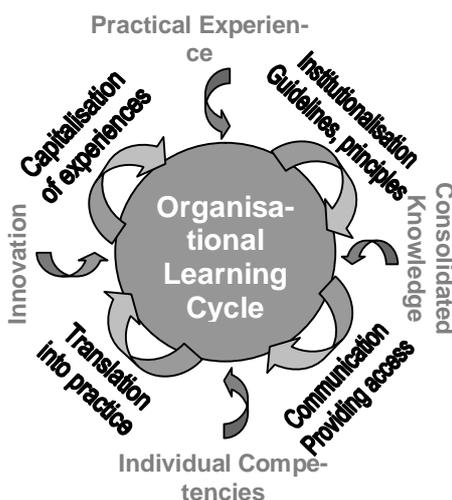
- “What do we know which can help us improve our future performance?”
- “What experiences can we use to realize our project or program more purposefully and how can we accomplish this, or how can we do more justice to context when shaping our concept or strategy?”
- “Our project or master plan is improved with respect to these aspects (*cite aspects*).”
- “We need insights on the following aspects (*cite aspects*) to improve our project or strategy.”

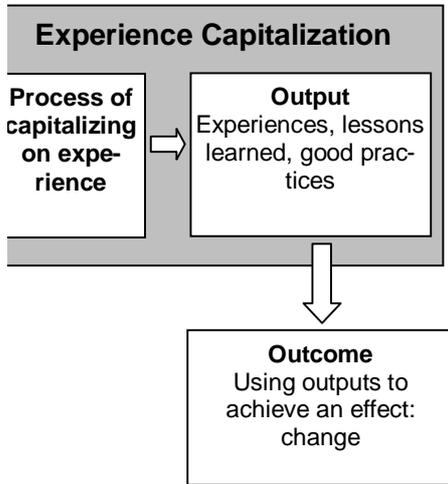
3.2 Using experience capitalization

Experience capitalization is a **learning process** which paves the way for change. Its purpose is not to show accomplished actions, document success, or create an individual legacy as a project, program phase or career nears completion. Other methods are available for such projects, mainly experience documentation (à 2). Capitalizing on experience means consolidating already acquired experience into common viewpoints within organizational learning processes (à organizational learning cycle) and translating them into a basis for a new orientation of activities, for the adaptation of concepts.

Lessons learned and good practices are the **output** of experience capitalization. Their **outcome** refers to triggered changes. The application of experiences must be prepared and agreed upon by all participants. The investment of “knowledge” capital must be planned with a maximum of consensus and implemented as a project of change. The purpose of experience capitalization is only achieved when a practice has actually been modified.

Experience capitalization is more successful when the objective and question are formulated as precisely and clearly as possible. This in turn will also make achieved results more useful and applicable.





Consolidated experiences are not automatically implemented as a logical consequence of experience capitalization. This depends on the **willingness** of the persons and organizations involved to **change**, including those in hierarchical functions, as well as on existing structures and decisions which experience holders cannot make on their own. Last but not least – local partners and target groups must also support the changes. Unlike experience capitalization, the players involved in projects of change are usually not “autonomous”.

3.3 Experience capitalization as an end in itself – Experience capitalization to reinforce third parties

One must also differentiate between what an organization wants to know and thus pursues through experience capitalization for its own sake, and contributions to the experience capitalization of partner organizations (for example, in the scope of capacity development activities). In the second instance, either the experiences gained by resource persons are used, or experience capitalization is supported logistically, while those experiences dealing with changing one's own practices are not treated.

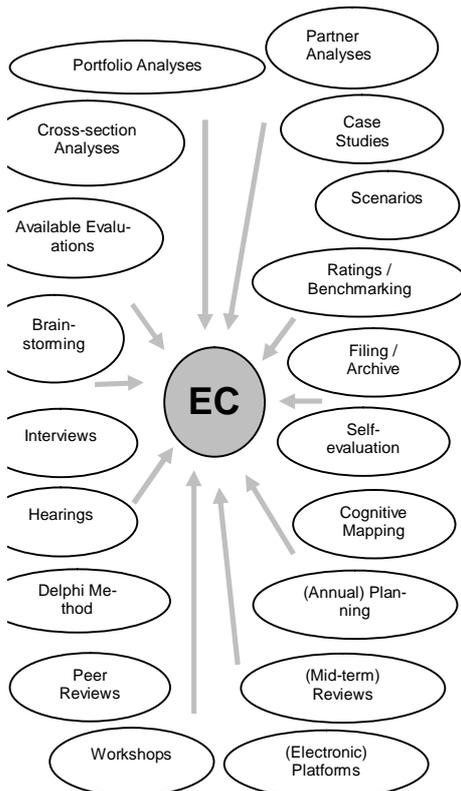
4. How does one capitalize on experiences?

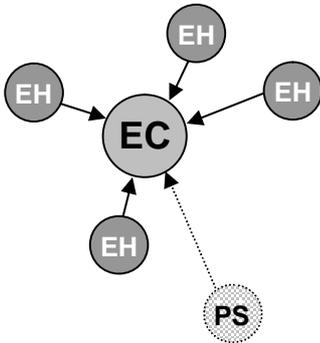
4.1 Methods

Experiences can be capitalized in very different ways, using a variety of instruments and procedures. Common to all forms of experience capitalization is the objective of changing a practice. To this end, individual and organizational knowledge are integrated, and relevant actions undertaken.

The form of experience capitalization and the **selection of appropriate instruments** depend on the motivation and the objective of experience capitalization, on personnel and institutional participation in the process, and on the geographical range. Finally, based on their form, experience capitalizations also become part of institutional traditions. Processes and reasons for experience capitalizations and participation therein are thus also determined by the history of the organization which capitalizes on experience. Hence, process managers and participants must also select the appropriate instruments or even create them. However, the use of instruments is not an end in itself since experience capitalization is not limited to the routine application of methods and procedures. The results of having applied any such instruments must be **interpreted**, compared and **evaluated** in order to suitably serve as a basis for planning changes.

Experience capitalizations can take the form of quick and simple reflections within a small group of people, or they may be more comprehensive, extending over a longer period of time (weeks or even months, if necessary).





○ Case studies: A, B,

4.11 Brief and quick experience capitalization

Occasions

In the scope of smaller projects or a community of practice, or when very specific questions are formulated within complex structures or systems, experience capitalization can be performed quickly (within days), with a minimum of logistics and without elaborate process structuring.

Participants

The experience holders (EH) themselves, i.e. those directly involved, can realize this form of experience capitalization without external support. The enlistment of process supporters (PS) is only required when time resources are limited.

Instruments

Appropriate methods for rapid experience capitalization processes include brainstorming sessions; surveys; and previously realized, easy self-evaluations in the sense of the SWOT procedure (S = success, W = weakness, O = opportunities, T = threats), etc.

Forms

This type of experience capitalization can be realized in the form of short workshops, written questionnaires or interviews, etc., and should take advantage of any already-scheduled events in the scope of projects and the SDC’s annual, country and medium-term programs, including annual planning, mid-year and mid-term reviews, etc.

4.12 Comprehensive and far-reaching experience capitalization

Occasions

Basic adaptations of projects and programs, of concepts and strategies and their thematic orientation require a more broadly structured experience capitalization process which extends over weeks or even months. It may get by without a central event and without all participants encountering each other face-to-face.

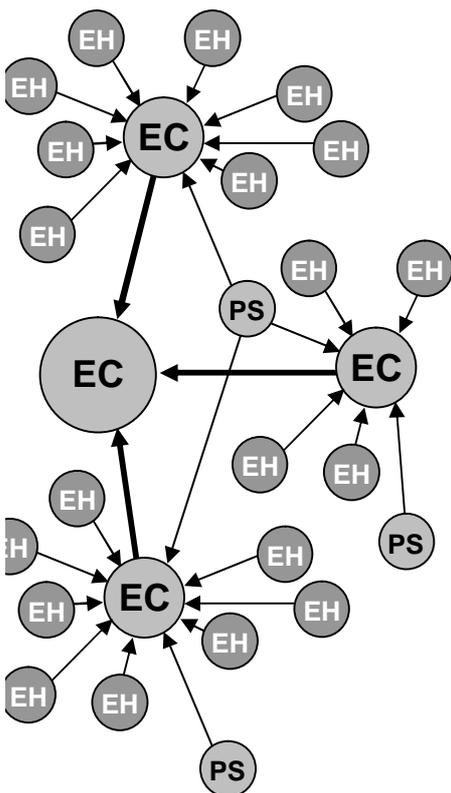
Participants

When required, the support of experts (from Switzerland or partner countries) who may have only an indirect connection to the theme of the experience capitalization process may also be enlisted as experience holders, in addition to those directly involved, to the employees from the SDC’s cooperation offices (COOFs) and from Headquarters (geographical and specialized divisions).

In any case, such F Department employees or external advisors must receive a clear mandate to function as process supporters based on a detailed functional specification.

Instruments

Depending on the need, all available instruments can be used in comprehensive experience capitalization to record, present and consolidate experiences. These include, for example, brainstorming sessions, surveys, interviews and consultations, previously realized self- or internal evaluations, cross-sectional evaluations, partner analyses, case studies, the evaluation of existing documents, cognitive mapping, portfolio analyses, scenario techniques, etc.



○ Case studies D, E, F, G, H, I

Forms

Usually this procedure cannot be completed within a few events (integrated, most of the time, within the framework of other events). Instead, it requires detailed process planning, with clearly defined stages, responsibilities and the presentation of intermediate results, etc. In comprehensive experience capitalization, it is imperative that participants be informed of (intermediate) results, and that they be invited to assess and comment on them as soon as a first synthesis of results achieved in the process has become available. The respective feedbacks flow into the experience capitalization process and its final results. Such concluding feedback rounds help to bring about a consensus (or to determine differences) in addition to having participants support the final results.

4.2 Organizing the experience capitalization process

The SDC defines experience capitalizations as one of its key processes.

Experience Capitalization (EC)				
	Who with whom?	Tasks	What to think about?	F Department
Identification of Needs	Geographical and specialist divisions / cooperation offices (COOFs) / in certain cases external experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine objective and purpose (required knowledge). ■ Decide if and what type of experiences should be systematically capitalized. ■ Define expected output. ■ Set the time frame. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are people open to EC and to change? ■ Is there a willingness to make investments? ■ Are changes possible (time!)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports the identification of needs. ■ Stands behind the objective.
Planning	COOFs / geographical and specialist divisions / in certain cases external support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Precisely formulate the objective of EC and how results will be applied. ■ Define fields to be observed and key questions. ■ Determine the process, length and rhythm. ■ Appoint those in charge, select participants and beneficiaries and other interested parties. Define their roles and earmark the required resources. ■ Select instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EC guide ■ Goal orientation: the more precise the question, the clearer and more implementation-oriented the EC process. ■ Be realistic! Plan expenditures and instruments in line with defined needs and objectives. ■ Time frame: plan short processes! ■ Transparency: EC is more efficient when the interests of participants are laid open on the table. ■ Do not capitalize experience for others! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supports a detailed objective. ■ Supports detailed planning. ■ Co-defines participation, roles and resources. ■ Selects instruments.
Implementation and Support	Experience holders with supporting group (COOFs / geographical and specialist divisions / invited partners / in certain cases external support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that experience holders retain ownership. ■ Define process management. ■ Document results. ■ Synthesize results. ■ Discuss results with experience holders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EC is a learning process. ■ The EC process should not be misused to assert individual interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Controls the process. ■ Documents results. ■ Consults and synthesizes.
Change Practices	COOFs / divisions / departments / COOFs with local partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan the application of capitalized experiences. ■ Make decisions on strategy and/or practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EC is not an end in itself, but rather a basis for making change and planning improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advises during implementation phase. ■ Applies results in quality system assessments (QSA), etc.

Stages

It makes sense to divide experience capitalization processes into four stages:

1. the identification of needs
2. planning
3. implementation (and support)
4. change of practice

It is important to understand that any preliminary and follow-up procedures are part of the experience capitalization process. Without clarification of the need, careful planning and the implementation of results, i.e., without the application of any knowledge gained in a (changed) procedure, experience capitalizations are incomplete. At the same time, processes should be kept as brief as possible – capitalization does not necessarily improve with longer process times.

Identifying the goal and theme

A prerequisite for the success of experience capitalization is the clear definition of a goal – or if necessary, of several secondary goals. The theme of experience capitalization must also be defined. Frequently, experience capitalization focuses on very specific aspects identified as needing revision and which are of more interest than large-scale or global topics. The more precisely these are formulated, the more solid will be the basis provided by the experience capitalization process for the planning and implementation of any changes.

Participation

Participants must be selected in accordance with the nature and demands of the respective experience capitalization process and the changes to which it should contribute (à also see Para. 5 of this guide). In principle the following applies:

- Participants should be selected according to their ability to make an important contribution to capitalization; in other words, they should be the experience holders. Experience capitalizations function as inclusive processes.
- The enlistment of a process supporter must be coordinated with the experience holders.

Process quality

Although experience capitalizations are planned in as much detail as possible, i.e. as precisely as required, they are still learning processes, which means the ability to plan them is limited. Experience capitalizations are unpredictable, dynamic ventures because of their participative structure. By involving various players with possibly diverging interests – but most certainly, with different perspectives – the objective is to illuminate all the different experiences and assessments rather than reach a consensus. It is not wise to strive for agreement on experiences; on the contrary, the presentation of different experiences should foster discussion among the players and in this way enrich the experience capitalization process.

Timing – experience capitalization and project, i.e. program cycle management

Experience capitalization taps into past experiences in order to adapt future practices and is thus basically future-oriented. In other words, capitalizing on experience is a meaningful process when a need for change exists and when the opportunities to initiate change are actually

given. In cases where estimates reveal only a small chance for change to even take place within a program or project, experience capitalization is superfluous. For example, the end of projects and programs is not a suitable moment to carry out experience capitalizations because there is no longer any leeway for changing an unsatisfactory procedure.

By comparison, the most significant opportunities for capitalizing on experiences are given during periods of crisis in medium- and long-term projects and programs, as well as during routine planning. Nevertheless, systematic experience capitalization is not necessarily a part of managing project and program cycles since many of these do well without it. But whenever experience capitalization is realized in the scope of routine project sequences, it should consider and use such significant milestones as planning sessions, mid-year and mid-term reviews, etc. Experience capitalization is always used in organizational learning processes.

5. Participants and roles

5.1 General

Experience holders (EH)

Experience capitalization always connects to something which already exists. It condenses experiences to common viewpoints and prepares these for the adaptation of a practice. Thus, it is not a compulsory process but is initiated and carried out by the participants themselves. Experience capitalization cannot be performed **without the experience holders**, and its results cannot be used as a basis to change any practice against the will of participants.

The most important players in experience capitalization processes are the experience holders themselves. Not only do they own the process and its results, they are also concerned with making capitalized experiences available to third parties. Experience holders initiate the experience capitalization process, define its objectives and integrate their knowledge and experiences into the process. Often, they – or at least some of them – are also responsible for implementing capitalized experiences. In other words, they are the ones who change their own practice.

At the same time, one must remember that while only experience holders can capitalize on experience, and although capitalization cannot be delegated, it may often aim at changing the practice of another group, or more precisely of the superordinate organization(s).

Process supporters (PS)

External players who are not necessarily familiar with the contents of an experience capitalization theme can be called in to support the experience holders in the process of capitalizing on their experiences. They can provide advice on the **structure of the experience capitalization process**, document intermediate and final results, and may even participate in planning the implementation of capitalized experiences.

Other participants

Besides experience holders and process supporters, other functions can be involved in experience capitalization, e.g., external experts who support the validation of consolidated experiences, those responsible for change processes, decision-makers, as well as persons and functions entrusted with transfer and networking tasks.

5.2 Roles of F Department employees

F Department employees can participate in experience capitalizations in **three ways**:

- they can be holders of general experiences and in this quality can participate in experience capitalizations,
- they can provide support for experience capitalization processes, and
- they can initiate experience capitalizations themselves (cf. also the table on the next page).

Experience holders (EH)

As experience holders with general thematic knowledge, F Department employees can make special contributions to experience capitalization processes initiated by third parties.

Process supporters (PS)

As process specialists, they can deliver methodological inputs for the experience capitalizations of third parties. They can support the identification of needs, as well as the planning, performance and implementation of experience capitalizations. In this second role, F Department employees are not only service providers, but also stakeholders by virtue of the fact that they help shape the experience capitalization processes which reinforce organizational learning processes, and which are the reason for, and the objective of, knowledge transfer and networking.

Initiators of F Department controlled experience capitalizations

F Department employees can also initiate experience capitalization processes themselves – for example, those performed within the Department or those which concentrate on experiences made by the geographical divisions. In the case of internal F Department experience capitalizations, F employees simultaneously assume both the role of experience holders and process managers – although these tasks could also be allocated to other people. As initiators, F Department employees themselves formulate the question, define the objective of experience capitalization, and then carry it out and implement the results.

In cases where F Department employees simultaneously assume various roles in experience capitalizations, they have the additional responsibility of **keeping the functions separated**, i.e. of always being conscious of when they assume a given role in supporting or actively participating in a process of experience capitalization – either as resource persons, experience holders, as process managers who offer “logistic” support, or as process initiators – and of communicating this to other participants.

F Department employees always have the added task of taking a methodological look at the experience capitalization process. The experiences gained in the course of this process serve as a valuable foundation for their participation in, or their independent performance of, later experience capitalizations.

		Tasks of F Department Employees
Experience Capitalization (EC) Initiated by E / O Departments	Role 1: Experience Holder (EH)	<p>Identification of Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps identify needs (when requested). • Helps define the theme and objective(s) (when requested). <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice on process structuring (when requested). <p>Implementation and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes experiences. <p>Changing the Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies results.
	Role 2: Process Supporter (PS)	<p>Identification of Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the process of identifying needs. • Helps define the theme and objective(s). <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in specifying objective(s) and working out detailed process structure. • Provides advice on selection of participants, roles and earmarked resources. • Makes suggestions on the application of methods and instruments. <p>Implementation and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises the process. • Documents results, if necessary. • Participates in organizing consultations on EC results and synthesizing feedback. <p>Changing the Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice on planning and implementation. • Applies results (in cross-sectional analyses, evaluations, etc.).
Role 3: Initiator of F Department Experience Capitalization		<p>Identification of Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the need (if necessary, in cooperation with geographical and multilateral divisions). • Establishes the theme and objective(s) (if necessary in cooperation with geographical divisions). <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines the objective(s) more precisely and works out process details. • Determines participants, roles and earmarked resources. • Selects methods and instruments. <p>Implementation and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises the process. • Documents results. • Contributes experiences. • Organizes consultations on EC results and feedback synthesis. <p>Changing the Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and implements new procedures. • Applies results (in cross-sectional analyses, evaluations, etc.).

APPENDICES

- 1 Methodological tips for experience capitalizations**
- 2 Case studies of successful experience capitalizations**

APPENDIX 1 Methodological tips for experience capitalization

A rich supply of methodological experience in the form of SDC in-house as well as external publications is available to support experience capitalization processes. Below are some tips on where to look, as well as on the literature available concerning selected methods. These methods – which are always intended for group use but also allow individual experiences to be placed side by side – deal mainly with the process of experience capitalization itself (cognitive mapping, Delphi method, brainstorming, self-evaluation). Also mentioned is the peer review, a procedure which allows the results of experience capitalization to be compared within an extended context.

1.1 Addresses and in-house documents

- SDC IntraWeb: Key Process
- Specialist Divisions
- Yellow pages in the SDC IntraWeb

1.2 Literature and web tips

Self-evaluations

Since experience capitalizations belong to those involved, self-evaluation is one of the most valuable ways to review experiences. All types of experience capitalizations are at the same time always self-evaluations. Their retrospective orientation is invariably enhanced by a glance into the future to enable the planning of additional measures, in this case the *use* of capitalized experiences.

- SDC. “Guide to Self-evaluation” (“Wegweiser zur Selbstevaluation”), 1995.
- SDC. “Guide to Self-evaluation. Suggestions for Methodological Procedures.” („Wegweiser zur Selbstevaluation. Methodenheft“), 1995

Brainstorming

Brainstorming makes it possible to quickly and, with a minimum effort, extend one’s horizon to available experiences. For application in groups and in workshops, this method consists of collecting uncommitted ideas or suggestions and is thus especially used at the beginning of (brief as well as comprehensive) experience capitalizations in order to gain an overview of the theme to be treated.

- Most brainstorming sessions follow this procedure:
 1. Introduce a question, problem, or theme both orally and in writing on chart paper.
 2. Invite participants to respond with as many ideas or suggestions as possible, ideally in single words or short phrases. Encourage all to participate, but do not proceed in any set order.
 3. Explain that until the brainstorming session has been completed, no one may repeat or comment on any response.
 4. Record each response on chart paper. Often, the most creative or outrageous suggestions are the most useful and interesting.
 5. Afterwards, results are prioritized and analyzed, or the list is used to generate discussions or problem solving.

- <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hrhandbook/methods/1.htm>>
- <<http://hu/courses/mttp://www.stuart.iit.edgt581/files/pdf/brainstr.pdf>>
- <http://www.unlv.edu/centers/tlc/articles/ClassroomManagement/tlc_brainstorming.html>
- <http://www.inem.org/htdocs/toolkit/tools5_4_2.html>
- <http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_brainstorming.html>

Peer Reviews

Peer reviews refer to the (written or oral) analysis and commenting of a subject by uninvolved persons who are active in a similar function in the same thematic field (peers = people of equal standing). For instance, they serve to illuminate and test capitalized experiences from an external perspective and thus place them in a broader context.

- The latitude for shaping peer reviews is large. A customized procedure makes it possible to consider the needs and possibilities of those affected. It can also be kept short and simple, or it can be designed more elaborately if and when a situation appears to justify it. The following procedure is possible:
 1. Establish a **rough framework**.
 2. **Analyze** experiences (e.g. as a self-evaluation on the part of the program/project actors who draw up theses on key themes and interests).
 3. Select a **group** of complementary peers/persons.
 4. When appropriate and feasible, invite peers to **comment** on the theses.
 5. Organize and carry out the actual **peer event** (≈ 2-4 days), including workshops and field trips, contacts with institutions, etc.
 6. **Document** the entire process (experience reviews, workshops, peer assessments, list of contacts and addresses).
 7. **Review steps** which can reinforce networking.
 8. Formalize - **Implement** - Conclude
 9. **Decide** on whether or not to carry out additional peer reviews.

(SDC. “The PEER REVIEW – An instrument designed to educate and develop.” (“Ein Instrument zum Lernen und Entwickeln”), 2004.)
- <http://www.racp.edu.au/afphm/cpd/peer/Peer_Review_Guide.pdf>
- Braga de Macedo, Jorge. “Peer Review and Public-Private Partnership among Developing Countries”, 2003, <www.globalcentres.org/html/pdf/Bellagio_Dec_2003/NEPAD_bellagio_de%20Macedo.pdf>
- Pagani, Fabrizio. “Peer Review: A Tool for Co-operation and Change. An Analysis of an OECD Working Method.” OECD, 2002, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/16/1955285.pdf>>

Portfolio Analyses

Portfolio analysis – a method borrowed from private enterprise, used especially in the financial sector – supports the strategic management of projects. The objective of portfolio management is, for example, to reach a balanced relationship between different projects within a program. Sufficient *star projects* make it possible to bear part of the *dead ducks* which are deemed necessary parts of a program. *Foundation stones* – or reliable, well-functioning projects – can compensate for uncertain projects or *question marks*.

This analysis procedure can also be applied to different types of partners or procedures, etc. Of course, depending on how the question is formulated, other categories can also be defined according to which the portfolio is examined, analyzed, evaluated and its development planned.

Star Projects	Question Marks
e.g. Projects or Partners or Procedures, etc. • A • B	e.g. Projects or Partners or Procedures, etc. • E • F
e.g. Projects or Partners or Procedures, etc. • C • D	e.g. Projects or Partners or Procedures, etc. • G • H
Foundation Stones	Dead Ducks

Once the analysis is made and experiences have been reviewed through portfolio analysis, strategic decisions can be made on how to develop the relationship between the four types of projects (etc.), and appropriate measures can then be initiated.

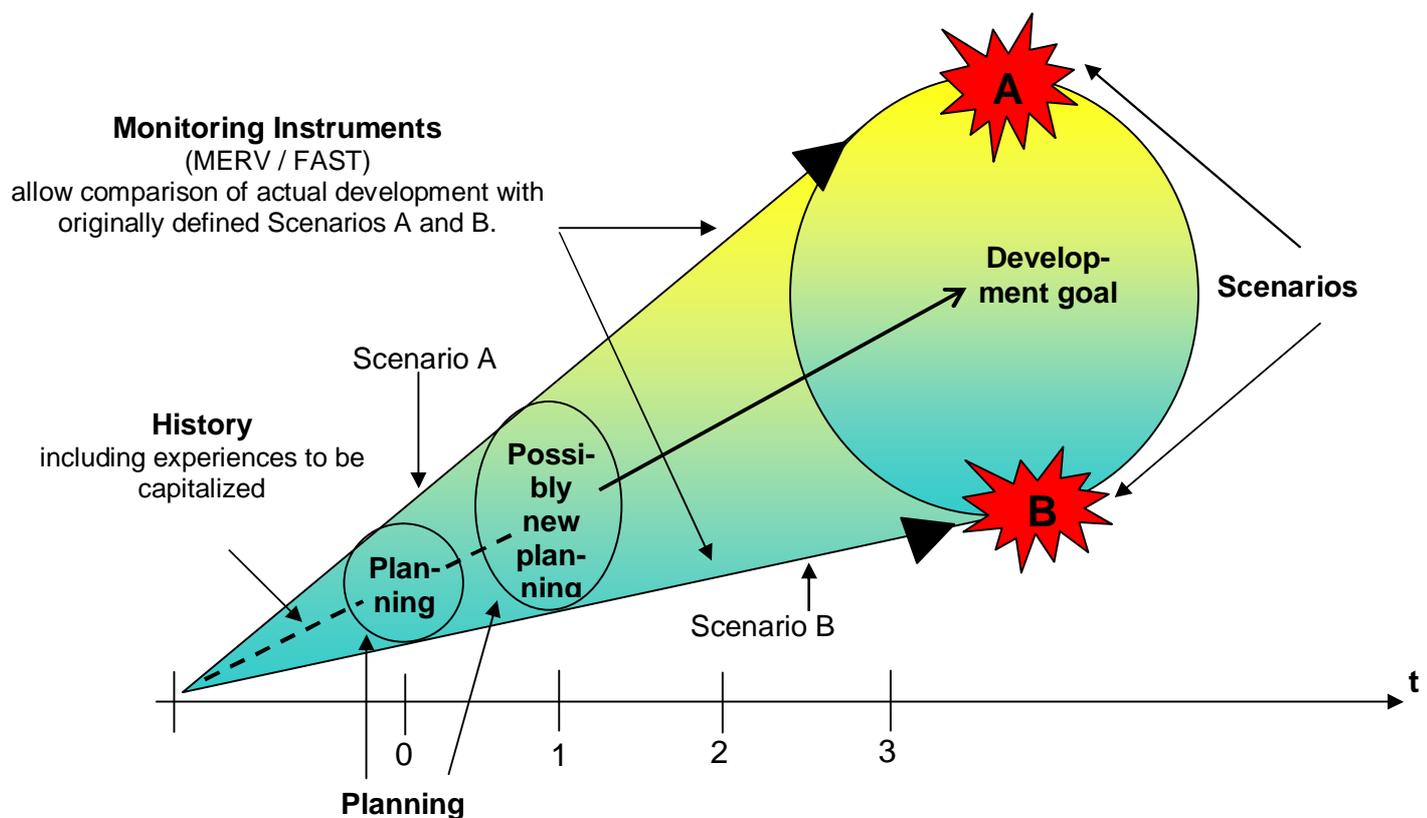
Benchmarking

Ratings and benchmarking are instruments which allow comparison of a project or an actor with others. The comparison is based on values which are defined as standards in a field, and the project to be evaluated can be measured against such values. Frequently, projects define their own benchmarks – for example in the scope of objectives.

The productivity of one hectare of ground, a cow, the costs of one school hour per student, the number of beneficiaries, etc. – these are all examples of benchmarks which serve as yardsticks for project evaluations. Experience capitalizations can, for example, express themselves in the definition of benchmarks.

Scenarios

Using the scenario technique – an instrument borrowed from commerce and industry – the planning of programs and projects can be projected into an uncertain future context by outlining possible, perhaps contrary developments – in this case, scenarios in which development cooperation activities should be placed.



Definition of scenarios A and B and actions to be taken.

Scenarios and actions are also defined based on capitalized experiences.

Experience capitalization can be useful in scenario techniques because (among other things) it can help in the planning of changes to basic conditions and because knowledge on local conditions is reviewed.

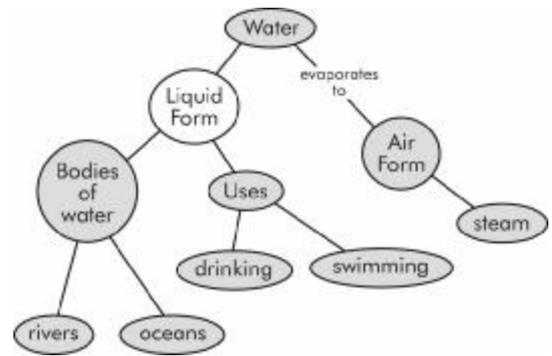
- Reibnitz, U. von, H. Geschka, S. Seibert. Scenario Technique as the Basis of Planning (Die Szenario-Technik als Grundlage von Planungen), Frankfurt a.M. (Battelle), 1982.
- Reibnitz, U. von. Scenario Options for the Future (Szenarien-Optionen für die Zukunft), McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987.

Also see the following website (arms industry) for an introduction to this theme, including a sample application:

- http://www.futurovenezuela.org/_curso/8-scen.pdf

Cognitive Mapping

Cognitive mapping is mainly a graphic method which is suitable for (all forms of) experience capitalization because it makes ideas in an area visible and thus comparable. As with all the other methods, it shows that the best results can be achieved when questions are precisely formulated. The method can be used for individual learning or group sessions and is especially suitable for the participative presentation of experiences.



- According to Robert Axelrod, the man who introduced cognitive mapping in the early 1970s: "A cognitive map is a specific way of representing a person's assertions about some limited domain, such as a policy problem. It is designed to capture the structure of the person's causal assertions and to generate the consequences that follow from this structure."
Axelrod, Robert. "Structure of Decision." Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- <<http://intraspec.ca/cogmap.php>>
- <<http://www.banxia.com/depaper.html>>
- <<http://risk-management.argospress.com/cognitymappi.htm>>
- <<http://www.phrontis.com/CogMapStart.htm>>
- <<http://omni.bus.ed.ac.uk/opsman/oakland/inst18.htm>>
- <<http://www.volterra.co.uk/cogmap.html>>
- <<http://www.cbs.umn.edu/~pregal/cognitive.htm>>
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- Lehner, Johannes M. "Cognitive Mapping", "The Cognitive Maps of Management" ("Kognitive Karten vom Management", in: *Managementforschung* No. 6, G. Schreyögg and P. Conrad (Pub.), 1996, pp. 83-132.
- Hodgkinson, Gerard P., A. John Maule and Nicola J. Bown. "Causal Cognitive Mapping in the Organizational Strategy Field: A Comparison of Alternative Elicitation Procedures", in: *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 2004, pp. 3-26.

Delphi Method

The Delphi method is especially suitable for large-scale experience capitalizations in order to obtain expert written opinions on a topic (usually as a response to specific questions). Thanks to feedback loops, a consensus (or the determination of differences) can be reached without the persons questioned having to meet face-to-face.

- The objective of most Delphi applications is the reliable and creative exploration of ideas or the production of suitable information for decision making. The Delphi method is based on a structured process for collecting and distilling knowledge from a group of experts by means of a series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback (Adler and Ziglio, 1996). According to Helmer (1977) Delphi represents a useful communication device among a group of experts and thus facilitates the formation of group opinion. ... The Delphi method has been developed in order to make discussion between experts possible without permitting a certain social interactive behavior, as occurs during a normal group discussion and which can hamper opinion forming. <<http://www.iit.edu/~it/delphi.html>>
- Delphi method: The Delphi method can be described as a method for structuring a group communication process in order to allow a group of individuals as a whole to effectively deal with a complex problem. It is typically used in the areas of forecasting, broad or long-range policy creation and in the development of management strategies. It is a technique for eliciting and refining the group judgments of recognized experts in situations where exact knowledge is not available but where partial information is available for the disposal of the individuals in the group. ... The integration of individual interviews into a structured and moderated process helps to overcome the uncertainty inherent in complex problems and to approach the factual developments.

The process: In general, the Delphi process consists in obtaining individual answers from anonymous experts to predetermined questions, typically by questionnaire, and then collecting the answers and feeding them back to the participants. The experts can then modify their response in the light of the findings. This

continues as an iterative process until the group arrives at an agreed response, though not necessarily a single viewpoint. This systematic and controlled interactive form of a Delphi exercise is in marked contrast to the informal and 'loose' interaction of traditional face-to-face roundtable discussions.

Important aspects of a Delphi process are:

- Anonymity of respondents
 - Iteration and controlled feedback
 - Statistical group response
 - Influence of dominant individuals
 - Consensus orientation
-
- Adler, M., and E. Ziglio. Gazing into the Oracle: The Delphi Method and Its Application to Social Policy and Public Health. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1996.
 - Cornish, E. "The Study of the Future." Washington D.C.: World Future Society, 1997.
 - Delbecq, A.L., A. G. Van de Ven, et al. Group Techniques for Programme Planning: A Guide to Nominal Group and Delphi Processes. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1975.
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 - Linstone, Harold A. and Murray Turoff, Editors, The Delphi Method: Techniques and Applications, 1975. <<http://www.is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/>>
 - http://www.izt.de/eurendel/scope_of_the_project/delphi_method.html

APPENDIX 2 Case studies of successful experience capitalization processes

- A Neuchâtel Initiative

- B F Department Collaboration with Cooperation Offices (COOFs) / Regional Competency Centers

- C Special Field of Financial Sector Development

- D Seed Potato Projects

- E Social Mediation (Seminar on Security Building and Conflict Prevention)

- F Integrated Rural Development in the 1980s

- G Forum Stara Planina à Bulgaria Forum

- H CAPEX Clean Air (1990-2000)

- I CAPEX India

ATTACHMENT A Neuchâtel Initiative

Members of the community of practice of donor organizations – formed in connection with the theme “Agricultural Consulting and Other Rural Services” – had characterized their group as a model of ideal cooperation. To try to understand why, the group met in 2001 for a half-day, moderated brainstorming session.

Effect

The results of their experience capitalization – the awareness of the Neuchâtel Initiative’s strengths and weaknesses – were used to continue improving the community’s operations. It meets at least once a year to exchange information on a range of agricultural consultations, to compare strategies and plan adaptations.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Experience capitalization within a community of practice – i.e. with participants who share a common background – and with a commonly agreed upon, precisely formulated question can yield good results in a minimum time frame.
- ⇒ In this case, only the experience holders benefit from the value of capitalized experiences.

Contact: Thomas Zeller

ATTACHMENT B F Department Collaboration with Cooperation Offices (COOFs) / Regional Competency Centers

Cooperation between headquarters, branch offices, and local partners is a permanent topic of discussion in every organization. In order to improve the effectiveness of collaboration between the F Department at Headquarters and the COOFs, as well as the regional competency centers, qualified F Department employees performed an experience capitalization process in 2003. Available experiences were collected by means of a questionnaire and case studies. These were then presented and discussed in a moderated two-and-a-half hour workshop.

Effect

Summarized in a paper, the workshop results made it possible to immediately adapt the relationship between the F Department at Headquarters and the COOF's, as well as regional competency centers, based on a consensual viewpoint on the part of Headquarters (F Department). In a further step, these results were supplemented by collecting and capitalizing on the experiences of the COOFs and other foreign partners. For example, local experiences were also made available to Headquarters in the form of simple feedback loops to F Department thematic service areas.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ The inclusion of potentially interested people and functions right from the start of an experience capitalization process is not necessary. On the contrary, the process can “begin small” and be planned in a way which allows the isolated realization of single steps.

Contact: Manuel Flury

ATTACHMENT C Special Field of Financial Sector Development

Experiences with the sectorial policy and analysis of the SDC’s financial administration sector were capitalized in 2001. The original goals – identifying good practices and analyzing its own portfolios, which included the alignment of the SDC Strategy 2010 with international “best practices” and with the financial sector policy dating back to 1998 – were dropped in the course of capitalization workshops. The latest objective calls for an examination of strategy and medium-term planning through an experience capitalization process.

Previously, capitalization was based on predefined central questions, a consultation on (among other things) the medium-term program with the Employment and Income Division (E+I), the geographical divisions, and the COOFs, together with an analysis of the evaluations made between 1995 and 2000. Practice-relevant results were quickly achieved in a half-day workshop with five participants from the Controlling Department, people with backstopping mandates (BSM, and personnel from the E+I Division. This was also made possible by dividing the tasks among the participants who, in the preliminary stage, took a more in-depth look into various aspects and prepared them for presentation. In retrospect, it would have been advantageous to have the external offices take a more active part in the process. The capitalized experiences were then implemented by a larger team which also included colleagues from operations.

Effect

Experience capitalization made it possible to make a general survey of the SDC portfolio in the F Department. Results showed the examined strategy to be relevant but needing improvement in its application and implementation. The knowledge gained flowed into a work schedule and a medium-term program, and was implemented using the available SDC instruments and processes (information, [E+I], annual programs à training, SMEs). At the same time, the search for new working instruments for priority themes began as a result of the experience capitalization process.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ The objectives of experience capitalization can be reviewed and adapted while it is in progress – provided all participants agree.
- ⇒ Experience capitalizations initiated by the F Department reach limits due to the lack of budget competency and normative power: the application of instruments recognized as being effective must be declared absolutely binding.

Contact: Hansruedi Pfeiffer

ATTACHMENT D Seed Potato Projects

The SDC's 20-year experience with seed potato projects was due for review in 1995 and thus made available to experts and decision-makers. At that time, the responsible expert team "Agriculture", together with consultants and the COOFs, based the realization of its capitalization process on experiences gained in six projects in the form of case studies which served as the basis for synthesis. This synthesis and summary of recommendations were – although somewhat late – widely distributed and thus allowed the results of experience capitalization to become well visible and to reach those interested.

Effect

The results of experience capitalization were made available in a broad and appropriate manner in the form of a short publication. The CIP Competency Center, in particular, still taps from the knowledge gained by this experience capitalization process. The SDC continues to support seed potato projects, and in-house there is an informal group of people (Latin America Division) who continually exchange information on this topic.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ The results of experience capitalization have a half-life: New SDC employees are not familiar with them and they tend to be forgotten unless they are continually called to mind. Institutional changes may also cause these results to slip into the background. For example, following the dissolution of the expert team "Agriculture", no one was left to assume responsibility for capitalizing experiences on "seed potatoes".
- ⇒ In order for knowledge to be kept alive and thus remain relevant and adaptable – for example during the current development policy discussions – its ownership must remain in the hands of one person or group responsible for carrying out or delegating the respective updates.
- ⇒ Whether or not the results of important experience capitalization processes should be publicized on the website, and in what form, must be examined.
- ⇒ The usage of capitalized experiences calls for clear ownership and accountability.

Contact: Thomas Zeller

ATTACHMENT E Social Mediation (Seminar on Security Building and Conflict Prevention)

In order to approach local conflicts with different social dynamics and formulate guidelines for conflict prevention, the SDC carried out experience capitalization in West Africa in 2003. Representatives from the respective COOF, the geographical divisions and the F Department at Headquarters, as well as local and international experts – a total of 40 participants – spent one week discussing inputs (PCIA Niger, accounts from the COOFs, etc.), comparing local experiences in dialogue, and formulating hypotheses on social mediation.

Effect

Managed by a cooperation office, experience capitalization resulted specifically in the formulation of guidelines for the COOFs, the fostering of local research and its implementation, and finally internal knowledge transfer (especially to the associated Division Asia 1).

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Well prepared focal points within an experience capitalization process are decisive for its success. In the above example, a clear division of tasks and coordination among participants (e.g. between the F and E Departments) forms part of the process. The case studies drawn up by the COOFs, combined with background information from Headquarters, constituted a valuable basis for workshop contents.
- ⇒ Experience capitalizations involving participation of the geographical divisions and the F Department should not be viewed strictly as isolated events, but rather as an opportunity to deepen strategic cooperation.

Contact: Günther Bächler

ATTACHMENT F Integrated Rural Development in the 1980s

In 1982 the SDC carried out an experience capitalization process – under another name – on the theme „Integrated Rural Development“, in order to examine the differences between „integral“ and „sectorial“ thinking and to establish the new SDC “rural development” policy. Thirty people worked on the subject for one week (without the participation of local partners) based on experiences gathered on the project level and on conceptual assessments.

Effect

The result supported by the majority of workshop participants was not an explicitly new orientation of SDC policy, but rather the closing of all projects on integrated rural development. Experience capitalization thus did have an effect, but not one based on formal decisions. The effect of this experience capitalization process is the clear illumination of the different viewpoints within the SDC – proponents of both sectorial approaches and of integrated procedures were given the opportunity to present and clarify their points of view. Whether or not a sectorial or integrated approach is necessary, remains a current topic at the project level – even though it is not always referred to in these exact words.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Experience capitalization must be planned and executed so as not to overtax the capacities of participating institutions.
- ⇒ Experience capitalization must have the courage to pursue its objectives. If a goal calls for the new formulation of a policy, then the latter should be defined. At the very least, any deviations from the original goal should be explained.
- ⇒ Local partners (at local and government levels) can be involved in experience capitalizations when strategic decisions are being worked out which will noticeably affect the cooperation program.

Contact: Thomas Zeller

ATTACHMENT G Forum Stara Planina à Bulgaria Forum

The „forum“ instrument was designed to promote a new kind of collaboration between various Bulgarian authorities as well as between agencies and the civilian population. The capitalization of experience with the „forum process“ in Stara Planina in Bulgaria, initiated in 2000, should make it possible to adapt and mould the “forum” instrument in critical discussions with partners as well as improve its local, regional and national anchorage. SDC Headquarters, COOFs, local partner organizations (associations and companies), Bulgarian and Swiss experts, authorities and cooperation agencies are taking part in the process which is based on evaluations of the completed phase and accompanying analyses.

Effect

Thanks to the ongoing process of experience capitalization, the selected approach can be continually adapted and improved. Improvements can also be made in the activation of target groups, and more efforts can be made to convince partners about the benefits of participation.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ By systematically involving local partners in activities, knowledge can be conveyed to them on “experience capitalization” as an instrument, thus ensuring that the practice becomes embedded.
- ⇒ When a large number of organizations and people participate in experience capitalization, the process becomes more complex and absorbs more resources. Hence, the importance of careful planning and control of such processes cannot be overemphasized.

Contact: Jean-Pierre Egger

ATTACHMENT H CAPEX Clean Air (1990-2000)

In 2002, the SDC capitalized on experiences gained in 11 “clean air” projects stemming from various parts of the world in order to clarify definitions and create a basis for strategic development. Organized by a team of specialists, and partially supported by outside experts but without the participation of local partners, the most important stages of this experience capitalization process included a metaevaluation, interviews and a stakeholder workshop. Problems were encountered in delineating system boundaries (which experiences should even be capitalized?) and in clearly planning and communicating how experience capitalization results can be applied.

Effect

This process of experience capitalization had no visible effects. Nevertheless, it did encourage participants to reflect on the topic and thus led to operational changes.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Experience capitalizations must be well anchored institutionally in order to ensure the application of their results. If the results of experience capitalization are not taken into consideration when planning projects in a given thematic area, the potential added value is lost.
- ⇒ The process of experience capitalization may include benchmarking because additional insight can be gained by comparing other projects in the same area.
- ⇒ It is important to clarify the interests of all participants. To a certain degree, external experts pursue their own interests when taking part in experience capitalization.
- ⇒ Resources should be earmarked not only for carrying out experience capitalization, but also for implementing its results.

Contacts: Pierre Walther, Martin Sommer

ATTACHMENT I CAPEX India

Switzerland's long-term commitment to India's animal husbandry sector was reviewed between 1997 and 2000 in a broadly structured experience capitalization process. Documented in a technical report, the results were to serve as a basis for future program development. In addition to the SDC, the process involved the producer, Indian partners, important former players, consultants and representatives from NADEL (the Postgraduate Course on Developing Countries at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). Assignments were divided up and included collecting and analyzing documents, holding interviews and carrying out workshops with experts, and thematic studies. The process of experience capitalization itself was analyzed by its participants (and judged as being only partially satisfactory). The large number of participants, often with varying interests, combined with the length of the experience capitalization process turned this into a cumbersome process.

Effect

The experience capitalization process clearly showed that a change in collaboration content had taken place. Technical questions were supplemented by more comprehensive approaches reflecting social, institutional and human developments. Experience capitalization also showed how the SDC can integrate projects into programs. At the same time – thanks to the participation of the Indian partners – experience capitalization demonstrated how the small donor country of Switzerland could play an important and recognized role in its large partner country, India.

Lessons Learned

- ⇒ The example shows how important it is to formulate goals and processes as precisely as possible. More clarity in these areas would have allowed a more future-oriented experience capitalization process and a more appropriate selection of participants.
- ⇒ Complex experience capitalization processes call for a structured project organization.
- ⇒ With complex processes and when strong interests exist on the part of participants, it may be wise to place the responsibility for carrying out the experience capitalization process into the hands of external third parties. Participants who exhibit a strong commitment should be freed from the tasks of moderation and documentation.
- ⇒ Selecting the appropriate time frame for experience capitalization is important. Periods marked by high personnel turnover are usually not suitable for such processes.
- ⇒ Extensive experience capitalization processes also call for the precise differentiation between themes to be treated locally and those which must be handled in Bern.
- ⇒ Preliminary work for experience capitalization (case studies, interviews, document analyses, etc.) should be structured as clearly as possible in line with the objective of the experience capitalization process.
- ⇒ The inclusion of Indian partners made it possible to convey a positive image of Switzerland, thanks to the fact that the Swiss commitment was made visible in the scope of the experience capitalization process.

Contact: Hansruedi Pfeiffer