AdaptScan PLUS

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OVERVIEW

What is AdaptScan Plus?

In these complex times, our continued effectiveness requires an ability to experiment, learn, and adapt in response to unique and shifting dynamics in the contexts where we work. There are many ways to work adaptively: through your use of data, how you collaborate both internally and externally, or with nimble and responsive operations—to name a few.

Mercy Corps and peer organizations have studied adaptive management practices that have been pioneered by program teams across the globe, in a wide range of sectors and operating contexts. Case studies, research, and learning pilots have informed the development of the AdaptScan framework and accompanying co-assessment methodology.

Together, these tools help you identify ways your team can work more adaptively. They are also designed so that teams can periodically repeat the AdaptScan process to track their progress and continue to improve over time. The result: a team that better understands the what, why, and how of adaptive management, and an adaptive management plan that helps you take more of the actions that drive better outcomes. This "pro" version of AdaptScan is designed for teams that are ready to make a deeper investment in working adaptively. It requires 4-5 days of preparation by a process facilitator, culminating in a six-hour workshop with the full team. It is best run with an ongoing program that has already established some of its practices. It should bring together as broad a set of program stakeholders as possible.

(Teams interested in quicker returns should consider the standard AdaptScan, a three-hour workshop requiring less preparation but also yielding less nuanced and actionable assessments of the factors driving or inhibiting adaptive outcomes. It can be run as part of a PM@MC training or separately.)

ADAPTSCAN FRAMEWORK

The core of the AdaptScan framework rests on a set of "adaptive factors": capacities, structures, and practices that make adaptation possible. These factors are grouped under five themes:

ADAPTScan Framework

Theme	Factor	Description
Strategy	Vision	Program stakeholders share a clear vision for the program, reinforced by leadership messaging, so they know what they are adapting toward.
	Theory of Change	Outcomes and program logic (through a theory of change or other tool) are well defined and clearly stated, helping program stakeholders understand how their efforts add up and what flexibility exists.
Team	Leadership	Leadership encourages working adaptively by modelling adaptive behaviors, promoting open communication and candid conversations, emphasizing the importance of data and learning, building ownership, promoting well-being, encouraging mentorship and staff development, and welcoming discussions on failures/challenges.
	Staff and structure	Team members bring deep understanding of local dynamics and an adaptive mindset to their roles, and are supported in their professional development and well-being throughout their work. Staff structure and role definitions support appropriate devolved decision-making, collaboration across teams, and flex as needed in response to program changes.
	Team Culture	Team culture (shared norms, habits, and expectations) supports open communication, critical feedback and candid conversations, collaboration (including across team boundaries and with external partners), and learning from failure.
Processes	Operations and finance	Compliance, finance, contracting, and other systems are designed to meet requirements while supporting flexibility, limit unnecessary processes that slow down or discourage program shifts, and align with implementing partner systems. All team members understand rules and how to follow them in ways that optimize flexibility.
	Workflow and decision-making	Processes place decision-making authority as close to the front-line as possible and appropriate, meetings and internal communication channels (e.g. email) help teams to work efficiently and translate decisions into action quickly, and systems and norms support cross-team collaboration (including by bridging the gap between programs, operations, and finance).
Learning	Context knowledge	Program design and implementation incorporate deep understanding of context, and continually sense for context shifts that might call for a change of course.
	Data and knowledge management	Teams develop and maintain right-sized systems for data collection, management, and analysis to enable understanding of and reflection on program outputs, program outcomes, and shifts in program context.
	Learning approach	Team processes support learning and reflection, both through directed efforts like research agendas and through less formal efforts, such as open-ended inquiries and regular spaces to pause-and-reflect.
Partnerships	Program partners	Program partners work closely together to share information and change course as needed to achieve their shared vision.
	Donor relationship	Program relationship to donor(s) is characterized by trust and collaboration. Reporting requirements are appropriate but not burdensome, grant agreements allow flexibility, and both formal and informal communications practices support learning and adaptation.
	Resourcing and budgeting	Program budget allows for movement of funds between budget lines to align with changing program priorities, promotes testing new approaches, has mechanisms for rapid response funding if needed, and adequately funds functions that support adaptation (like M&E, learning, and staff development).

AdaptScan Plus helps a team do a deep dive on how these factors either enable or inhibit their ability to adapt program strategies and activities in ways that could lead to better development outcomes. By creating an adaptive management plan, the team then lays out the steps to improve these factors and their ability to work adaptively.

CO-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

AdaptScan Plus has three stages, which should be conducted periodically in a cycle:

1. Workshop preparation:

Gathering data and perspectives on the program's adaptive factors and adaptive actions through a staff survey and semi-structured interviews. (Preparation may will typically be longer the first time a team runs a workshop, and shorter in future iterations.)

2. Co-assessment workshop:

Facilitated discussion of findings from the preparation phase, with the team analyzing past adaptive actions they have taken, assessing the factors behind these, and making plans for improving their adaptive approaches in the future.

3. Adaptive management plan:

Implementing decisions made in the co-assessment workshop during the course of program implementation. Also involves keeping a "change log" of adaptive actions, which provides an input for the next preparation and workshop phases.

Initial preparation

- Team survey
- Key informant interviews
- Document review
- Program observation
- Initial synthesis

Co-assessment workshop

- Facilitated discussion on findings
- Joint scoring of adaptive factors
- Timeline of adaptive actions, linked to factors
- Identifying margins resulting from actions

Adaptive management plan

- Aims to improve key or lagging factors, as identified in the workshop
- Assigns responsibility, timelines, outputs for steps to improve adaptive factors
- "Change log" tracks adaptive actions for future co-assessments

STAGE 1

Initial Preparation

Teams committed to holding an AdaptScan Plus workshop should first **choose a process facilitator.** The ideal facilitator is a knowledgeable outsider (someone who is not on the program team, but who already has a strong familiarity with the program or can quickly get up to speed through meetings with the program lead) or an insider who can maintain objectivity and impartiality. They could be staff on other programs in the same country office, trusted partners or researchers, or staff from Mercy Corps regional or HQ offices. They should have strong facilitation skills and a familiarity with adaptive management.

The process facilitator uses the preparation stage to conduct key informant interviews and (optional) a team survey, in addition to any document review and program observation needed. These data will inform an initial analysis and planning for the co-assessment workshop.

Key informant interviews:

These interviews help the process facilitator gather qualitative data for the co-assessment workshop discussion, including an initial list of adaptive actions that the team has taken and insights into the team's adaptive factors. These should be semi-structured interviews, conducted with a selection of program leaders and key team members, such as M&E staff. See appendix for interview guide.

Team survey (optional):

Best administered electronically, the team survey measures norms and perceptions related to team communication, culture, and decision-making. It provides data for the co-assessment workshop. See appendix for template.

Following this data collection, the process facilitator should conduct an initial synthesis. This involves collating survey findings and interview responses by the relevant factor, and summarizing the findings so the facilitator can report back to the team on what was learned about each of the factors. (See "Facilitator's pre-synthesis guide" in the appendix.)

Participants do not need to do extensive preparation. However, if they have had limited prior exposure to the concepts of adaptive management, the facilitator should consider sharing the Adapting Aid case studies with them prior to the workshop. The case studies could also be used as part of a discussion, as described in PM@MC's Adaptive Management 101 module, either in a separate session a week before the workshop or incorporated into the agenda below to start the workshop.

STAGE 2:

Co-assessment Workshop

Timing:

The co-assessment workshop can be conducted as a standalone event, or as part of a team retreat, program review, or other process. Before running the AdaptScan, it is important to meet with key members of management (at the team, program, or country-level) to ensure their leadership and buy-in, preview the process, and answer any questions they have.

Participants:

In addition to the program team, operations, finance, M&E, and country leadership, where applicable, should also participate in the workshop. Close partners can also provide useful perspectives.

Agenda:

The workshop is designed to take under 6 hours, including a coffee/tea break and a lunch break. The following at-a-glance agenda can be shared with participants; see the appendix for a more detailed Facilitator's Workshop Guide.

Session		Time	Objective
1.	*Overview and purpose*	15 min	Review workshop goals and agenda.
2.	*Pre-assessment findings: adaptive factors*	75 min	Share findings of facilitator's pre-synthesis, and add to those based on team's observations.
	Tea/coffee break	15 min	
3.	*How we've adapted: past actions taken*	60 min	Explore the past "adaptive actions" taken by the program, what made them possible, and their impact on outcomes.
4.	*What makes us adaptive: finalize co-assessment of adaptive factors*	15 min	Jointly assess of which "adaptive factors" best enable or inhibit the team's adaptation.
	Lunch break	60 min	
5.	*Adaptive management plan: improving our work*	60 min	Plan for how the program will improve conditions for adaptive actions that lead to improved development outcomes in the future.
6.	*Wrap-up*	15 min	Finalize plans and next steps.

STAGE 3:
Adaptive Management Plan

Following the workshop, either the facilitator or a designated team member should compile the results—especially the adaptive actions timeline, the action chains, the factors co-assessment, and the adaptive management plan—into a workshop report. The report should be shared back with the participants and kept for future reference. The adaptive management plan should be finalized by program leadership shortly after the workshop.

The adaptive management plan should include a decision on how and when the team will revisit the co-assessment and update the plan, as AdaptScan provides the greatest value when run in a cycle. Future cycles can be less resource-intensive, with the preparation phase shortened and the co-assessment workshop focused on updating the assessment (instead of creating it from scratch) and discussing key issues from the prior plan.

APPENDIX

Process facilitation tools

AdaptScan Framework

The core of the AdaptScan framework rests on a set of “adaptive factors”: capacities, structures, and practices that make adaptation possible. These factors are grouped under five themes:

Theme	Factor	Description	Example Behaviors
Strategy	Vision	Program stakeholders share a clear vision for the program, reinforced by leadership messaging, so they know what they are adapting toward.	○ Craft a vision statement for the program, setting an aspirational but attainable goal. ○ Work with staff and stakeholders to craft that vision, and refer back to it throughout the program.
	Theory of Change	Outcomes and program logic (through a theory of change or other tool) are well defined and clearly stated, helping program stakeholders understand how their efforts add up and what flexibility exists.	○ Program logic stated in a form accessible to staff and program stakeholders. ○ Program logic is shared and referenced during reviews, retreats, and other reflection moments.
Team	Leadership	Leadership encourages working adaptively by modelling adaptive behaviors, promoting open communication and candid conversations, emphasizing the importance of data and learning, building ownership, promoting well-being, encouraging mentorship and staff development, and welcoming discussions on failures/challenges.	○ Leadership takes opportunities to describe their own learning and failures, and how that has led them to make changes. ○ Leadership provides mentorship/coaching to staff. ○ Leadership encourages open exchange at staff meetings and through other channels.
	Staff and structure	Team members bring deep understanding of local dynamics and an adaptive mindset to their roles, and are supported in their professional development and well-being throughout their work. Staff structure and role definitions support appropriate devolved decision-making, collaboration across teams, and flex as needed in response to	○ Staff with deep local context knowledge are hired. ○ Staff who show willingness and ability to adapt and change are hired. ○ Staff have opportunities to develop professional skills. ○ Staff well-being is prioritized.

		program changes.	
	Team Culture	Team culture (shared norms, habits, and expectations) supports open communication, critical feedback and candid conversations, collaboration (including across team boundaries and with external partners), and learning from failure.	○ Teams talk candidly about challenges and work together to find solutions. ○ Staff regularly interact and collaborate with other team members in different departments, and also with external partners.
Processes	Operations and finance	Compliance, finance, contracting, and other systems are designed to meet requirements while supporting flexibility, limit unnecessary processes that slow down or discourage program shifts, and align with implementing partner systems. All team members understand rules and how to follow them in ways that optimize flexibility.	○ Operational systems are streamlined to reduce time take and disruption of program activities, both for staff and partners. ○ Processes are adjusted to local needs, while still meeting compliance requirements.
	Workflow and decision-making	Processes place decision-making authority as close to the front-line as possible and appropriate, meetings and internal communication channels (e.g. email) help teams to work efficiently and translate decisions into action quickly, and systems and norms support cross-team collaboration (including by bridging the gap between programs, operations, and finance).	○ Teams are clear which communication channels to use for various purposes. ○ Meetings have clear purposes, and bring together the right staff, partners, and data to make timely decisions.
Learning	Context knowledge	Program design and implementation incorporate deep understanding of context, and continually sense for context shifts that might call for a change of course.	○ Program design is led by and involves those with deep knowledge of the context, resulting in a program appropriate for the context. ○ Program has practices and systems for maintaining context awareness.
	Data and knowledge management	Teams develop and maintain right-sized systems for data collection, management, and analysis to enable understanding of and	○ M&E systems generate necessary data for decision-making, without creating undue data collection burdens.

		reflection on program outputs, program outcomes, and shifts in program context.	○ Program data and documents managed through clear and efficient processes and systems.
	Learning approach	Team processes support learning and reflection, both through directed efforts like research agendas and through less formal efforts, such as open-ended inquiries and regular spaces to pause-and-reflect.	○ Program has clear set of questions to answer or assumptions to test, with the answers guiding future implementation. ○ Team has regular moments for reflection on program progress and challenges.
Partner-ships	Program partners	Program partners work closely together to share information and change course as needed to achieve their shared vision.	○ Partners have trusting relationships, interacting regularly through formal and informal channels. ○ Partners are included in learning, reflection, and strategic decisions.
	Donor relationship	Program relationship to donor(s) is characterized by trust and collaboration. Reporting requirements are appropriate but not burdensome, grant agreements allow flexibility, and both formal and informal communications practices support learning and adaptation.	○ Team and donor(s) have trusting relationships, interacting regularly through formal and informal channels. ○ Reporting requirements are designed to support this trusting relationship and create space for learning and adaptation, rather than being focused on compliance.
	Resourcing and budgeting	Program budget allows for movement of funds between budget lines to align with changing program priorities, promotes testing new approaches, has mechanisms for rapid response funding if needed, and adequately funds functions that support adaptation (like M&E, learning, and staff development).	○ Program budgets can and are changed in response to changing conditions or new learning. ○ Funds are set aside for program changes, such as “small bets” or rapid responses.

Template:
Key Informant Interview Guide

Select the questions most relevant for the key informant being interviewed.

Topic	Questions
A. Overview	Explain the purpose behind the interview: • This conversation is one of many that will help us collect data to inform the team's upcoming co-assessment workshop. I'll be presenting a synthesis of the interview findings to help spark the team's conversation. • This interview, and the workshop itself, will focus on two things: the concrete changes or adaptations that the program has undergone in the past year; and the underlying aspects of the way you work together (known as adaptive factors) that made these changes possible. • The adaptive factors framework has five themes: strategy; team; processes; learning; and partnerships. We'll talk through each of those.
B. Adaptive Actions	1. How has your program adapted its strategies or activities over the last year? What about these adaptations make them particularly important from your perspective?
C. Strategy	2. How do you understand the purpose of this program? • Probe into: What is the overall vision for the program? How is it communicated to program stakeholders? • Probe into: What tools does the team use to clarify its approach? (e.g. theory of change, logframe, etc.)
D. Team	3. Has the composition of the team changed over the last year? What caused those changes? Has this affected your role or work? 4. Do you understand how your role compliments and fits into the work your colleagues are doing? Do you feel you have potential to grow in the program? Why/why not? 5. How have you or your colleagues seen professional growth over the last year? What was this professional development in response to? 6. What enables/limits team members from building relationships that help you to effectively communicate and collaborate with each other?
E. Processes	7. What decisions are you responsible for? How are you involved in decision-making?

	8. Are there rules/processes related to compliance, procurement, operations, or finance make it easy or hard for you to make changes to the program? Which ones? 9. How have these factors affected your ability to improve your work? Connect to specific adaptive actions and/or get specific examples.
F. Learning	10. What stakeholder community, participant feedback mechanisms are used in the project? 11. How do any of these data and feedback tools enable decisions on your team? 12. How do you keep track of changes in context? What changes have you noticed? 13. How does the team collect/share informal analysis and field observations? Probe for formal and informal channels. 14. What spaces does the program have for learning and reflection, bringing together different team members? 15. What role have each of these types of analysis/learning played in taking adaptive actions? What's been missing/limited your ability to adapt? Give specific examples.
G. Partner-ships	16. Which project partners do you interface with during the project? • Probe for: How do you work with them? What processes or mechanisms promote coordination, sharing, or joint decision-making? 17. What kind of relationship do you have with the project donor? • Probe for: How are they involved and what sort of communication do you have with them? What are reporting requirement/how have they changed?
H. Wrap up	18. Reflecting on this discussion, what do you think are the 3 most important factors for helping your team adapt? 19. Reflecting, what do you think are the 3 biggest barriers to your team adapting? 20. Is there anything else we haven't discussed yet that you would like to share with us now?

Template:
Team survey

This survey is best shared in an electronic format, e.g. through a google form, survey monkey, or similar.

1. How often do you communicate with or interact with the people listed below during your work?

Scale:	*never/not applicable*	*rarely* (at least once every three months)	*occasionally* (at least once each month)	*often* (at least once each week)	*very often* (at least once each day)

— staff who you supervise
— your supervisor
— other program teammates
— program implementing partners
— other external program stakeholders, e.g. government, private sector, etc.
— community members and community-based organizations
— Mercy Corps team members outside your program

2. What is the program culture and communication like?

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Scale:	*Strongly disagree*	*Somewhat disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Somewhat agree*	*Strongly agree*

— Team members are encouraged to try new things and propose new ideas.
— Team members talk with one another about challenges and struggles they face in their work.
— Program leaders invite alternative perspectives, different opinions, and brainstorming.
— Program leaders model learning and adaptation in their own work.
— Team members are coached or mentored by program leadership to continuously learn and grow professionally.

3. What information does the program use to make decisions?

Please tell us how important each of the following sources of information are.

Scale:	*not used at all*	*somewhat important to program decisions*	*very important to program decisions*	*unsure or do not know*

- monitoring data collected on the program activities
- monitoring data collected to understand changes in the program context
- inputs and insights from program implementing partners
- inputs and insights from other program stakeholders, e.g. government, private sector, etc.
- inputs and insights from communities
- first-hand experiences of program staff
- technical evidence generated by peer practitioners or experts working in other contexts

4. How are you involved in program decisions?

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Scale:	*Strongly disagree*	*Somewhat disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Somewhat agree*	*Strongly agree*

- I receive information that helps me understand the program's decisions.
- I have opportunities to provide input into the program decisions that impact my work.
- I am directly involved in decisions that impact my work.
- I am primarily responsible for decisions that impact my work.

5. How do the following factors enable or inhibit the program's ability to learn and adapt?

Scale:	*Significantly inhibits*	*Somewhat inhibits*	*Neither inhibits nor enables*	*Somewhat enables*	*Significantly enables*	*Unsure or do not know*

- Implementing partner relationships
- Relationships with other program stakeholders, e.g. government, private sector, etc.
- Program donor relationship
- Mercy Corps compliance procedures

Facilitator’s Pre-synthesis Guide

Purpose:

The interviews and survey are designed as inputs to the facilitator’s pre-synthesis that kick off session 2 of the workshop. The purpose of the synthesis is not to pass judgment on the adaptive factors (it does not involve giving ratings to the factors), but rather to inform the team’s conversations.

Process:

1. To conduct the synthesis, organize the inputs along the adaptive factors framework, using the table below. Use the “source of inputs” column as a guide for where to look for relevant inputs to each factor. Fill in the “inputs” column with all data you have on that factor. (You will need to expand this template to make space.)
2. Use the “analysis” column to summarize what has been learned about each factor. Try to keep the analysis to 2-4 bullet points for each factor. What are the key points to share with the team about how that factor affects their work? Where are there points of agreement among interviewees, and where are there contradictions?
3. Once you’ve completed the synthesis, copy just the last column to slides 5-9 in the Intro Slides, for use at the beginning of session 2.
4. Separately from the factors framework, make a list of all the adaptive actions mentioned in the interviews (interview question 1). These will be used to help construct the “action timeline” in session 3.

Theme	Factor	Source of inputs	Inputs	Analysis
Strategy	Vision	Interview question 2		
	Theory of change	Interview question 2		
Team	Leadership	Survey questions 1, 2		
	Staff and structure	Interview questions 3, 4, 5, 6		
	Team culture	Survey question 2 Interview question 6		
Processes	Operations and finance	Survey question 5 Interview questions 8, 9		
	Workflow and decision-making	Survey questions 1, 3, 4 Interview question 7		
	Context knowledge	Survey question 3 Interview questions 10, 12		
Learning	Data and knowledge management	Survey question 3 Interview questions 10, 11, 12, 13		
	Learning approach	Interview questions 14, 15		
Partnerships	Program partners	Survey questions 1, 3, 5 Interview question 16		
	Donor relationship	Survey question 5 Interview question 17		
	Resourcing and budgeting	Interview question 17		

** Interview questions 18-20 may be inputs for any of the factors above.*

Facilitator's Workshop Guide

Agenda at-a-glance:

Session	Time	Objective
1. Overview and purpose	15 min	Review workshop goals and agenda.
2. Pre-assessment findings: adaptive factors	75 min	Share findings of facilitator's pre-synthesis, and add to those based on team's observations.
Tea/coffee break	15 min	
3. How we've adapted: past actions taken	60 min	Explore the past "adaptive actions" taken by the program, what made them possible, and their impact on outcomes.
4. What makes us adaptive: finalize co-assessment of adaptive factors	15 min	Jointly assess of which "adaptive factors" best enable or inhibit the team's adaptation.
Lunch break	60 min	
5. Adaptive management plan: improving our work	60 min	Plan for how the program will improve conditions for adaptive actions that lead to improved development outcomes in the future.
6. Wrap-up	15 min	Finalize plans and next steps.

Room setup:

Plenary space where all participants can see one another and a presentation space (e.g. U-shaped row of chairs); enough space for 3-4 breakout groups, either in the main plenary space or nearby.

Materials needed:

Projector/projection screen; flipchart paper; markers; post-it notes; pre-printed "action chain" templates, or pre-drawn templates on flipchart paper (for use in session 2 breakouts); printed copies of the AdaptScan Framework; flipchart sheets with factors written up (for co-assessment scoring in session 3).

15 min | 1. Overview and Purpose

Align on purpose and terminology

Provide workshop context from “Overview” section of this brief.

Warmup: Ask participants to each write a post-it note with a single word or phrase answer: What does “adaptive management” mean to you?

- Have them place the post-its somewhere visible on the wall, read each other’s post-its, and discuss any commonalities or differences.
- Allow space for critiques of adaptive management (e.g. that it’s just a buzzword, that it’s what the team already does, or that it’s too vague to be useful). Note that the AdaptScan process is designed to connect adaptive management to the practical reality of the team’s work.

Intro to AdaptScan Plus slides**:**

1. **Review objectives:** This workshop aims to help you be intentional about how your team works adaptively. Together, we will assess the enablers and barriers to adaptive management in your program, and plan steps to improve them.
   - AdaptScan is a co-assessment: the team makes the assessment together, with me as a facilitator. Why? Because adaptive management is about how the whole program works together, so we need everyone’s perspectives. Moreover - adaptive management is different in different programs, so only the team implementing it can decide which parts are most important.

2. **AdaptScan framework:** The framework for AdaptScan was originally created from case studies, by looking for similarities across how different teams are working adaptively. The final version was developed as part of research to demonstrate how adaptive management leads to better outcomes.
   - The framework has 5 themes: strategy includes the vision for the program and its theory of change; team includes the ways that leadership encourages and models adaptive approaches, the way the team is structured, who’s recruited, how they’re mentored, and the team culture; processes includes both the operations and finance systems that shape how a team operates, and the internal workflow, communications, and decision-making processes; learning includes how the program understands its context, the M&E and other data systems, and its approach to learning; and partnerships covers external relationships with program partners and donors, as well as how those relationships shape the program’s resourcing and budgeting.

3. **Agenda at-a-glance:** For this process, we'll start by sharing what we heard in the pre-synthesis and giving you a chance to reflect on those. Then in session 3, we'll map out the actions your team has taken to adapt the program, what made those actions possible, and what impacts they had. After lunch, we'll finalize our overall co-assessment of enabling and inhibiting factors based on that discussion. Finally, we'll make a plan for how the team can work more adaptively in the service of incrementally improving our ability to achieve program outcomes and goals.

4. **Co-assessment cycle:** Our adaptive management plan that we create during today's co-assessment workshop will be implemented over the course of our regular work. At some point in the future, we will revisit this co-assessment through another workshop. As we close, we can decide when to do that—whether in a year, or more or less frequently.

75 min	2. Pre-assessment Findings: Adaptive Factors

30 min	*Facilitator shares pre-synthesis*

- **Introduce pre-synthesis:**

> *In preparation for this workshop, I held a number of interviews with various team members, and we sent out a survey to the full team. The goal was to collect a bit of data for a pre-synthesis, and then put those findings in front of the team for discussion at this workshop. This is not an assessment, as doing the assessment is up to all of you. Rather, this serves to provide further datapoints for you to reflect on as you make your assessment. The pre-synthesis was not comprehensive, so I encourage you to push back when something seems wrong and to fill in gaps that we have missed.*

- Share pre-synthesis presentation, as prepared during the pre-synthesis, leaving ample time for participant comment and feedback.

30 min	*Initial factor rating breakout groups*

- Split into 2-3 groups. Facilitator should ensure that groups are mixed by gender, leadership level, and functional team. Equip each group with flipchart sheets with the factors written up (or use printouts of slide from Adaptive Management 101).

- Ask each group to rate each factor 1-10 (1 = least enabling; 10 = most enabling) based on what they feel has had the greatest impact on their teams ability to work adaptively.

> *How well does this factor enable or inhibit adaptive actions for the team? Even though our discussion has focused on enabling, think also about which factors may be getting in the way of working adaptively.*

- Encourage each group start with private rating (everyone does the ratings silently) for each factor, before then sharing with the group for discussion.

- Each team should come to an average or consensus rating for each factor, with a one-sentence explanation for each rating.

✓ Facilitator Tip: During the breakouts, circulate among the groups to encourage them to keep moving through the factors. Ideally every group covers all of the factors/themes. However, if it seems like that will not happen, ensure that at least one group covers each of them. (I.e. One group might do "strategy" and "team" while another does "processes" and "learning" and the third group does "partnerships".)

15 min	*Report back on initial ratings*

- Each team reports back on their ratings.

- Facilitate a compare/contrast discussion.

- Note that we will put this finalize this assessment later in the workshop, in session 4. The upcoming session will instead shift to focus on specific ways that the team has adapted in the past, in order to inform the final assessment.

15 min	**Tea/coffee break**

60 min	**3. How We've Adapted: Past Actions Taken**

15 min	*Construct action timeline*

- Prepare timeline on flipchart or whiteboard with any past program milestones (launch, midterm reviews, etc.).

- Ask team: What changes have you made in the program since launching? Think both about outward-facing changes to the program's approach (such as new interventions or working in new geographic areas) and inward-facing changes in how you work (such as new processes or new tools)?

- Ask team to write major changes in the program on post-it notes, first writing individually and then sharing.

- Add post-its to the timeline, asking for brief descriptions of each.

- Compare what has been shared to the list of adaptive actions you compiled from interviews during the pre-assessment synthesis. If any are missing, suggest adding these to the timeline.

- Ask the team to identify the actions that have had the largest and most direct impacts on program outcomes; move those higher on the flipchart. Move internal changes and less impactful changes lower on the paper.

- Narrow the set of actions to the 10-12 most impactful, either by consensus of the group or with voting. Encourage the group to focus on actions that have clear results in terms of the program's outcomes (as opposed to internal changes in how the team works).

30 min	*Action chain breakout groups*

- Split into 3-4 breakout groups. Each group takes 1-2 actions from the set of most impactful actions. Each group should be given copies of the "action chains" template (either print copies for them to complete, or provide flipchart paper to draw the template in large format).

- Explain the process for completing an "action chain" for each of their selected actions. The steps are:

    1. Start by putting the action in the "Adaptive Action" box in the middle of the template.

    2. Then complete the "New Information" and "Decision" boxes: what new information did the team learn and what decision(s) were made that led to the action?

    3. Complete the "Initial context" and "Result achieved" boxes: these focus on outcomes. For "Initial context": What outcomes were not being achieved or what problems existed before the action was taken? For "Result achieved": What new outcomes were achieved due to the action?

4. Finally, complete the "Factors that made the action possible" box. Encourage groups to select at least 3 factors for each action, and to write out what aspects of those factors made the action possible. Hand out copies of the AdaptScan factors framework for them to reference. (E.g. Rather than just writing "program partners" or "operations and finance", the group might write: "close relationships with community councils helped us understand changing needs" and also: "operations team had supplier agreements in place that allowed us to move quickly with procurement when needed".)

15 min	*Report-out and refine action chains*

- Groups share their action chains for comment and refinement.
- Encourage discussion on the "factors" identified for each action. Reference back to the AdaptScan Framework.

15 min	**4. What makes us adaptive: co-assessment of adaptive factors**

15 min	*Final co-assessment*

- Ask team to reconsider the scores given in session 2, in light of the adaptive actions discussion.
- Encourage discussion, especially where the group's earlier scores diverged. (For example, ask a group that rated a factor high to share why they rated it that way, and do the same for a group that rated it low.)
- Find consensus, where possible, to either finalize the average rating or to adjust it based on the discussion. If no consensus is possible, settle on a range score (e.g. "4-6", "7.5", or even "sometimes 3, sometimes 8").
- Ask the group for short statements that describe the key enablers and barriers under each theme, expanding on the scores with a qualitative statement. Encourage them to be as specific as possible. (For example, rather than "team communication is good" as an enabler, be more specific: "team makes good use of email to share updates, and staff meetings to problem solve".)
- Add these statements to the template.

- Ask for group agreement that the co-assessment is complete and that everyone feels comfortable with the ratings given.

60 min	Lunch break

60 min	5. Adaptive management plan: improving our work

Explain the purpose of the adaptive management plan

“ In our final session, we will create an adaptive management plan. This plan will help your team improve your adaptive factors over time. We will focus both on factors that are currently enablers but could be better, and on factors inhibiting adaptive management.

45 min	*Planning breakout groups*

- Ask for 2-4 volunteers to lead planning breakout groups. Each lead will select 3-5 factors that they want to address, either selecting all the factors under a single theme, or choosing across themes. Groups should focus on factors that had low scores or where there were disagreements on scores. No need to assign every factor to a group.

- Other team members should join planning breakout groups based on interest. They will have an opportunity to contribute to other groups during the report-out.

- Each group should reflect on the enablers and barriers of each of their factors, then brainstorm steps they can take to improve the factor.

- Encourage them to use an effort/impact matrix to prioritize action items. (See template below: an effort/impact matrix has four quadrants across axes for low-high effort and low-high impact.)

    - Suggest first having group members plot actions on a 2x2 and then overlay the quadrant names (“major initiatives” for high effort and high impact; “quick wins" for low effort and high impact; etc.) that show where their investments may generate the most value for the effort.

15 min	*Report-out and compile adaptive management plan*

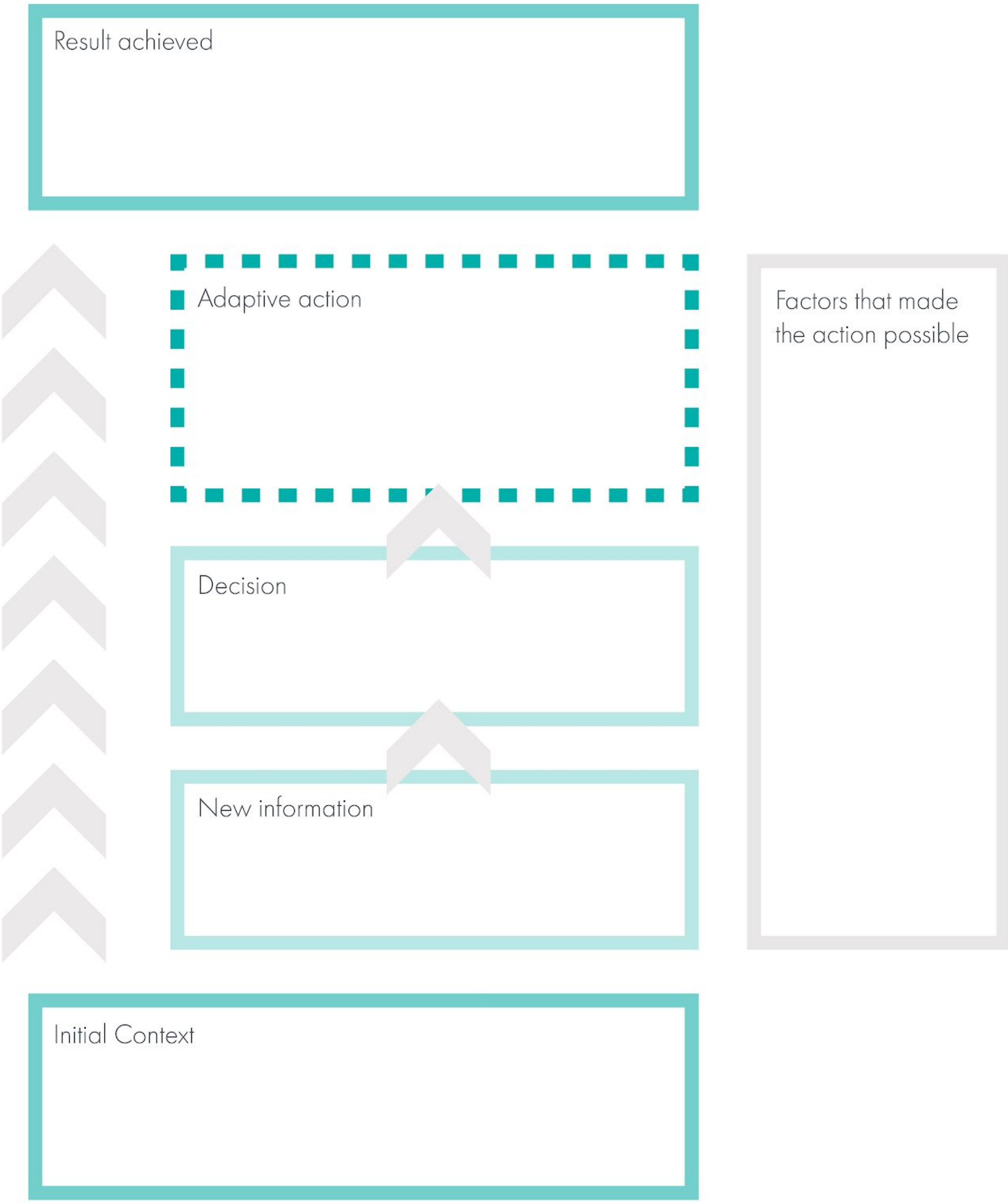
- Groups should report back their top 3-5 next steps for group discussion.
- Compile these into the "adaptive management plan" (see template - either complete on a screen or flipchart).
- For each step in the plan, identify person responsible, others consulted/informed, success milestones, and date due.

15 min | 6. Wrap-up

Review and finalize

- Recap each session and the outputs. Provide space for final comments and adjustments.
- Designate a steward for the adaptive management plan. This should be someone who is empowered by leadership to facilitate the actions outlined, but they do not need to execute them all directly.
- Agree when the team will check on progress against their adaptive management plan and/or repeat the AdaptScan process to check on their "adaptive health"; this can be done as part of other pause-and-reflect moments, perhaps in line with key program moments.

Template:
Action Chains



Example:

Action Chain

See below for a sample of how an action chain looks once completed. **This is best used for your reference as the facilitator**, as sharing it with the participants risks biasing their outputs.

Result achieved:

80% of women accessing grants sustained income generating activities after 6 months. Women in meaningful community leadership roles increased from 30% to 45%.

Adaptive action:

Developed model for "Women's Initiative Fund"; provided grants for women to launch small income generating activities and build leadership capacity in community groups.

Factors that made the action possible:

- Team capacity building focused on gender.
- Good data management and analysis, in particular applying Gender Analysis Framework to tailor activities.

Decision:

Decided to design and launch interventions to address gaps in women's capacity, access and acceptance.

New information

Midline survey data revealed limited meaningful participation of women in economic development activities or community leadership roles.

Initial Context:

Women's participation in economic development activities was limited and passive. Women engaged in traditional agricultural activities, with no access to savings. In community leadership, women held 30% of key roles.

(Example adapted from the Managing Risk for Economic Development II program in Nepal.)

Template:

Adaptive Factor Rating

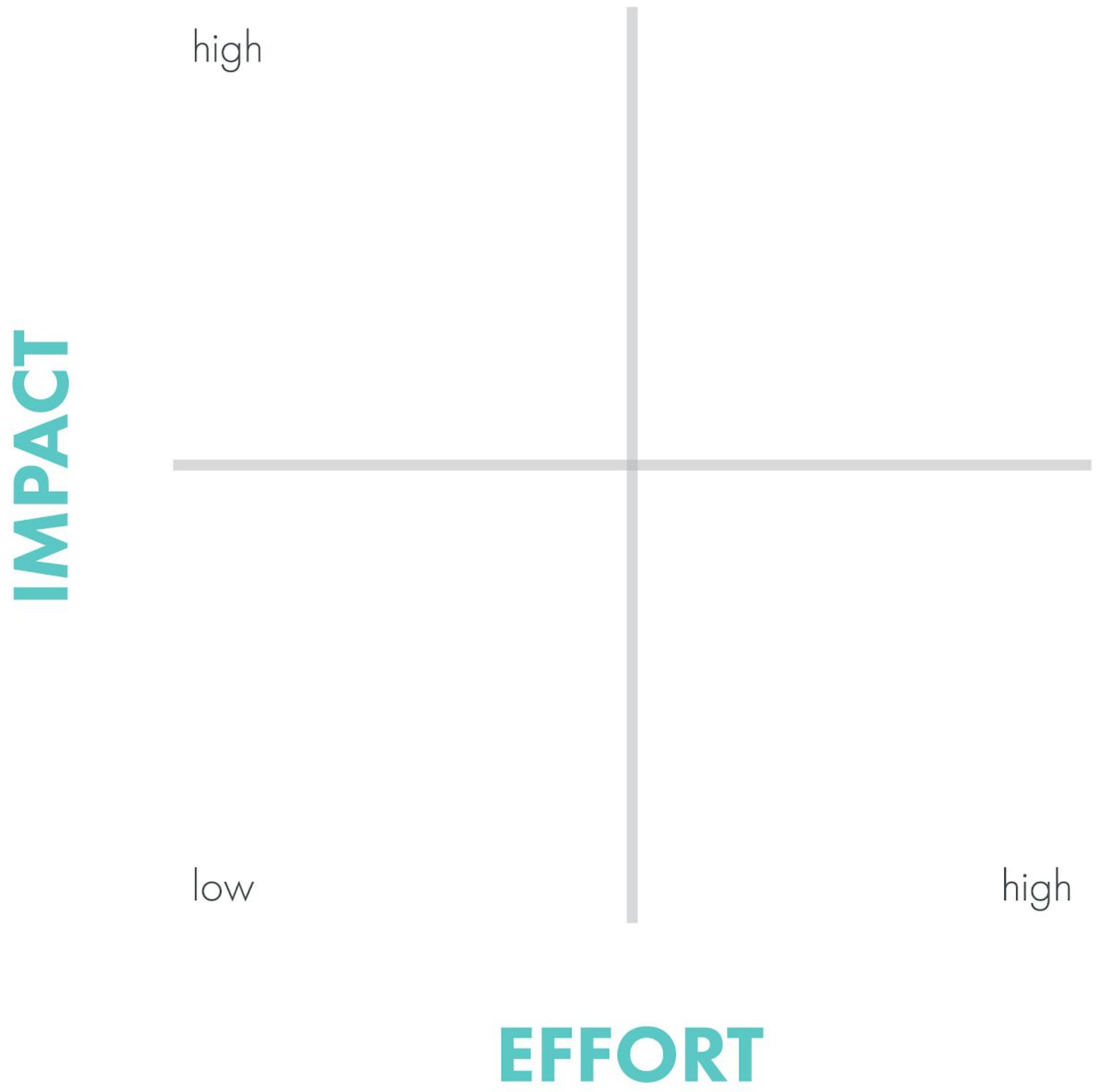
Themes	Factors	Ratings	Key Enablers	Key Barriers
Strategy	Vision			
	Theory of change			
Team	Leadership			
	Staff and structure			
	Team culture			
Processes	Operations and finance			
	Workflow and decision-making			
Learning	Context knowledge			
	Data & knowledge management			
	Learning approach			
Partnerships	Program partners			
	Donor relationship			
	Resourcing and budgeting			

Example:
Adaptive Factor Rating

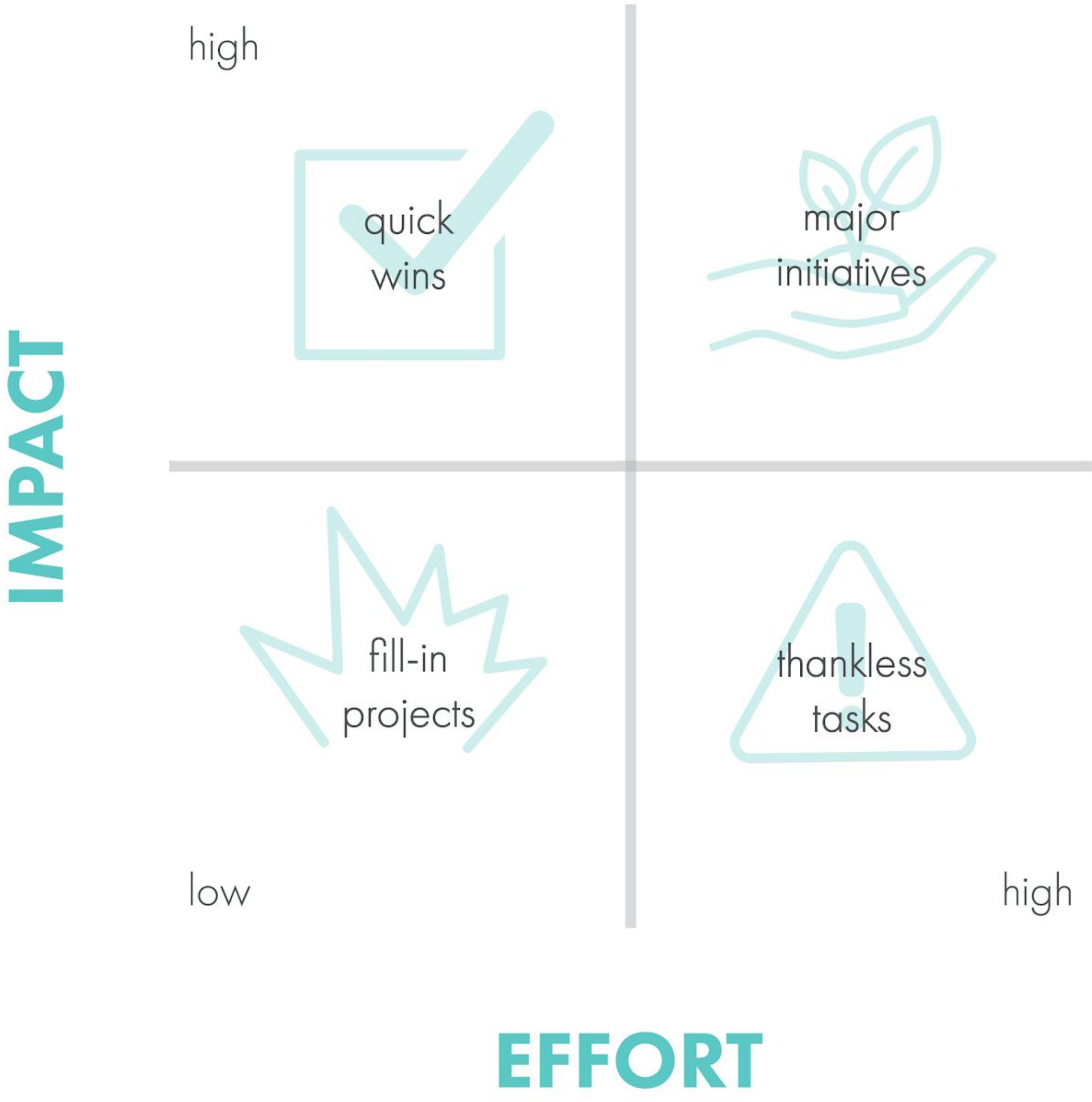
See below for a sample of what the first two sections of the adaptive factor template will look like once completed. **This is best used for your reference as the facilitator**, as sharing it with the participants risks biasing their outputs.

Themes	Factors	Ratings	Key Enablers	Key Barriers
Strategy	Vision	4	Vision for program approach and ToC are both clearly articulated and well understood by the program team. Vision includes the value of working adaptively. ToC allows for adaptation while pursuing clear outcomes.	Vision and ToC are not widely shared by program partners. The ToC is written in technical jargon that may not be accessible to non-specialists.
	Theory of change	3		
Team	Leadership	4	Leadership models adaptive behavior, e.g. by clearly sharing failures at team meetings and talking about what has been learned. Informal mentorship and coaching is common.	Mentorship and coaching are informal, and do not reach all staff.
	Staff and structure	2	Staff brings deep local knowledge and values adaptation.	Collaboration across teams (e.g. program/ops, and also among multiple programs) is hindered by lack of clear liaisons; staff often unsure who to approach.
	Team culture	3	Team members feel comfortable sharing critical feedback and discussing failure, both in formal and informal settings.	Some concerns that staff are not drawn from program area communities in equal proportions.

Template:
Effort/Impact Matrix



Example:
Effort/Impact Matrix



Template:

Adaptive Management Plan

Add or remove lines from each section, as needed.

Theme	Action	Responsible person	Others consulted or informed	Success milestones	Date due
Strategy					
Team					
Processes					
Learning					
Partnerships					