Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity (TASC)

Administrator's Manual

United States Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Global Health
Office of Population and Reproductive Health
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The development of TASC was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development

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What is the TASC?

The Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity (TASC) was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to assess the statistical capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to conduct censuses and household-based surveys. This updated version has been revised based on recent developments in data collection and dissemination, as well as feedback from NSOs and donor organizations that have administered the TASC. The TASC provides a quantitative score of the overall capacity of an NSO, as well as a breakdown of the areas of strength and weakness. Although this information has many uses, three stand out:

1) the TASC aids NSOs and donors in identifying areas where training is needed,
2) the TASC can help NSOs and donors to justify the need for funding for training in specific areas, and
3) the TASC can provide a measure of the impact of capacity building activities by being administered at two points in time, pre- and post-assistance.

TASC Background

Frameworks and tools that measure statistical capacity are common in development planning and practice. In this sense, the TASC will be familiar to those who have previously worked with such tools.

The World Bank defines statistical capacity as "a nation's ability to collect, analyze, and disseminate high-quality data about its population and economy.[1]" This definition informed the development of the TASC, but - the TASC is specifically designed to measure the capacity of NSOs to conduct household-based surveys and censuses. This focus bounds the TASC in two ways. First, the TASC does not measure the ability of NSOs to produce statistics based on businesses, agriculture and so on. Second, the TASC approaches capacity in terms of measuring processes rather than outcomes. An understanding of this scope is important when interpreting and presenting results.

A number of previously developed frameworks and tools analyze aspects of the enabling environmental factors and the outcomes that relate to statistical capacity, both for individual organizations and for the national statistical system. The TASC focuses on measuring the operational statistical capacity of NSOs to produce quality data. Four predecessors were especially relevant to the development of the TASC:

[1] http://datatopics.worldbank.org/statisticalcapacity/

- International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF): Developed in 2003, the DQAF covers seven dimensions of data quality and a set of prerequisites for data quality. The five dimensions of data quality are: integrity, methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability, and accessibility. The framework has 50 indicators that are broad and qualitative by nature. The IMF's DQAF provides guidance for the concepts being measured in the current U.S. Census Bureau TASC, but does not provide specific indicators/questions that are easily measurable. The proposed TASC aims to fill the gap between theory (DQAF) and practice (U.S. Census Bureau's TASC).

- PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Building: In 1999, the PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Building developed a set of indicators to help track the statistical capacity of countries. The indicators were developed specifically to target "statistically challenged countries." The tool includes sixteen quantitative indicators that primarily measure performance and eighteen qualitative indicators drawn largely from the IMF's DQAF. The main limitation of this approach is that the quantitative indicators measure only performance and the qualitative indicators provide highly aggregated scores that lack discriminatory power. Therefore, the indicators do not aid the measurement of the statistical capacity of an NSO.

- World Bank Statistical Capacity Indicators: The World Bank publishes a Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI) for over 140 countries. The indicator is constructed using metadata from the World Bank, IMF, UN, UNESCO, and WHO. A score is computed for three dimensions: (1) statistical methodology, (2) source data, and (3) periodicity and timeliness. The main drawback of this method is that it is based on performance indicators rather than capacity indicators. A low SCI is not sufficient to inform the user on the causes of a low score and a high SCI score may be the result of foreign technical assistance and funding. Therefore, the SCI does not necessarily provide information about the capacity or sustainability of an NSO. Finally, the SCI does not reveal whether the data produced by the countries are effectively shared and used or if the methodology behind them is reliable.

- Health Metrics Network (HMN) Assessment Tool: The tool was developed in 2005 and has been used to assess health information systems (HIS) in over fifty countries. The HMN assessment tool examines six components of HIS: HIS resources, indicators, data sources, data management, information products, and dissemination and use. The HMN Assessment Tool cannot be used to inform the TASC because it is focused on measuring HIS. However, it provides a useful framework for the scoring system and administration of a tool meant to assess capacity across a broad range of skills and activities.

How is the TASC Structured?

To successfully conduct a census or survey, an NSO must demonstrate statistical capacity across a defined set of operations. These operations are:

- planning and managing,
- mapping,
- sampling,
- questionnaire content and testing,
- field operations,
- data processing,
- data analysis and evaluation
- data dissemination, and
- publicity.

The TASC has a module for each of these operational areas, as well as one module that assesses the overall institutional capacity of the NSO.

An optional module measures the capacity of an NSO to collect and use administrative records. This module should only be administered in countries where the NSO has some experience using administrative records.

The technology available for censuses and surveys is rapidly changing the expectations of governments and respondents. NSOs are responding to these changes by implementing technologically sophisticated solutions for statistical data collection and processing. The TASC includes questions that probe the readiness of the NSO to implement mobile data collection technology. These questions are spread throughout several operational sections. A summary score is provided that consolidates answers to these questions. These ten modules were chosen for two reasons: (1) they facilitate the administration of the TASC, and (2) they clearly define the areas where the NSO rates high or low on statistical capacity.

The first module, institutional capacity, has five subsections (See Table 1).

Table 1. Number of Items in the Institutional Capacity Module

	NUMBER OF ITEMS
1. Institutional Capacity	**40**
Legal Environment	8
Data Confidentiality and Protection	7
Organizational Structure	7
Human and Physical Capital	10
Stakeholder Coordination	8

Each of the remaining nine operational modules, as well as the administrative records optional module, is divided into four subsections (see table 2):

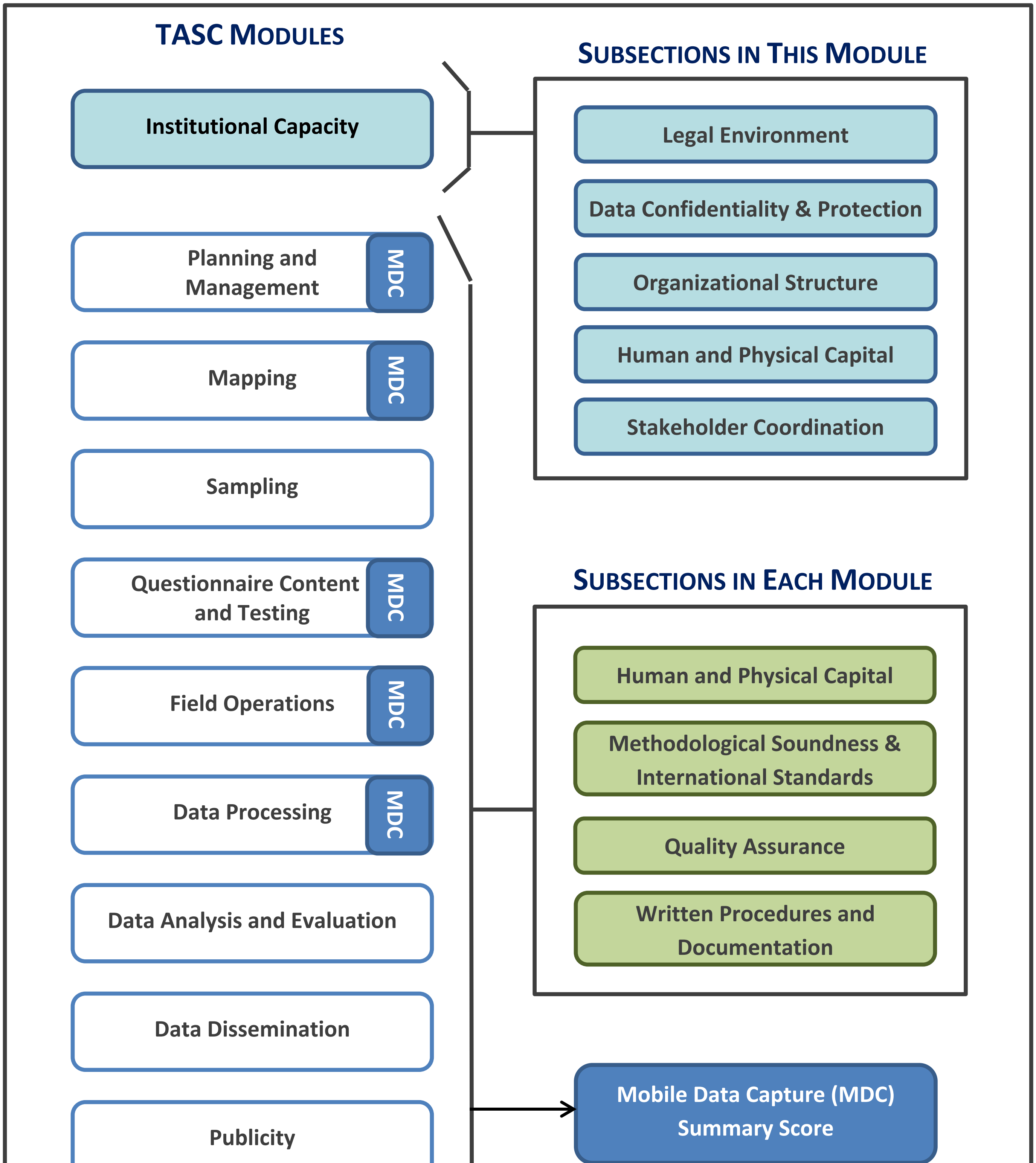
- human and physical capital,
- methodological soundness and international standards,
- quality assurance, and
- written procedures and documentation.

Table 2. Number of Items in the Operational and Optional Modules

MODULE	SUBSECTION				
	Human and Physical Capital	Method. Soundness & Intl. Standards	Quality Assurance	Written Procedures and Documentation	Total
2. Census/Survey Planning and Management	10	5	3	4	**22**
3. Mapping	7	5	8	4	**24**
4. Sampling	3	4	2	2	**11**
5. Quest. Content & Testing	2	6	6	2	**16**
6. Field Operations	4	6	4	2	**16**
7. Data Processing	11	4	12	7	**34**
8. Data Analysis and Evaluation	8	5	4	6	**23**
9. Data Dissemination	5	13	7	4	**29**
10. Publicity	8	4	4	6	**22**
Total Number of Questions in the TASC					**237**
A. Administrative Records	1	5	6	2	**14**

These four subsections cover the statistical capacity factors measured in other frameworks such as the DQAF or PARIS21. The consistency of these four subsections across modules allows for the aggregation of scores across modules so that, if desired, capacity building for each of these subsections across operations can also be measured.

Figure 1. Summary of the TASC Modules and Subsections



Note: MDC indicates modules with question included in mobile data capture summary score.

Source: US Census Bureau

Each module has a series of items. Each item consists of a statement with a written description of what is meant by a "not adequate," "somewhat adequate," "adequate," or "highly adequate" score, corresponding to a 0-3 scale (See Figure 2). This allows for a more objective quantitative rating of each indicator. The items aim to measure capacity rather than performance. Each of the modules contains several items to ensure that it captures various activities or practices and that areas of strength and weakness are identified.

Figure 2. Example of a TASC Item

6.13	National Statistical Office (NSO) has procedures in place to ensure the timely return of questionnaires and materials from the field	Mechanisms are in place and have been timely in the past	Mechanisms are in place but delays often take place	Mechanisms are in place but only in certain areas	Mechanisms are not in place

6. Field Operations	
6.13	National Statistical Office (NSO) has procedures in place to ensure the timely return of questionnaires and materials from the field

3	2	1	0
Mechanisms are in place and have been timely in the past	Mechanisms are in place but delays often take place	Mechanisms are in place but only in certain areas	Mechanisms are not in place

The TASC has the following elements:

- TASC PowerPoint: A presentation about the TASC that can be used at the beginning of the TASC administration to orient participants.
- TASC Administrator's Manual: This document provides details about the TASC and is intended for TASC facilitators.

- TASC Booklet (PDF): This is a printable version of the TASC that contains only the items. One printed copy can be re-used multiple times.
- TASC Answer Sheet (PDF): A printable scoring sheet where a respondent can fill in the score they choose for each item.
- TASC Results Calculator (MS Excel): An interactive set of Excel spreadsheets where the scores recorded on the answer sheets can be input. The TASC Results Calculator automatically produces a series of charts that summarize the areas of strength and weakness in the capacity of an NSO.
- TASC Fact Sheet: This is a short fact sheet that can be used to provide an introduction to the TASC to NSOs or stakeholders.

How is the TASC Administered?

The TASC requires the active participation of the staff and senior management of the NSO. This section explains how it should be administered to them.

Who Should Administer the TASC?

Ideally, the facilitator of the TASC would be someone who is an outside expert to ensure objectivity when assessing the statistical capacity of the organization. The facilitator should have a good grasp of the operations covered by the TASC because participants may have questions. For example, questions may arise because terminology can differ across countries and some participants may not speak English as their first language. Another common reason participants have questions is because the NSO's practice may not fall neatly in the defined answer categories. By listening to a short explanation, the facilitator should be able to provide guidance as to the answer that best fits the practice of the NSO.

Before administering the TASC, the facilitator should read the TASC thoroughly to make sure he/she understands each item and module. It is advised that the facilitator complete the TASC as a participant would, so that he/she can understand the experience of completing the TASC.

How Long Does TASC Administration Take?

Administration of the TASC takes half a day. However, the facilitator should plan to spend a minimum of three days at the NSO. More days might be needed depending on the size of the NSO. The breakdown for the timeline would be as follows:

Before Arriving in Country

After the NSO has agreed to complete the TASC, the facilitator should get a point of contact (POC) at the NSO who is in a position of authority and knows the overall structure of the NSO well. Often this is the Census director or a high-level manager who has worked in multiple areas at the NSO.

The administrator should send the link[2] to the TASC POC weeks before arrival and arrange meetings to ensure that the NSO understands the purpose of the TASC. If possible, the administrator should also arrange a tele- or video-conference with the high-level managers of the NSO to explain the purpose of the TASC and answer any questions they may have. After explaining the purpose of the TASC, the facilitator should ask the POC to arrange as many meetings as possible in the day before the administration of the TASC. The facilitator should also ask the POC to find a space where the TASC can be administered.

During these conversations, the administrator should learn whether the NSO has worked with administrative records and make a decision as to whether to administer that module.

How are Participants Identified?

Identifying the correct participants is the most important part of making sure that the TASC results accurately capture the capacity of the NSO. Depending on the size of the organization, between 25 and 40 people should complete the TASC.

If possible, it is helpful to look at an organizational chart and ask to meet with the heads of all the areas that are involved in any operational part of a census or survey. After the meeting, the facilitator can then ask to meet their staff. Often a meeting with one person will indicate other people that the facilitator should ask to meet.

At each meeting, the facilitator should explain the purpose of the TASC and learn as much as possible about what that specific department or area does. This knowledge can later serve as a subjective measure of whether the TASC has accurately captured the capacity of the NSO. After the purpose of the TASC is clear, the facilitator should ask managers to identify specific staff to attend the TASC administration. The facilitator should also be clear about people who should not participate, such as accountants or human resources staff.

Participants by Module

The TASC should be filled out by as many people as possible who have at least three years experience working at the NSO. The people invited should have a range of experience and include upper and mid-level managers, as well as lower level staff with many years of experience. It is important to have a diversity of levels because each may have a different expertise on operational details.

[2] http://www.census.gov/population/international/about/tasc/

It is also important that there be enough people to cover all the modules of the tool, with a minimum of three participants per module. One exception to this rule is that there are some NSOs that do not conduct all operations for a census or survey internally. For example, in some countries mapping is done by a separate entity of the government or data processing is outsourced. In these cases, the module can be skipped when identifying participants. Another exception is the administrative records module, which should only be administered if countries have some experience working with this type of data.

Because NSOs differ in structure, it is difficult to identify specific personnel that should complete the TASC (e.g., Director of Household Surveys). The following are guidelines for the types of people who should fill out each module:

1) Institutional Capacity:
    - High-level managers from all the areas involved in censuses or surveys
    - Staff in charge of negotiating with stakeholders
2) Planning and Management
    - High-level managers from all areas involved in censuses and surveys
    - Mid-level managers from the same areas
    - Publicity staff and managers
3) Mapping
    - Cartography staff and managers
    - GIS staff and managers
4) Sampling
    - Staff and managers involved in creating the samples for surveys
5) Questionnaire Content and Testing
    - Subject matter specialists and managers
    - Data processing staff and managers involved in questionnaire design
    - Other staff or managers involved in questionnaire content, design or testing
6) Field Operations
    - Field staff and managers
    - Staff and managers involved in developing the training program for enumerators
    - Staff and managers involved in creating the system that tracks the distribution and return of materials
7) Data Processing
    - Data processing staff and managers
    - Staff and managers involved in the creation of the data entry program and edits and specifications
    - If mobile devices were used, the staff and managers involved in programming the devices

- Staff and managers involved in choosing the method of data capture and purchasing related hardware and software
- Staff and managers involved in creating the system that tracks questionnaires through the stages of data processing

8) Data Analysis
   - Subject matter specialists and managers
   - Staff and managers involved in data analysis, demographic analysis, producing coverage and content error estimates
   - Staff and managers involved in designing and analyzing the Post-Enumeration Survey or Check

9) Data Dissemination
   - Staff and managers involved in dissemination
   - Staff and managers who maintain the NSO library, keep the website updated, and respond to requests for data

10) Publicity
    - Staff and managers involved in publicity, public affairs, or communications
    - Subject matter experts who provide information to the public or answer inquiries

11) Mobile Data Capture Summary
    - The mobile data capture summary score summarizes responses provided in other sections
    - Managers, IT, field, mapping, and subject matter staff should all be available to discuss the summary score

A. Administrative Records (optional module)
   - Statisticians involved in transforming administrative records into statistical records
   - Statisticians involved with collecting and merging administrative data and testing its quality

Conducting the TASC

Before arriving in country, the facilitator should make sure he/she has enough copies of the TASC booklet and answer sheet. The facilitator may also download these materials from the U.S. Census Bureau website. Often, this means that the facilitator must bring them him or herself. It is advisable to have at least 30 copies of the booklet and 60 copies of the answer sheet. The facilitator should also have a laptop with the results calculator and the TASC PowerPoint downloaded. If the administrative records module will be administered, there are instructions and slides to substitute at the end of the PowerPoint. These slides should be deleted if the optional module is not being administered. Before the facilitator arrives in country, he/she should ensure that there will be a projector in the room where he/she will be administering the TASC.

Administration of the TASC has three main parts:

1) Presentation of the TASC
2) Individual answering session
3) Group answering session(s)

Using the TASC PowerPoint, the facilitator should begin by explaining the purpose of the TASC and providing an overview of how the TASC should be filled out. Then, the facilitator should explain the types of questions that are asked in each section. Before the administration begins, the facilitator should ask the participants to try to identify the modules they have experience in as each module is presented. All of this information is provided in the TASC PowerPoint.

Participants would then answer the TASC in two rounds. First, the TASC is filled out individually, with each participant completing the modules in which he/she has experience. Second, the TASC is filled out in groups by module. During both sessions, the facilitator should be available to clarify concepts and answer questions but should refrain from trying to influence decisions in any way.

Individual Administration of the TASC

Each participant should receive a booklet and an answer sheet. Participants should be instructed to fill out the respondent information on the back of the answer sheet and circle "INDIVIDUAL". Then, participants should read each item and choose the score on the answer sheet that most accurately reflects the practice of the NSO. If a specific item does not apply to the NSO or the participant has no experience with the item, he/she should be instructed to leave the answer blank. *Each participant may fill out as many modules as he/she has experience with.*

While individuals are filling out the answer sheet, the facilitator should pass around a sign-up sheet, asking each individual to write his/her name and the module(s) he/she is answering. When participants have finished filling out the TASC individually, the facilitator should collect all the answer sheets.

Group Administration of the TASC

During the individual administration, the facilitator should use the sign-up sheet to try to identify the best way to break participants into groups to answer the questions in one module. It is important to try to ensure that each group has at least 3 members and, if possible, a mix of staff, mid-, and high-level managers. Often this leads to having two group sessions, each with 4-5 groups. At times, there are so many people for a module that there will be two groups providing responses for the same module.

Each group should receive one new, blank answer sheet and mark "GROUP" for the respondent. Each group should only fill out the module that the facilitator assigns them, making sure that at least one group fills out each module. Groups should discuss the items and arrive at what they believe to be the best description of NSO procedures. This may mean some individuals change their answer from what they wrote on the individual sheets because they gain new information through the discussion. When groups have finished filling out the TASC, the facilitator should collect the answer sheets. This completes the administration of the TASC!

How are Results Processed and Interpreted?

After administering the TASC, the facilitator is responsible for analyzing the data and interpreting the results. This section explains how this should be accomplished using the TASC results calculator.

Recording Results

The results calculator is a series of Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets with the following components:

- A tab for each module in the TASC that contains:
    - All of the items for that module
    - Columns where scores from the individual and group assessments can be recorded
    - A summary of the results for that module, automatically calculated as the results are entered
- A tab consolidating questions related to mobile data capture and scoring results for those questions independently of their original operational module
- A 'Summary of Scores' tab and a series of additional tabs summarizing TASC results using bar charts

Starting with column 1 of the individual or the group answers, the facilitator should transfer the information on the answer sheets to the results calculator. *Please note that the full computations will only be accessible when the scores for the "Planning and Management" module is filled out with both individual and group scores.*

Note that the 'Mobile Data Capture' summary tab cannot be edited. It reproduces the scores for questions asked in other sections that relate to mobile data capture. The mobile data capture summary score is only shown when all questions that appear on the mobile data capture summary sheet are filled out in their respective operation modules.

Interpreting Results

The bar charts and summary score sheets included in the results calculator provide a good overview of the results of the TASC. Interpreting the results becomes easier the more times a person administers the TASC. This section will provide an overview of how to interpret the overall capacity score for an NSO, whether to rely on individual versus group scores, how to pinpoint specific areas of interest for capacity building activities, and how to interpret TASC scores over time.

Scoring

In the results calculator a total score for the TASC is calculated at the top of the "Summary of Scores" tab. This score is broken into two parts, an institutional capacity score and a score that summarizes the operational modules. See the next section for differences between the individual and group scores.

The "Mobile Data Capture" sheet is not an operational module. Instead, it combines the scores from questions distributed in several modules to evaluate the readiness of an NSO to use digital devices in the field for data collection. If any of the questions are unanswered, the total score will show as "N/A" in the score summary. The mobile data capture score is not included in overall scoring when the summary sheet is scored as "N/A."

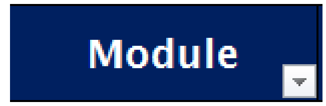
Figure 3. Example of the TASC Summary of Scores

	Group		Individual	
	Institutional Capacity	Other Modules	Institutional Capacity	Other Modules
NSO TASC Score	67%	47%	53%	42%

Due to cultural differences, the total score should not be compared across countries. Some countries tend to overemphasize their skills and others tend to under-report them. In addition, if privacy of the scoring is not assured, staff in NSOs may not be motivated to answer it realistically. Consequently, the total scores should be interpreted with caution and are most meaningful when the aim is to compare scores for the same institution over time. The breakdown of scores by module provides the best way to identify areas of strength and weakness of an NSO. This is visualized effectively on the 'Chart-ModulesScore' tab.

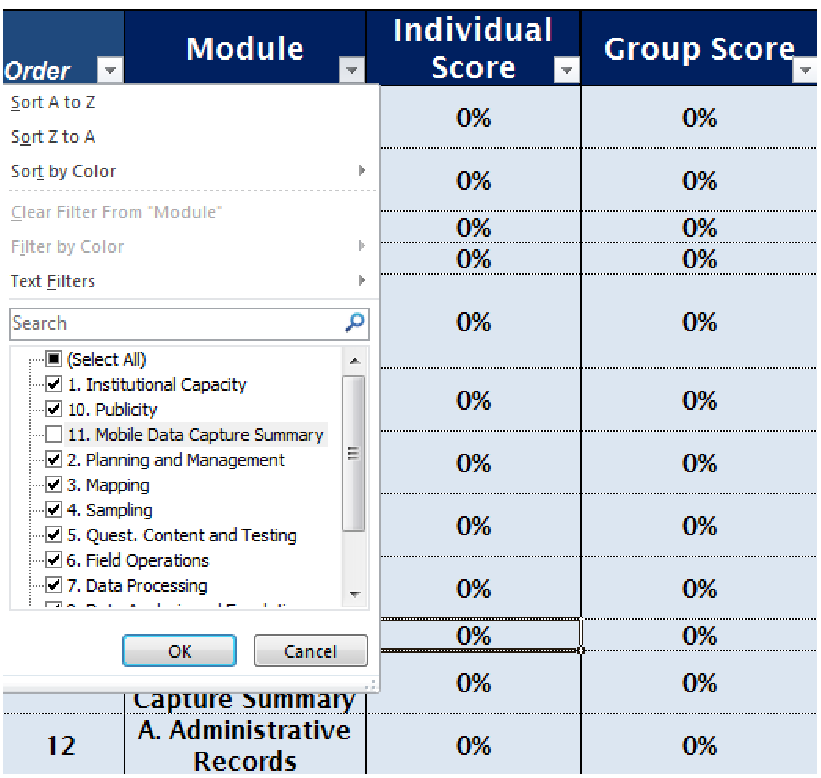
The 'Table-ModulesScore' tab controls the modules shown on the 'Chart-ModulesScore' tab. If you wish to remove any of the modules from the charts, including the mobile data capture summary score, use a column filter as shown in Figure 4. The AutoFilter is the only interactive functionality available on this tab.

To access the filter:



1. Select the 'Table-ModulesScore' tab.
2. Select the drop down arrow in the bottom right corner of the Module column (picture on right)
3. Add or remove modules from the graphs by checking and unchecking modules from the list that appears in the drop down.

Figure 4. Filtering for Unused Modules



Any module filtered from the 'Table-ModulesScore' will not appear in any of the charts shown in the 'Chart-ModulesScore' tab.

Individual vs. Group Scores

Overall, the individual and groups scores should be similar. When they differ, experience in multiple pilot countries indicated the group scores tend to provide a more objective assessment of the level of capacity of an NSO than the individual scores. This is because, when people worked as a group, they learned information about some practices of the NSO that they had not previously known about. Putting the knowledge of various individuals together gave a more accurate score.

The exception to this rule exists in countries where the system is very hierarchical. In these countries, the groups tend not to discuss the answers but rather defer to the highest ranked person for their answer. In this case, the average of individual scores provides a better assessment of the capacity level of the NSO.

The decision of whether to focus on the individual or the group scores should be made by the facilitator based on his/her observations during the administration of the TASC.

Figure 5. Example of TASC Individual Scores

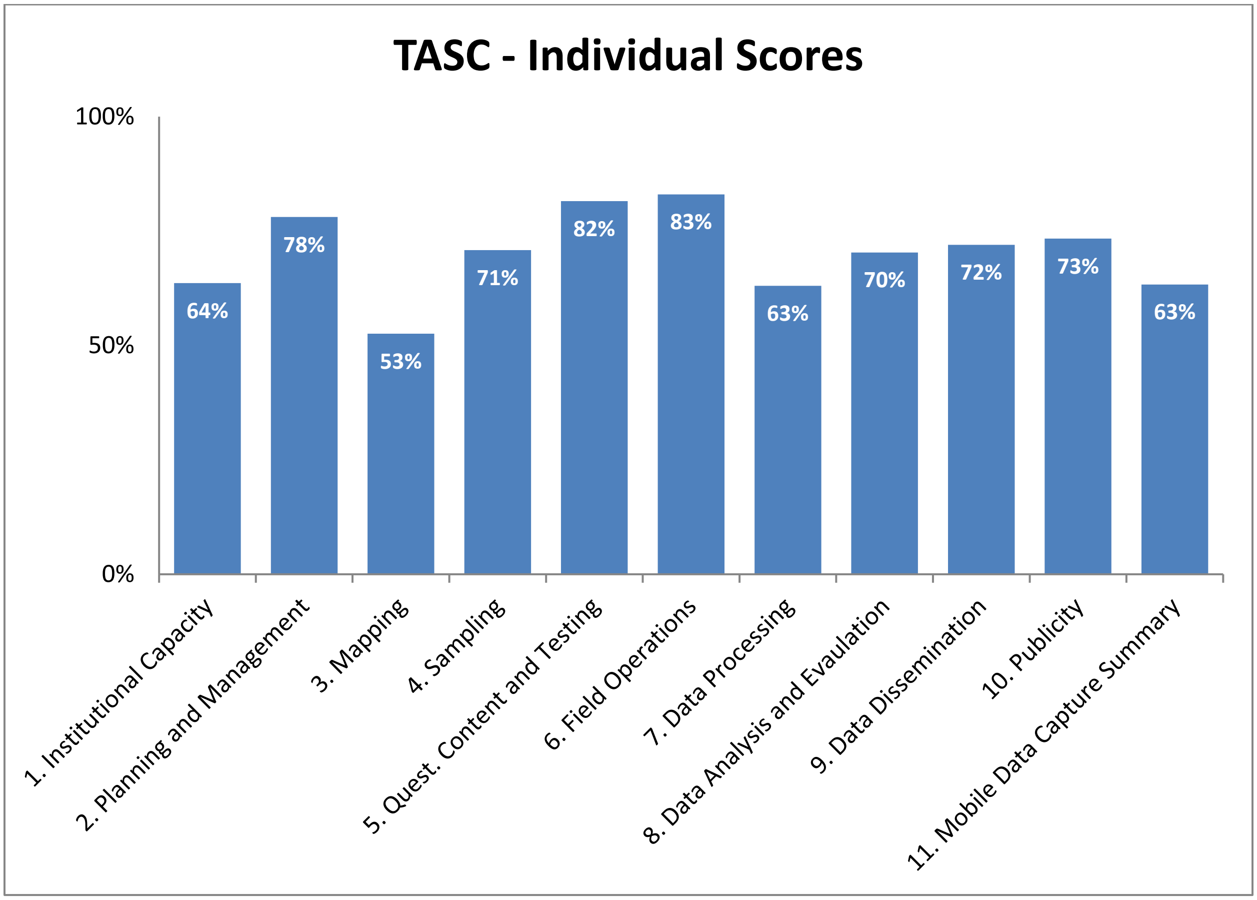
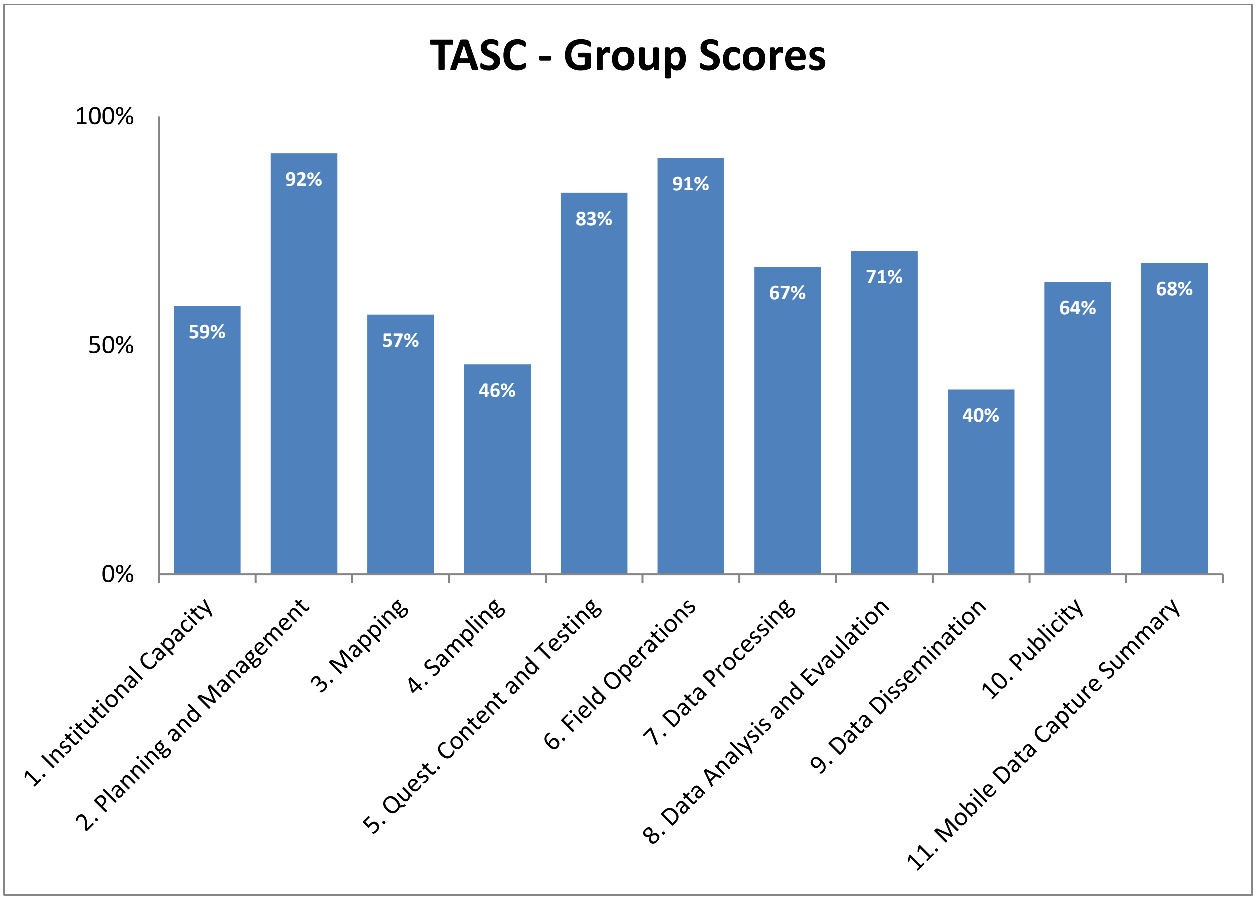


Figure 6. Example of TASC Group Scores



Identifying Specific Areas for Capacity Building

Stakeholders may be interested in knowing whether the NSO has a need in a specific area. For example, some NSOs focus on providing funds for purchasing hardware and may want to know whether they should direct their funds toward buying plotters and computers for the mapping team or towards buying new computers and scanners for data processing. A different stakeholder group may be planning a series of workshops and would like to know whether the NSO would benefit more from a workshop on tabulation of results or if the NSO is ready for a workshop on analytical reports. By examining specific questions on the TASC, stakeholders can objectively make these decisions.

Change in Capacity Over Time

Finally, the TASC can also be used to measure changes in the capacity of an NSO over time. The clearest use of such data would be to assess the impact of a series of capacity building activities. It is important to note that the TASC is not meant to measure the impact of only a few capacity building activities. Rather, an increase in the capacity of an NSO would only be reflected in the TASC scores when a comprehensive program with multiple capacity building activities has been implemented over a short time period. If these capacity building activities are concentrated in one or two areas, TASC scores should only be compared for the specific operational modules affected.

Presenting Results

Because the NSO dedicates time and resources to the administration of the TASC, the results should be made available to the organization. It is ideal if the facilitator can present a summary of the results to the NSO the day after the administration of the TASC. It is recommended that the presentation include:

- Overall results using the group or individual chart in the ‘Chart-ModulesScore’ tab
- A breakdown of the overall areas of strength and weakness, regardless of whether they are of interest to the stakeholder administrating the TASC. The NSO may be able to use these results to make a case to other stakeholders
- An explanation of the areas of strength and weakness of specific interest to the stakeholder administrating the TASC

Following the visit to the NSO, the facilitator should develop a written report documenting the findings of the TASC.

Can you Give me an Example? (A TASC Case Study)

After corresponding for several weeks with the Ms. Doe, the Census Director of Popstan's National Statistical Office (PNSO), Mr. Jones from the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) arrived in Popstan to conduct the TASC. The relationship had been set up through a stakeholder that had worked with PNSO in the past and had used the services of the USCB to provide capacity building help in nearby countries. Mr. Jones had made sure before he arrived that Ms. Doe understood the purpose of the TASC. Three weeks prior to his arrival in the country, he had a video-conference with Ms. Doe and the head of the major divisions of the NSO. He also referred her to the Census Bureau website where she was able to look at the TASC and read the manual. He also ensured that she had secured a place where the TASC could be administered on the second day of his visit.

Upon his arrival, Mr. Jones met with Ms. Doe. Although he had outlined everyone he wanted to meet with over e-mail, he went over the list with her again. By looking at an organizational chart for the PNSO, he was able to ask for meetings with several additional people. He learned about the high-level plan for the upcoming Census from Ms. Doe.

For the rest of the first day, Mr. Jones met with many people at the PNSO. Each meeting lasted between a half an hour and an hour. Whenever he had a little extra time, he would ask to meet some additional people in the area he was visiting. Often, information acquired from one meeting led him to additional people he should meet with. Ms. Doe was very accommodating and made sure all of the meetings were arranged and information was passed freely.

One example of a meeting was the one with Ms. Smith, the head of the household directorate at the PNSO. After explaining the TASC, learning about the role of the household directorate in the upcoming Census, and identifying people to attend the TASC administration, Mr. Jones learned that a separate group, which he had not yet met with, was in charge of drawing the sample for the long form. He was sure to add a meeting with that group to his list. By learning about the Census, he had identified extra people to meet and take the TASC.

Forty people showed up on the day of the TASC administration. Many did not yet fully understand what the TASC was so Mr. Jones gave a short explanation using a PowerPoint presentation. Once people were clear on which modules they were answering, Mr. Jones distributed copies of the TASC booklet and answer sheets. People worked on the TASC very earnestly. Mr. Ahad, a programmer, had previously been a mid-level manager in the field office, so he filled out the modules on data processing and field operations. Ms. Jan was a sampling expert who often did analysis for PNSO, so she filled out the sampling and data analysis and evaluation modules. While people answered the TASC individually, Mr. Jones passed around a sign-up sheet.

After collecting the individual answer sheets, Mr. Jones broke the participants into the groups he had determined by looking at the sign-up sheet. He had decided to have two group sessions. During the first group session, the following groups met: Institutional Capacity, Mapping, Field Operations, Questionnaire Content and Testing, Data Processing, and Sampling. The rest of the groups met in the second session. Mr. Jones divided them this way because many participants had answered both the institutional capacity and the planning and management session and he wanted them to participate in both groups. People who did not have a group to participate in during the second session were free to leave after the first.

Mr. Jones walked around and, without participating or getting too close to the groups, listened in on the discussions. The groups were enjoying themselves very much and having lively discussions about their work. The process to choose the final score for each item was democratic. After the groups were done, Mr. Jones collected the answer sheets. He thanked each participant and they all told him that they enjoyed the experience and had actually learned from it.

Back in his hotel room, Mr. Jones entered the scores from the answer sheets into the results calculator. After looking at the results and comparing them to what he had learned subjectively during the first day of his trip, he felt the TASC matched much of what he had heard. The results also clarified some things that had not been clear. For example, in various meetings he had heard mixed stories about the dissemination plan and the quality of the products from previous censuses and surveys. From the TASC, it was clear this was an area that could benefit from a series of capacity building activities. The same was true in the area of planning and management.

Mr. Jones decided to use the group rather than individual scores, based on his observations during the administration, and prepared a short presentation that outlined the TASC results, the overall findings, and a proposal for capacity building activities that the USCB could help with. Ms. Doe had set up a meeting with various stakeholders, including USAID and UNFPA. Mr. Jones presented his findings to all groups. Based on the findings of the TASC, the stakeholders felt confident they were supporting the Census where needed. Capacity building activities and support were given to the PNSO and the Census of Popstan was a success!

Glossary

Assessment: The systematic collection and evaluation of information about the ability of an NSO to conduct a census or survey.
Capacity Building: Means by which skills, experience, technical, and management capacity are developed within a NSO, often through the provision of technical assistance, training, and specialist inputs (e.g., computer systems). The process may involve the development of human, material, and financial resources.
National Statistical Office (NSO): The leading statistical agency within a national statistical system.
Stakeholder: A party that has an interest in an organization or project. The primary stakeholders are usually investors, customers, employees, and the national government.
Standards: Defined and established uniform specifications and characteristics for products and/or operations.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
HIS	Health Information Systems
HMN	Health Metrics Network
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NSO	National Statistical Office
PDF	Portable Document Format
SCI	Statistical Capacity Indicator
TASC	Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
U.S.	United States
USCB	United States Census Bureau
WHO	World Health Organization

References

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