



INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MIDWIVES

Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT)

Guidelines for Use

A. Introduction

The mission of the International Confederation of Midwives is to advance the profession of midwifery globally by promoting autonomous midwives as the most appropriate caregivers for childbearing women and in keeping birth normal, in order to enhance the reproductive health of women, and the health of their newborns and their families.

The Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT) is one way of assessing the strength of an Association. Strong Associations are able to meet their organisational objectives. The purpose of the assessment is for the Association to identify its own needs including what activities should be carried out to make the Association stronger. The tool provides a framework to help the Association to decide what activities should be carried out. It does not dwell on the Association's weaknesses.

B. Who should administer the MACAT

1. The Association itself, represented by various combinations of people, such as:
 - a. A small committee representing all the stakeholders of the Association. This allows for a complete picture of the Association as perceived by all stakeholders.
 - b. A small committee including the Association's Executive Committee/Office Bearers. Where funds permit, the committee could be assisted by an external consultant to guide the process. The presence of a consultant is optional.
 - c. The Association's staff or volunteers. Where staff and volunteers, if any, perform the assessment, they need to be oriented to the Association and its functions so that they are clear about how and what they are assessing and evaluating.
2. An external consultant should be given access to all documents, members and stakeholders of the Association. A non-member consultant provides an external objective perspective for the Association.
3. Focus group discussions can be set up to collect more information and/or to substantiate responses.

C. How to administer the MACAT

Administering the MACAT involves responding to a series of items divided into seven sections. Some of the information is available from the Association's records and documents. It is important to make these available at the beginning of the assessment.

Step 1: A group of people or consultant is selected, as described in Section B, to conduct the assessment. An explanation of the purpose of the assessment and the process to be followed is given to the group. The group is facilitated to understand how the responses direct the group to the activities required to strengthen the Association.

Step 2: A trial-run on one section is conducted to orientate the group to the tool and demonstrate what information can be obtained from responding to the items under each section.

Step 3: The full assessment is carried out, i.e. the group responds to all the items under each section honestly and objectively. It is important that all items are responded to as each item represents an important aspect of the association.

D. How to respond to the items

Each section has subsections and items under each subsection.

For example:

- *Section A: Governance*
 - *Subsection a1: **Board***
 - *Item: The Association has a Board/Executive Committee governed by a constitution and bylaws.*

Expected Responses: Yes/No/N/A

The respondents will tick whatever is applicable.

Additional Comments:

Space is provided in the tool for respondents to make additional comments, explanations or information where the Yes /No response is not adequate.

E. Interpretation of results

Areas marked "No" and "N/A" require attention. These areas are collated and analysed, as indicative of the needs of the Association which will form the basis for strengthening interventions.

F. Developing interventions

The group uses the results to:

- a. Draw up a list of what is to be done (needs) to make the Association stronger.
- b. Classify the needs according to what the Association can do on its own and those where the Association needs external support.
- c. Prioritise the needs
- d. Prioritise and inform the Association's strategic and action plans and any proposals requesting external support.

G. Suggested approach

The MACAT is divided into 7 sections. The Association can choose to address one section at a time. For example, the Association can start by working on Governance. This means the Association responds to the items under Governance. It develops strengthening activities and works on strengthening Governance before proceeding to work on another section.

H. Monitoring and Evaluation

Follow up is encouraged after one to two years of implementing strengthening interventions. This can be done through re-administration of the MACAT and comparing the results of the first and second administrations.

Explanatory notes on the terms used in each Section

<p>Section A: Governance This section looks at the way the Association is structured and how it functions in terms of processes and directions.</p>	
Board/ Executive Committee	A group of people appointed by the membership to act on behalf of the membership. The Board or Executive Committee usually consists of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. They are elected for a specific period as determined by the Constitution of the organisation. The terms Board and Executive Committee can be interchangeable.
Goals	Goals are the achievements or results that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-targeted (SMART) towards which efforts are directed.
Governance	A set of processes, customs, policies and laws affecting the way an Association is administered or controlled.
Legal Status	The Association has legal recognition with such bodies as the Ministries of Health, and registering authorities. Most Midwives Associations are registered as charitable not-for-profit organisations.
Mission Statement	A brief description of an organisation's fundamental purpose that serves as a baseline for effective planning.
Strategic planning	The process of making fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, what it does and why it does it, with a focus on the future. It involves intentionally setting goals and developing an approach to achieve those goals. It is best done with input from members and stakeholders.
Vision Statement	What the Association sees in the future if all its work achieves desired outcomes. This vision provides a framework for all strategic planning of the Association.

<p>Section B: Management Practices and Leadership This section looks at the leadership of the Association, how it is managed and the composition of staff functions.</p>	
Accountability	Often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility and answerability, blameworthiness, and liability for one's actions.
Authority	Legal or rightful power.
Human Resources	The individuals who comprise the workforce of an Association, the staff.
Infrastructure	The physical and Associational structures necessary for the Association to be able to function. These structures could include appropriate office space, office furniture and equipment as well as access to communication systems such as email, telephones and internet.
Leadership	Organising a group of people to achieve a common goal.
Management	The planning and organising of projects and operations, allocating and directing practices and procedures. Management focuses on systems and structures.
<p>Section C: Financial Resource Management This section looks at the financial situation of the Association; how it is managed and whether it is viable.</p>	
Accounting	The art of recording, classifying, and summarising monetary transactions and events which are of financial character.
Budgeting	A list of all planned expenses and revenues. Budgeting means understanding how much money is available, how it is spent, and then planning how to best allocate it.

<p>Section D: Functions This section looks at what the Association actually does to advance its members, midwifery practice, and the health of women, children and their families.</p>	
Advancing Professional Practice	Ensuring that midwives practise according to the underlying belief of the profession thus creating a culture of excellence. This requires making clear a set of values and standards that influences practice behaviours to which all midwives can aspire. (Adapted from Girard, 2005)
Advocacy	Aiming to influence public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.
Quality and quality assurance	The measure of excellence. Quality assurance refers to a program for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service, or facility against an agreed set of standards.
<p>Section E: Collaboration, Partnerships and Networks This section looks at the place of the Association within the Health Care Professions, National Health System and others.</p>	
Collaboration	A process where two or more people or organisations work together in the interest of common goals.
Network	An interconnected group.
Partnership	A relationship between individuals or groups that is characterised by mutual cooperation and responsibility to achieve a specific goal.
<p>Section F: Visibility including Media Relations This section looks at the way the Association presents itself and how well it is known.</p>	
Media (Public) Relations	Linkages with the media that facilitate an Association in getting a favourable, timely and widespread editorial coverage.
Visibility	The level of presence and accessibility of the Association.

Section G: Sustainability This section looks at the long-term and future possibilities of the Association.	
Resource Mobilisation	The ability of an Association to acquire resources and to mobilise people towards the achievement of its goals. (Adapted from Kendall, 2006)
Sustainability	Continuing development ("stewardship" and well established goals) of the Association to ensure its viability now and in the future.