



# INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING: AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF FULL SPECTRUM CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT



## THE CHALLENGE

Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) has become an increasingly important aspect of the U.S. approach to security cooperation. ICB encompasses security cooperation activities that support partner efforts to establish or improve institutional policies and processes necessary to plan, develop, resource, acquire, staff, employ, and sustain capabilities of mutual benefit. A partner's institutional capacity is critical to developing full-spectrum capability.

While it makes logical sense, security cooperation planners sometimes struggle to effectively integrate ICB tools and methods into security cooperation plans and subsequent activities, resulting in investments that fall short of achieving our strategic objectives. They often focus on the tactical capability and capacity of partner forces but do not realistically assess whether the partner has the ability and will to play a larger security role in support of our mutual objectives or to absorb, employ, or sustain capabilities we want to help them build.

The paradigm shift toward full spectrum capability planning in security cooperation requires asking two key questions early and often:

- ◆ How do we more realistically take ICB considerations and analysis into account early in the planning cycle when setting security cooperation objectives?
- ◆ How do we make best use of limited ICB resources to design engagements that have the greatest impact in facilitating a partner's ability to successfully fulfill a partner role?

**Full-Spectrum Capability** ensures the partner has all that is necessary and sufficient to successfully play a security role in support of our mutual objectives. This concept goes beyond the traditional DOTMLPF-P view of capability in security cooperation planning to emphasize broader, systemic factors essential to a partner making successful use of a particular military capability to achieve a strategic outcome.

## ABOUT ISG

The Institute for Security Governance (ISG) – situated within the Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU) – is the Department of Defense's Center of Excellence for Institutional Capacity Building (ICB). As a component of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and one of its primary international Security Cooperation schoolhouses, ISG is charged with building partner institutional capacity and capability through tailored advising, education, and professional development programs grounded in American values and approaches.

This document helps security cooperation planners understand:

- 1) How ICB improves the achievability and effectiveness of security cooperation planning, and
- 2) Best practices for integrating institutional capacity considerations into all stages of security cooperation planning.

- THE CHALLENGE
- STATE OF THE FIELD
- WHY ICB MATTERS FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
- BEST PRACTICES FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION



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WHY ICB MATTERS FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

BEST PRACTICES FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

## STATE OF THE FIELD

In the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017 (NDAA 2017) Congress mandated better analysis and design early in the planning process to include assessing partner will and institutional capacity before making train and equip decisions. The FY17 NDAA gives security cooperation planners unprecedented freedom to design programs and task resources for security cooperation in a more strategic way. To date, planners have made solid progress retroactively integrating ICB into projects that have already been developed. However, planners and implementers continue to grapple with moving ICB upstream: fully thinking through the implications of the partner's institutional capabilities early enough to influence the setting of objectives.

In response to this challenge, DoD established a Significant Security Cooperation Initiative (SSCI)-centric

planning and resourcing process. SSCI-centric planning requires Combatant Commands to generate partnership assessments, Initiative Design Documents (IDD), and discrete proposals to obtain funding and authorization to train-and-equip our partners. Fully integrating ICB considerations at the beginning stages of this planning cycle and across authorities will help ensure that partner institutional shortfalls and the ability and will to address them are considered, generating more realistic objectives within country plans. The starting point must be a shared understanding between the partner nation and the U.S. of the priority problem(s) to address that are in their shared interest, also known as a "problem - driven approach." If this can be clearly understood and broadly shared among security cooperation planners and implementers, ICB can be readily integrated at the beginning of a planning approach and inform subsequent implementation.



## WHY ICB MATTERS FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

If the process of assessing partner capacities is addressed after a program has already been designed, the result can be overly ambitious training and equipping plans that consume U.S. and partner resources without yielding viable capabilities the partners can effectively employ. Common consequences of poor security cooperation assessment and planning could include:

- ◆ Partners that do not have the ability to acquire parts or have effective systems to maintain transferred equipment – such equipment quickly becomes useless
- ◆ Training provided without consideration of how the partner views career paths – personnel are reassigned or leave the service with little opportunity

to apply their new skills and with no system in place to train their replacements

- ◆ Combat units receive significant increases in capability without commensurate support to their infrastructure – partner lack of logistics, intelligence, or command and control capabilities or other support undermines the partners ability to use the capability developed
- ◆ ICB efforts focus on areas where the partner lacks the will and ability to make institutional changes – ICB shortfalls persist and effective employment of new capabilities are undermined

Fortunately, planners can avoid these pitfalls in both the analysis and implementation phases.

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## BEST PRACTICES FOR ICB PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Combatant Command and Service Component SC planners should integrate ICB factors into all types of planning: country plans, SSCI development, 333 proposals, training and equipment lists, and program execution. In order to accomplish this critical task, planners have access to regional teams of ICB experts from DSCA, ISG, and DIILS who can analyze partners' institutional capacity and develop targeted ICB support plans to address the highest priority shortfalls in a manner most likely to meet with success.

ICB can address such areas as:

- ◆ Legal authorities (information sharing, rules of engagement, law of armed conflict)
- ◆ Strategy and policy (national or service strategies, long-term planning guidance)

- ◆ Human resource management (recruiting, retention, careers, separation, retirement)
- ◆ Resource management (requirements definition, planning, programming, and budgeting)
- ◆ Force Development (force generation, force management, force structure, training, education, doctrine, operational concepts)
- ◆ Acquisition and Logistics (procurement, maintenance, supply, services, planning)

For more detailed information on how to apply ICB principles and best practices, you can request a copy of the new ICB Handbook (2020 working draft) at [dsca.isg.mbx.icbexpert@mail.mil](mailto:dsca.isg.mbx.icbexpert@mail.mil).

## EXAMPLE: ICB CONSIDERATIONS FOR SECURITY COOPERATION PLANNING

### SSCI Partnership Assessment

*Shape desired security cooperation outcomes*

- ◆ What is the partner's will and ability to perform the desired partner role?
- ◆ How does the partner's institutional capacity impact their ability to perform the role?
- ◆ How much is the partner investing its own resources in this role in comparison to other priorities?
- ◆ What are national-level constraints or obstacles to capability development?
- ◆ Generate achievable objectives based on partner priorities, willingness, and capacity.

### Designing Initiatives in the Initiative Design Document (IDD)

*Develop full-spectrum capabilities*

- ◆ What performance expectations and level of proficiency in the partner is required to realize the desired outcome?
- ◆ What institutional challenges, if left unaddressed, prevent or significantly restrict the partner's ability to perform the desired partner role?
- ◆ Identify persistent conditions that frustrate a partner's ability to absorb, employ or sustain the capability but may not be solvable through U.S. engagement – these program constraints require workarounds.
- ◆ Identify partner institutional shortfalls that can be addressed by U.S. engagement.
- ◆ Determine entry points based on partner willingness to engage on the identified topics, mutual security cooperation interests, and the likelihood of success.

### SSCI Addendum

*Request and conduct ICB activities based on partner performance shortfalls*

- ◆ What are potential ICB activities that could address identified shortfalls? Is the ICB approach achievable, relevant, specific, and scaled to the SC role or objective?
- ◆ How much ICB is necessary and sufficient to achieve the desired outcome?
- ◆ ICB activities could include, but aren't limited to: advising and consulting services, mobile training teams, resident CONUS courses, senior leader seminars, table top exercises, multinational and/or interagency seminars, and purpose-built workshops with partner nation government in-country.
- ◆ Potential ICB approaches may include an ICB project (multiple or single ICB providers), which are generally tailored in-country during workshops led by ICB experts. It is beneficial when ICB projects reinforce other SC activities, amplifying impact.

## WHAT IS INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING?

Institutional Capacity Building programs, overseen by DSCA, encompass Security Cooperation activities that directly support U.S. ally and partner nation efforts to improve security sector governance and core management competencies necessary to effectively and responsibly achieve shared security objectives.

### ILLUSTRATIVE PARTNER INSTITUTIONS FOR ICB

Partner nations' civilian and military organizations focused at the strategic and operational levels such as Ministries of Defense and Interior, intelligence services, law enforcement organizations, military services, and legislatures.

### ILLUSTRATIVE ICB DOMAINS

- ◆ Strategy & Policy
- ◆ Resource Management
- ◆ Human Resource Management
- ◆ Acquisition & Logistics
- ◆ Force Management
- ◆ Law & Human Rights

## PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ICB

### STRATEGICALLY DRIVEN

Driven by U.S. interests and values. When integrated early into Security Cooperation (SC) planning, ICB supports strategic dialogue about the partner's capability and will to execute a specified role.

### PROBLEM FOCUSED

Assesses shortfalls in institutional performance that may impede partners' ability to execute role. Considers appropriate entry points for engagement and the enablers and inhibitors of change.

### PARTNER CENTRIC

Avoids the projection or imposition of U.S. models, which may not fit a partner's specific context. Responsive to partners' priorities and their unique political and institutional dynamics.

## MOVING FROM PROBLEM TO SOLUTION



## ICB OFFERINGS

- 
**ADVISING & CONSULTING**  
 Present partner with possibilities for institutional improvements or reform and assist with approaches tailored to partners' political and institutional context for change.
- 
**EDUCATION & TRAINING**  
 Equip partners with the knowledge, skills, tools, and expertise to design and implement solutions.
- 
**CONFERENCES & SEMINARS**  
 Engage partner stakeholders, explore country best practices, and help create space for progress.

### SELECT SERVICES

- ◆ Resident/non-resident advising & consulting
- ◆ Multi-stakeholder workshops
- ◆ Tabletop Exercises (TTX)
- ◆ Resident courses
- ◆ Mobile engagement / training teams
- ◆ Senior Leader Engagement

## ICB PLANNERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

- ◆ Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS)
- ◆ Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA)
- ◆ Institute for Security Governance (ISG)
- ◆ Regional Centers



## QUESTIONS ABOUT ICB?

Questions or comments about this Smart Sheet or any ICB topic?

Ask an ISG expert about any ICB question at:  
[isginfo@nps.edu](mailto:isginfo@nps.edu)