

CAPABILITY BRIDGING FRAMEWORK

Integration Readiness Assessment Instrument

A Facilitated Assessment Guide for Multi-Stakeholder Integration Ecosystems

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capabilitybridging.org

Seven dimensions across two categories. Six capability dimensions determine the integration pathway. One sustainability dimension assesses implementation viability. This instrument is designed for facilitated organisational assessments. Allow 60 to 90 minutes per institution.

1. About This Instrument

This instrument supports facilitated integration readiness assessments conducted as part of a multi-stakeholder integration ecosystem design exercise. It is used when a platform operator, ministry, or central body needs to assess multiple institutions before designing integration pathways.

It is distinct from the self-assessment tool available at capabilitybridging.org/assess. The self-assessment tool is designed for individual organisations. This instrument is designed for trained facilitators conducting structured interviews across an ecosystem of institutions.

1.1 Two Assessment Contexts

Ecosystem assessment. A platform operator or central body uses this instrument to assess all institutions in an ecosystem before designing integration architecture. This is the primary use case for this instrument.

Individual readiness check. An individual institution uses the assessment to understand where they sit ahead of any potential integration requirement. Results inform internal development planning.

1.2 How to Use This Instrument

Complete one instrument per institution. Conduct the assessment as a structured interview with a senior staff member who has operational knowledge of the institution's systems, data management practices, and financial situation. Technical expertise is not required from the respondent.

Work through Dimensions 1 to 6 in sequence. For each dimension, read the question aloud, present the four response options, and record the score selected. Use the facilitator guidance box to probe for additional detail and to validate the response. Complete Dimension 7 last.

Allow 60 to 90 minutes per institution for a thorough assessment. If time is limited, prioritise Dimensions 2 and 3, which are the primary determinants of pathway classification.

1.3 Scoring Overview

Score	Label	General Meaning
4	Strong	Full capability present. No significant barriers identified.
3	Good	Capability present with minor gaps. Some support may be needed.
2	Moderate	Partial capability. Significant gaps requiring support and development.
1	Developing	Minimal or no capability. Substantial intervention required before integration.

2. Organisation Details

Complete this section before beginning the dimension assessment. Record details as stated by the respondent.

Organisation Name	
<hr/>	
Country / Region	
<hr/>	
Sector	Organisation Type
<hr/>	<hr/>
Respondent Name	Respondent Title
<hr/>	<hr/>
Assessment Date	Facilitator Name
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Before proceeding: confirm the respondent understands that this assessment is used to design an integration pathway that fits their organisation. There are no wrong answers. Honest responses produce the most useful results.

D1

CAPABILITY DIMENSION
Systems Infrastructure

What systems does your organisation currently use to manage its core operational data?



Score 4

Cloud-based or web-based software system

A system accessible from any internet-connected device, hosted online by a vendor or the organisation's IT team.



Score 3

Locally installed software on office computers or servers

A system that runs on the organisation's own computers or servers, accessible only from within the office network.



Score 2

Spreadsheets such as Excel or Google Sheets

Most data is managed in spreadsheet files, with no dedicated database or management system.



Score 1

Paper-based records or no formal system

Most information is on paper, or there is no consistent system for managing organisational data.

△ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Ask the respondent to describe the main system by name if possible. Note the system name in the facilitator notes below.

If they mention multiple systems, record all of them and classify based on the system used for the majority of core data.

A Score 4 response typically involves a named cloud platform: a vendor-hosted ERP, a cloud student management system, a web-based HR or financial system.

A Score 1 response should trigger a question about whether any computers are in use at all. If there are computers but only for email or word processing, Score 1 still applies.

Watch for overstatement: some respondents may claim a cloud system when they mean an offline database. Ask: 'Can staff access this system from home or from another office?' A yes confirms Score 4.

Facilitator Notes — D1: System name(s), additional observations

D1 Score — Systems Infrastructure

 / 4

D2

CAPABILITY DIMENSION — PRIMARY DETERMINANT

System Accessibility

This dimension is the primary determinant of pathway classification. Score 1 or 2 on this dimension triggers Level 4 or Level 2 classification regardless of other scores. Probe carefully.

How do staff at your organisation access the main system you described?

Score 4 **From anywhere with an internet connection**
 Staff can log in from home, a different office, or a mobile device. The system is accessible online from any location.

Score 3 **Only from within the office or on the office network**
 Staff must be physically in the office or connected to the office network to use the system. Not accessible externally.

Score 2 **Only on specific computers in the office**
 The system or files are stored on particular computers. Staff must use those specific machines to access data.

Score 1 **No digital system to access**
 Data is on paper or the system is currently not functioning. There is nothing to log into.

▲ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

This is the most important dimension. Take extra time here.

Key probing question: 'If you needed to access this system from home tonight, could you?' A yes confirms Score 4. A no moves to Score 3 or below.

Score 3 applies to LAN-based systems, locally hosted servers, and systems accessible only via VPN from the office network.

Score 2 applies when the data lives on one or two specific office computers, not networked. Common with older Excel-based operations where files are stored locally.

Score 1 applies when the system is down, there is no digital system, or the organisation operates entirely on paper. If the server has been non-operational for months, Score 1 applies even if a system technically exists.

Note: A Score 1 on this dimension triggers an override classification to Level 4 regardless of other scores.

Facilitator Notes — D2: How system is accessed, connectivity details, VPN or network arrangements

D2 Score — System Accessibility

 / 4

D3

CAPABILITY DIMENSION
Digital Literacy

How would you describe the typical digital capability of staff who manage your organisation's data?

- Score 4**
Advanced. Dedicated IT staff or developers.
 The organisation has people who can configure systems, write scripts, manage databases, or develop software integrations.
- Score 3**
Intermediate. Staff operate systems and manage data independently.
 Staff are comfortable with software, can troubleshoot basic issues, and manage data with some training.
- Score 2**
Basic. Staff can use computers and common applications like Excel.
 Staff can do standard tasks but need guidance for anything beyond familiar tools. Limited confidence with new systems.
- Score 1**
Minimal. Most staff have limited experience with digital tools.
 Digital literacy is low across the organisation. Significant training would be needed before any digital system could be used independently.

△ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Ask the respondent to describe a typical data management task and who performs it. This reveals actual capability better than self-assessment.

Do not assess the most technically skilled person in the organisation. Assess the typical data staff member. Score 4 is rare outside of organisations with dedicated IT departments or software development capacity. Score 3 is common among organisations with university-educated administrative staff who regularly use enterprise software.

A useful probing question for Score 2 vs Score 3: 'If a new system was introduced next month, could your staff learn to use it without external training?' A yes suggests Score 3. A no suggests Score 2.

Watch for aspirational responses. Some respondents describe the capability they wish they had, not what currently exists. Probe with specific examples.

Facilitator Notes — D3: Specific staff roles and capabilities observed or described

D3 Score — Digital Literacy

 / 4

D4

CAPABILITY DIMENSION

Data Management Practices

How does your organisation currently collect, store, and maintain its core data?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 4	<p>Structured database with consistent standards and validation rules Data is collected in a structured system with defined fields, validation, and regular quality checks.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 3	<p>Spreadsheets with some structure but inconsistent standards Data is in spreadsheets but formatting and completeness varies. Some fields are standard, others are not.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 2	<p>Mix of digital and paper with no consistent standards Some data is digital, some is on paper. There are no common formats or validation processes.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 1	<p>Primarily paper-based or very limited digital records Most records are on paper. Digital records are minimal or not systematically maintained.</p>
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△ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Ask the respondent to describe how a typical data record is created from start to finish. This reveals actual practice better than descriptions.

Score 4 requires both structure and consistency. A well-designed database that is poorly maintained scores 3 or lower.

Score 3 is the most common response. Most organisations have spreadsheets but acknowledge inconsistency across staff or departments.

Probe for data quality awareness: 'When did you last check your data for errors?' No answer or a vague answer suggests Score 2 or lower.

If the organisation has multiple departments managing data differently, score based on the majority practice, not the best practice.

Note whether the organisation has ever been asked to provide data to an external body and how they responded. This reveals real data management maturity.

Facilitator Notes — D4: Data formats used, data quality observations, any gaps identified

D4 Score — Data Management Practices ___ / 4

D5

CAPABILITY DIMENSION

Vendor and Support Relationships

Who maintains and supports your organisation's main technology system?

Score 4 **Internal IT team manages and maintains the system**
 The organisation has in-house technical capacity to manage, update, and troubleshoot the system.

Score 3 **External vendor or contractor with an active support agreement**
 A third party maintains the system. Support is available and the relationship is active and functional.

Score 2 **External vendor but support is limited or unreliable**
 A vendor built the system but response times are slow, documentation is missing, or the relationship is strained.

Score 1 **No active support. System runs without maintenance or has failed.**
 Nobody is currently maintaining the system, or the system is not functioning.

△ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Ask when the system was last updated or patched. An update more than 12 months ago suggests Score 2 or lower.

Ask whether the vendor support contract is current. A lapsed contract scores 2 even if the vendor is occasionally responsive.

Score 4 is reserved for organisations with in-house developers or system administrators. A tech-savvy staff member who fixes things informally does not qualify for Score 4.

Probe for documentation: 'If your main IT person left tomorrow, does anyone else know how the system works?' No documentation and no backup suggests Score 2.

Note the vendor name if an external vendor is mentioned. This may be relevant for future integration planning.

A Score 1 on this dimension combined with a Score 1 on Accessibility is a strong indicator of an institution requiring emergency support before any integration design begins.

Facilitator Notes — D5: Vendor name, contract status, support history, known risks

D5 Score — Vendor and Support Relationships

 / 4

D6	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">CAPABILITY DIMENSION</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Governance Capacity</h2>
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Does your organisation have formal processes in place to maintain data quality and manage data responsibilities?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 4	<p>Documented data quality procedures and designated data stewards Formal rules for how data is validated, who is responsible, and how errors are corrected. Procedures are written and followed.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 3	<p>Informal practices. Some staff check quality but nothing is documented. Quality depends on individuals rather than processes. No formal procedures or assigned responsibilities.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 2	<p>Limited. Data quality is checked occasionally but not consistently. Quality checks happen sometimes, usually before a report is due, but there is no regular process.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Score 1	<p>No data quality processes exist. Data is collected and used without any validation or quality checking procedures.</p>
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△ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Ask: 'Who is responsible for data quality in your organisation?' If the respondent pauses or names a senior leader rather than a designated data officer, Score 3 or lower is likely.

Ask: 'What happens when an error is found in your data?' A clear, practiced answer suggests Score 3 or 4. Uncertainty suggests Score 2 or lower.

Score 4 requires written procedures, not just good intentions. Ask to see the document. If it exists, Score 4 is confirmed.

In most resource-constrained environments Score 2 or Score 3 is the norm. Do not be surprised if no institution scores 4.

Note: The HEMIS implementation across 30 institutions found that no institution had formal data quality procedures at the time of assessment. This dimension commonly scores 1 or 2.

The absence of governance capacity does not exclude an organisation from integration. It informs what support they need to sustain their pathway over time.

Facilitator Notes — D6: Data steward names if any, procedures observed or described, known gaps

D6 Score — Governance Capacity	<u> </u> / 4
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D7

SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSION — ADVISORY ONLY

Financial Sustainability

This dimension does not affect pathway classification. It produces an advisory flag that informs implementation planning and support decisions. Record the flag honestly.

Does your organisation have or can it source the funds required to set up and maintain an integration pathway independently?

- GREEN** **Budget already allocated**
 The organisation has an approved technology or digital systems budget that covers integration setup and ongoing maintenance without requiring additional approval.
- AMBER** **No current budget but can source funding**
 The organisation does not have allocated funds but has a clear mechanism to secure them, through a grant application, donor funding, government allocation, or a budget cycle that can accommodate the request within a defined timeframe.
- AMBER** **Uncertain. No clear pathway to funding.**
 The organisation acknowledges integration has a cost but has no current budget and no clear mechanism to source funds. Dependent on external support or decisions outside their control.
- RED** **No budget and no realistic prospect of independent funding**
 The organisation can only participate if integration costs are fully covered by the platform operator or a third party. Cannot contribute to integration costs independently.

⚠ FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

Approach this question with sensitivity. Budget questions can feel intrusive. Frame it as: 'We ask this to understand what support your organisation would need from the platform operator.'

A GREEN flag does not guarantee smooth integration. Budget can be withdrawn. Record any conditions or caveats mentioned by the respondent.

An AMBER flag is common and should not be treated as a problem. It signals that the platform operator needs to plan support for this institution.

A RED flag signals that integration costs must be fully absorbed by the platform. This should be factored into the platform budget before design begins.

If the respondent is unsure, record AMBER and note the uncertainty. Do not pressure for a definitive answer. Note whether any external donors or development partners are already covering technology costs. This is relevant for sustainability planning.

Facilitator Notes — D7: Budget source, conditions, donor relationships, sustainability concerns

D7 Flag — Financial Sustainability (Advisory)

GREEN / AMBER / RED

3. Scoring Summary

Complete this section after all seven dimensions have been assessed. Record all six capability dimension scores and the financial sustainability flag. Then apply the decision tree on the next page to determine the pathway classification.

Dimension	Weight	Score	Weighted Score
D1 — Systems Infrastructure	20%	___ / 4	
D2 — System Accessibility	30%	___ / 4	
D3 — Digital Literacy	20%	___ / 4	
D4 — Data Management Practices	15%	___ / 4	
D5 — Vendor & Support Relationships	8%	___ / 4	
D6 — Governance Capacity	7%	___ / 4	
TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE	100%	—	___ / 4
<i>D7 — Financial Sustainability</i>	—	Flag: ___	

How to Calculate the Weighted Score

For each capability dimension, multiply the score recorded (1 to 4) by the weight shown. Sum all six weighted scores to produce the total.

Example: D1 score of 3 × 20% = 0.60. D2 score of 2 × 30% = 0.60. And so on. Sum all six results for the total weighted score.

Override rule: If D1 (Systems Infrastructure) scored 1 OR D2 (System Accessibility) scored 1, classify as Level 4 immediately regardless of the total weighted score. Do not apply the decision tree.

Override Check

Did D1 score 1 (no digital system)?	YES → Level 4. Stop here. NO → Continue.
Did D2 score 1 (no system to access)?	YES → Level 4. Stop here. NO → Continue.

4. Pathway Classification Decision Tree

Apply the steps below in sequence after completing the scoring summary. Stop at the first match. If the override rule on the previous page applied, skip directly to recording the Level 4 classification.

STEP 1
Does the organisation have a functioning digital system? (D1 score 2 or above)

<p>YES → Has a digital system No functioning digital system present.</p>	<p>NO → Proceed to Step 2 Classify as Level 4 — Assisted Entry Pathway.</p>
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STEP 2
Is the system accessible over the public internet? (D2 score 4)

<p>YES → Internet-accessible system System confirmed as publicly internet-accessible.</p>	<p>NO → Proceed to Step 3 Classify as Level 2 — Local Network Systems Pathway.</p>
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STEP 3
Is the system a structured database or ERP? (D1 score 4 or 3)

<p>YES → Structured database or ERP Cloud or web-based ERP or database confirmed.</p>	<p>NO → Classify as Level 1 Classify as Level 3 — Structured Data Pathway.</p>
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Score Band Reference

If the decision tree produces a classification but the total weighted score suggests a different level, use the decision tree result. The decision tree takes precedence. The score band is provided for reference and validation only.

Weighted Score	Indicative Classification	Pathway
3.5 – 4.0	Level 1	Online Systems Pathway
2.5 – 3.4	Level 2	Local Network Systems Pathway
1.5 – 2.4	Level 3	Structured Data Pathway
Below 1.5	Level 4	Assisted Entry Pathway

5. Classification Record and Next Steps

Record the final pathway classification and financial sustainability flag. Then refer to the next steps guidance below for immediate actions.

PATHWAY CLASSIFICATION Level <u> </u> — <u> </u>	FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FLAG GREEN / AMBER / RED
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Additional Classification Notes and Context

Next Steps by Pathway Level

LEVEL 1	Online Systems Pathway — Next Steps Engage developer or vendor to assess API development feasibility and cost. Request API documentation from system vendor. Review CBF API specification at capabilitybridging.org . Establish governance policy before development begins.
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LEVEL 2	Local Network Systems Pathway — Next Steps Discuss scheduled bulk export capability with vendor. Evaluate feasibility of cloud migration if real-time integration is a priority. Download CBF bulk upload template and review required data structure. Agree submission schedule and assign data focal point.
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LEVEL 3	Structured Data Pathway — Next Steps Download CBF validated template and review column definitions and validation rules. Identify data focal point responsible for template completion and submission. Arrange template training before first submission cycle. Review governance documentation on versioning and conflict resolution.
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LEVEL 4	Assisted Entry Pathway — Next Steps Contact platform support team to arrange portal access credentials. Identify staff for data entry and arrange basic digital literacy training. Begin data digitisation exercise to convert paper records. Establish a supported submission arrangement for the first cycle.
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Financial Sustainability Flag — Implementation Implications

GREEN	Budget allocated. Organisation can sustain pathway independently. No additional financial support required from platform operator.
AMBER	Partial or uncertain funding. Platform operator should plan partial financial support and monitor budget situation. Consider phased implementation to manage costs.
RED	No independent funding capacity. Platform operator must absorb all integration and maintenance costs for this organisation. Factor into platform budget before design begins.

Important: Pathway classification reflects an organisation's full operational reality, not only its technical capability. A financially constrained organisation may rationally choose a lower pathway than their capability classification suggests. The framework accommodates this without penalty.

Suggested Citation

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