

CHISU Results in Action

Strengthening organizational development of local partners for a stronger health information system in Indonesia

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Background

The process of integrating health services data has many challenges in Indonesia. This includes the fact that more than 80 percent of health facilities across the country are still untouched by digital technology¹—as



Organizational Capacity Assessment for Castellum Digital Indonesia (CDI). Photo: CHISU

well as the fact that millions of data points from hundreds of apps are used at the facility level. This results in fragmented and siloed data across a variety of information systems used, making data management difficult for health system stakeholders. To address these issues, Indonesia's Ministry of Health (MOH) released in 2021 the Digital Health Transformation Strategy Indonesia 2024. Following the blueprint,

the Center for Data and Information Technology (Pusdatin), with support from CHISU, started implementing the strategy focusing on improving governance, systems and interoperability, and data use in Indonesia.

For this digital health strategy to be successfully implemented, it's essential that the MOH have access to local partners to provide technical assistance to subnational governments on their digital transformation journeys. Indonesia has a rich market of potential local partners that have the technical capacity to provide this assistance, but

¹ Blueprint for Digital Health Transformation Strategy Indonesia 2024 (<https://dto.kemkes.go.id/ENG-Blueprint-for-Digital-Health-Transformation-Strategy-Indonesia%202024.pdf>)

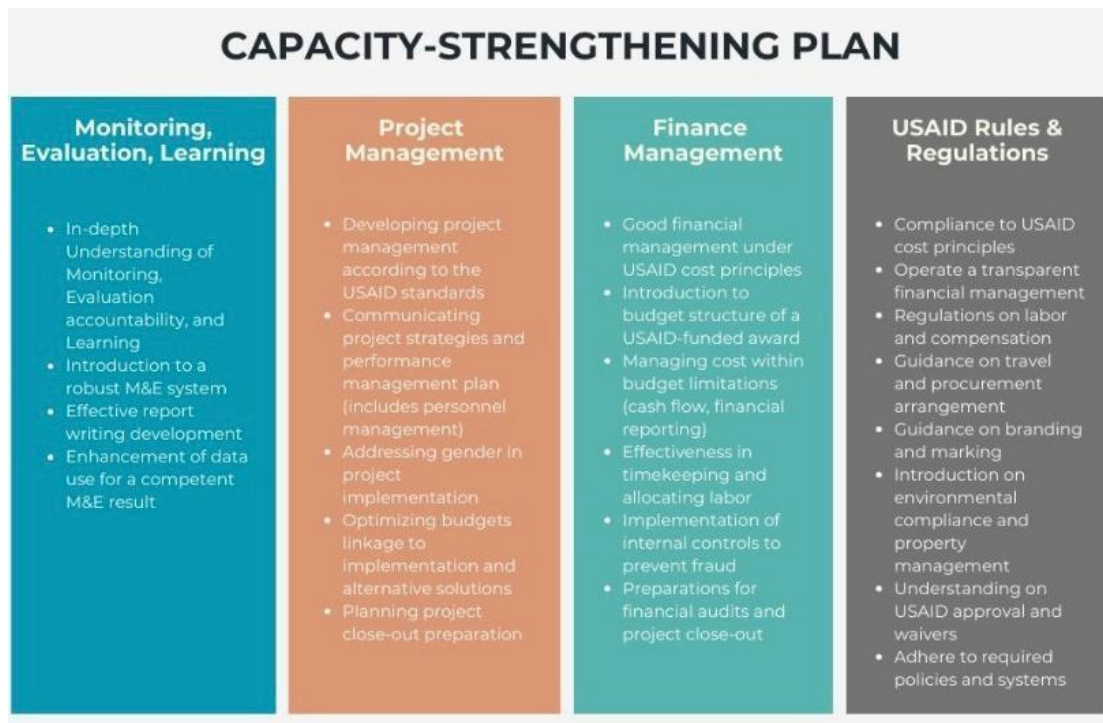
gaps can be seen in their organizational capacity to properly manage and execute program implementation and their finances and to effectively monitor and evaluate the program achievements against expected results.

In April 2023, CHISU selected Castellum Digital Indonesia (CDI) to be the local organization that CHISU will partner with at the subnational level to support the Provincial Health Offices and District Health Offices to realize the digital health transformation at their respective levels. Specifically, CDI is working within the CHISU consortium to provide technical assistance to DKI Jakarta, as well as the District Health Offices of Makassar City and Maros Regency to take action to meet targets of the national digital maturity index, develop and implement HIS strategies and interoperability roadmaps in each district, and support districts to improve the quality of their data.

Through this partnership, CHISU is supporting CDI's organizational development goals. By supporting CDI in both their technical activities and organizational development goals, CDI will be prepared to continue to assist stakeholders at the national and subnational level to realize the digital health transformation. To identify these organizational development goals, CHISU supported CDI to conduct an organizational capacity self-assessment in the targeted areas of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL), programmatic and financial accountability, health information system (HIS), technical assistance provision skills, and networking and coalition building. This assessment, conducted in June 2023, resulted in the identification of several priorities for CDI's organizational capacity development: MEL, project management, financial management, and compliance with USAID regulations.

Steps Taken

Based on the assessment results, CHISU developed a capacity-strengthening action plan emphasizing four key areas: MEL, project management, financial management, and compliance with USAID rules and regulations. The table below explains the capacity-strengthening plan in more detail.



The capacity-strengthening plan in the project management area uses a holistic approach, starting from developing work plans, communicating strategies, linking budgets to implementations, and development of back-up plans if the implementation does not go as planned—all the way to project close-out. The training plan also addressed gender balance in project operations.

Meanwhile, the finance management training plan includes all significant aspects of USAID’s financial administration and cost principles. One of these aspects was how to manage project costs within budget limitations to have a smooth cash flow, which also included allocating labor and internal controls to prevent fraud. Another aspect of training focused on the development of an inclusive financial report that can be relied upon during financial audits.

To have proper project and finance management, CDI must be able to conduct a comprehensive MEL procedure. Thus, in the MEL area, the action plan provided the overall steps of effective MEL implementation, such as introducing MEL concepts and purposes, components of MEL, effective report writing and presenting, and accurate data use. CDI is implementing their learnings in this area through the monitoring and evaluation of their technical activities with CHISU in the areas of governance, systems and interoperability, and data quality and use.

These three areas (project management, finance management, and MEL) are closely related to compliance with USAID rules and regulations, which is important for any potential future partnership with USAID. The capacity-strengthening action plan outlined procedures around cost principles, travel and procurement arrangements,

branding and marking guidelines, and environmental compliance at both national and international levels. The training plan addressed this requirement, which included USAID waivers and exemptions in special cases.

Results + Next Steps

CHISU carried out two of the four capacity-strengthening workshops specified in the action plan with CDI: the MEL training and the financial management training. Each training broadened their skills and knowledge in areas they were lacking as well as helped them gain an in-depth understanding of the overall MEL and finance management implementation.

In regards to the monitoring and evaluation training, Popy Meilani, Project Manager of CDI, said: “We acquired broader knowledge and better understanding in each stage of the monitoring and evaluation process from this workshop. Now we can fully understand the process of delivering a project starting from the preparation stage (which includes gap analysis, problem source determination, and opportunity and threats identification), then the progress monitoring stage, to the threat mitigation and risk management stage.”



Senior Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) specialist Amanda Foster facilitated a three-day workshop on MEL best practices on USAID-funded projects for Castellum Digital, a Jakarta-based startup. Photo credit: CHISU

Having received the MEL training, CDI is planning to develop more effective monitoring and evaluation tools for project implementation assessments that could assist CDI in achieving the project objectives and help minimize any potential risks (such as misuse of data) that might interfere with the project. The monitoring and evaluation tools will also be used by CDI for more effective project implementation.

The finance management training also received a positive response from the participants. The aim of this workshop was to ensure CDI develops project budget planning and manages it in accordance with USAID standards and policies, which is crucial for any potential future collaboration with USAID.

“The workshop gave us clear guidance on how to develop a project budget plan, to keep a complete financial record to minimize fraud, and most importantly to write an accountable financial report, all in line with the USAID policies,” Allama Iqbal, Tax and Finance Officer of CDI, said. “After this workshop, CDI will ensure our internal coordination among team members on how to have an efficient cash flow that can support our project’s sustainability.”

To have effective financial management, CDI will work on updating their current financial documents to comply with USAID standards, completing all the necessary

documents, and adding new finance documents that can help them create a better cash flow. They will apply petty cash management, which they have not done before, and review the finance approval processes to see whether it should be more than once a week in order to have a more simple financial process (i.e., an uncomplicated cash flow). Using the skills from the finance management training, CDI will also improve their staff's capability to develop a comprehensive financial report and to execute financial internal audits.

“The two capacity-strengthening workshops we received had given us improvement in knowledge and skills; we certainly need more sessions like these,” Meilani said. “For future workshops, we hope there will be more variation in the exercise part with more interesting media that can be adaptable to our organization's condition. Offline, thorough discussion on real cases will give us more insights for applying changes and future evaluation.”



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