



**Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)**  
**Facilitator Guide**  
**Governance Section Only**

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## The OCA Purpose and Framework

Within USAID' Forward's Implementation and Procurement's Local Capacity Development (LCD) reform efforts, the OCA can be facilitated through a guided, interactive self-assessment with USAID's partners (NGOs, private businesses, and government counterparts) on an annual basis. This is based on the objective to enable organizational learning, team sharing, and reflective self-assessment within each partner organization. The tool is tailored to identify areas of need within management systems, project performance, program performance, and networking as well as reinforce healthy organizational practices. Through this process with a broad range of staff representation (all departments and levels represented), this snapshot promotes both a healthy, focused dialogue on organizational areas (and technical areas in year 2 and beyond through an additional tool) and leads to the development of an Action Plan identifying areas of high priority, ensuing steps, responsible staff identified, estimated completion dates, and additional support identified. Through the regular use of the OCA, an associated Action Implementation Plan, and supportive training/coaching/mentoring opportunities have demonstrated an increase in strengthening the self-sufficiency and sustainability of partners.

## Acknowledgements

This compilation is based on a review and inclusion of the following Organizational Assessment Tools:

- The foundational tool is originally based on the New Partners Initiatives (NPI) OCA tool and process which was developed by Initiatives Inc. with contributions by John Snow Incorporated (JSI) under the USAID-funded New Partner's Initiatives Technical Assistance (NuPITA) Contract No. GHS-I-00-07-00002-00 and the CDC/HRSA-funded New Partner's Initiatives Technical Assistance (TA-NPI) Contract No. 200-204-05316.
- IDF originally based on USAID's TIPs #15
- Pact's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)
- Discussion-Oriented Organizational Self-Assessment (DOSAs) Tool
- NGO Sustainability Index

## Additional Resources

- Initiatives Inc. (2009). *Organizational Capacity Assessment for NGOs*. Boston, MA: Published by Initiatives Inc. for the United States Agency for International Development Support for HIV and AIDS Response in Zambia Project (SHARe).
- Management Sciences for Health. (2003). *Rapid Assessment Tool for HIV/AIDS Environments: A Guide for Strengthening HRM Systems*. Cambridge, MA: Published by MSH for the U.S. Agency for International Development Management and Leadership Program.
- Venture Philanthropy Partners. (2001). *Effective Capacity Building in Non-Profit Organizations*. Reston, VA: Venture Philanthropy Partners.

## Governance

**Objective:** The objective of this section is to assess the organization’s motivation and stability by reviewing its guiding principles, structure, and oversight.

### Vision/Mission

**Objective:** The Objective of this sub-section is to review the organization’s vision and/or mission statement learn what drives the organization, how the statements are reflected in what they do and how they are communicated and understood by staff.

**Resources:** Vision and/or mission statement, staff questionnaires

Vision/Mission	1	2	3	4
	The organization does not have a clearly stated vision and/or mission of what it aspires to achieve or become	The vision and/or mission provides a moderately clear or specific understanding of what the organization aspires to become or achieve; lacks specificity or clarity; is not widely held and rarely used to direct actions or set priorities	The vision and/or mission is a clear and specific statement of what the organization aspires to become or achieve; is well known to most but not all staff and is sometimes used to direct actions and set priorities	The vision and/or mission provides a clear, specific, and forceful understanding of what the organization aspires to become or achieve; is broadly held within the organization and consistently used to direct actions and set priorities

Vision/Mission Scoring Guidance	
Score	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> No documented vision and/or mission statement</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> A documented vision and/or mission statement exists</li> <li>• <b>Quality:</b> The statement is not short, clear and/or relevant to what the organization does and/or does not communicate the organization’s aspirations or intentions.</li> <li>• <b>Staff Awareness:</b> Responses to the staff questionnaire indicate that staff are not widely aware of or understand the statement</li> <li>• <b>Application:</b> The statement(s) is/are not used to guide organizational activities and priorities</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> A documented vision and/or mission statement exists</li> <li>• <b>Quality:</b> The statement is short, clear, and/or relevant to what the organization does and communicates the organization’s aspirations or intentions.</li> <li>• <b>Staff Awareness:</b> Responses to the staff questionnaire indicate that staff are not widely aware of or understand the statement</li> <li>• <b>Application:</b> The statement(s) is/are sometimes used to guide organizational activities and priorities</li> </ul>

<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> A documented vision and/or mission statement exists</li> <li>• <b>Quality:</b> the statement(s) is/are short, clear, and/or relevant to what the organization does and communicates the organization's aspirations or intentions.</li> <li>• <b>Staff Awareness:</b> Responses to the staff questionnaire indicate that staff are widely aware of and understand the statement</li> <li>• <b>Application:</b> The statement(s) is/are routinely used to guide organizational activities and priorities</li> </ul>
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## Organizational Structure

**Objective:** The Objective of this sub-section is to review the organizational structure – which is most often depicted in an organogram, but may be outlined in narrative – and determine if the structure is in line with the organization's mission, goals and programs and if systems are in place for ensuring strong coordination among departments or functions.

**Resources:** Organizational diagram or structure description

Organizational Structure	1	2	3	4
	The organization has no formal structure and department and or key functions responsibilities are not clearly defined and/or functions are not clear.	The organization has a basic organizational structure with adequate definitions of departmental responsibilities and/or key lines of responsibility and communication among departments and/or key functions somewhat clear.	The organization has an organizational structure which is well designed and relevant to its mission/goals; roles and responsibilities of departments and/or functions are clearly defined and appropriate.	The organization has an organizational structure which is well designed and relevant to the mission/goals, roles and responsibilities of departments and/or key functions are clearly defined and appropriate, and lines of communication and coordination among departments and/or key functions is clear and functional.

Organizational Structure	
Score	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> There is no formal written structure or defined functions for the organization</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Large organizations may have organograms that list departments and key functions within the executive team and departments. Smaller organizations may have organograms framed simply around key functions.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Organization has a basic, documented, organizational structure that accounts for most management,</li> </ul>

	<p>administrative and technical departments and/or functions but the structure is incomplete or not documented (check to see that NPI program positions are included, for example)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Relevance:</b> Lines of responsibility among departments/functions is not fully clear and/or organogram is not complete or organizational structure is not in line with the organization's mission, goals and programs</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Organization's organizational structure is documented and clear</li> <li>• <b>Relevance:</b> The structure is in line with the organization's mission, goals and programs</li> <li>• <b>Quality:</b> Function, role and responsibility of each department or position is clear and relevant</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Organization 's organizational structure is documented and clear</li> <li>• <b>Relevance:</b> The structure is in line with the organization's mission, goals and programs</li> <li>• <b>Quality:</b> Function, role and responsibility of each department or position is clear and relevant</li> <li>• <b>Linkages:</b> Relationship among departments or functions is clear, communication systems are well defined and operational such that there is good coordination among different departments or functions</li> </ul>

### Board Composition and Responsibilities

**Objective:** The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the board's composition, terms of reference, procedures and oversight to ensure that the board is capable of providing adequate guidance for the organization.

**Resources:** List of board membership, Board TOR, Board Meeting Minutes, Board Questionnaire

Board Composition and Responsibility	1	2	3	4
	<p>Board membership is drawn from a narrow spectrum; members have little or no relevant experience. Meetings are infrequent and/or poorly attended and undocumented. Board does not have TOR or a clear understanding of its key functions. Board term limits are not defined or are unreasonable. There is no process for electing officers.</p>	<p>Board membership is drawn from a somewhat broad spectrum; some members have relevant experience. Meetings are well planned and occur at regular intervals, but attendance and/or documentation is irregular. Board has TOR and a clear understanding of its key functions, but those functions are carried out inconsistently. Board term limits not defined or are unreasonable. There is no process for electing officers.</p>	<p>Board membership is drawn from a broad spectrum; all members have relevant experience. Meetings are well planned, documented and occur at regular intervals with good attendance. The board has clear TOR and a good understanding of its key functions and those functions are mostly carried out. Board term limits are defined and reasonable. Officers are informally selected.</p>	<p>Board membership is drawn from a broad spectrum; all members have relevant experience. Board displays a high willingness and proven track record of investing in learning about the organization and addressing its issues. Meetings are well planned, documented and occur at regular intervals with excellent attendance. Board has clear TOR and a good understanding of its key functions and those key functions are all consistently carried out. Board term limits are defined and reasonable.</p>

				Officers are elected/appointed according to board procedures.
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Board Composition and Responsibility	
Score	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Composition:</b> Review of the board membership list and/or discussions with leadership indicate that board member backgrounds are narrow or not relevant to the organization</li> <li>• <b>Oversight:</b> Board meets infrequently</li> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Board meetings are undocumented</li> <li>• <b>Roles:</b> Responses to board member questionnaires indicate that board members do not have a clear understanding of the board's key functions including fundraising, financial oversight and executive recruitment and guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> Term limits are not defined or are unreasonable. Processes are not in place for formally electing officers</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Composition:</b> Review of the board membership list and/or discussions with leadership indicate that board member backgrounds are somewhat diverse and are generally relevant to the organization</li> <li>• <b>Oversight:</b> Board meets regularly but attendance is inconsistent</li> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Board meeting minutes are documented irregularly</li> <li>• <b>Roles:</b> Responses to board member questionnaires indicate that board members have a clear understanding of the board's key functions including fundraising, financial oversight and executive recruitment and guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> Term limits are not defined or are unreasonable. Processes are not in place for formally electing officers</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Composition:</b> Review of the board membership list and/or discussions with leadership indicate that board member backgrounds are broad and relevant to the organization</li> <li>• <b>Oversight:</b> Board meets regularly and has good attendance</li> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Board meeting minutes are regularly documented</li> <li>• <b>Roles:</b> Responses to board member questionnaires indicate that board members have a clear understanding of the board's key functions including fundraising, financial oversight and executive recruitment and guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> term limits are defined and are reasonable. Processes are not in place for formally electing officers</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Composition:</b> Review of the board membership list and/or discussions with leadership indicate that board member backgrounds are broad and relevant to the organization</li> <li>• <b>Oversight:</b> Board meets regularly and has good attendance; board members show a strong commitment to understanding the organization, its operations and issues and to promptly addressing issues.</li> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> Board meeting minutes are regularly documented</li> <li>• <b>Roles:</b> Responses to board member questionnaires indicate that board members have a clear understanding of the board's key functions including fundraising, financial oversight and executive recruitment and guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Governance:</b> Term limits are defined and are reasonable. Processes are in place for electing or appointing officers and these are adhered to</li> </ul>

## Legal Status

**Objective:** The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's legal standing, and therefore sustainability, by checking legal registration and compliance with local tax and labor laws.

**Resources:** Registration; where possible and feasible: Local Tax Laws and Local Labor Laws

Legal Status	1	2	3	4
	Organization is not legally registered, registration is expired, or organization does not know its legal status and labor laws and is not aware of its tax status and or is not paying taxes.	Organization has applied for legal status but is not currently a legally recognized entity in the country in which it operates. Organization is aware of tax status and labor laws but is not fully compliant.	Organization is legally registered and is aware of tax status, but is not always compliant with tax obligations and/or labor laws.	Organization is legally registered, is aware of tax status and is fully compliant with tax obligations and labor laws.

Legal Status	
Score	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> the organization has no documented legal registration or registration is expired;</li> <li>• <b>Tax status:</b> Organization is unaware of tax status, labor laws and/or has never paid employment taxes before</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> The organization is in the process of seeking legal registration;</li> <li>• <b>Tax status:</b> Organization has unclear tax status and/or has not paid employee taxes in accordance with local laws in the past</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> The organization has documented legal registration, but it is not relevant to the organization's current operations;</li> <li>• <b>Tax status:</b> Organization is aware of its tax status but is not consistently in accordance with local laws in the past</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Documentation:</b> The organization has documented legal registration that is relevant to its current operations and programs;</li> <li>• <b>Tax status:</b> Organization is aware of its tax status and is always compliant with local laws</li> </ul>

## Succession Planning

**Objective:** The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's ability to continue smooth operations and program management in the event of an absence of or shift in leadership.

**Resources:** Job descriptions of senior management, Succession Plan, and Organizational Chart

Succession Planning	1	2	3	4
	Very strong dependence on CEO/executive director, organization would cease to exist without his/her presence. There is no plan for how the organization will continue if the CEO/ED (Executive Director) leaves.	High dependence on CEO/executive director; organization would continue to exist without his/her presence, but likely in a very different form or with significant drops in capability and quality. There is no plan for how the organization will continue if the CEO/ED leaves.	Limited dependence on CEO/executive director; organization would continue in a similar way without his/her presence, but fundraising operations and/or program quality would suffer significantly during the transition. A plan for how organization will continue should the CEO/ED leave exists, but no member of management could potentially take on CEO/ED role.	Reliance but not dependence on CEO/ED; A clear succession plan exists. A smooth transition to new leader could be expected; fund-raising, operations and program quality would continue without major problems; senior management team can fill in during transition time; one or more members or the management team could take on the CEO/ED role if needed.

Governance: Succession Planning	
Score	Criteria
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reliance:</b> the organization is entirely dependent on the current CEO/ED, CEO/ED effectively runs the organization, maintaining knowledge and control over financial and program management to the total exclusion of other management staff (or no other management staff).</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> Organizational operations and programs would collapse without the CEO/ED</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> The organization does not have a succession plan</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reliance:</b> The organization is highly dependent on the CEO/ED. CEO/ED has control/sole oversight over financial and program management and fundraising. Little authority, skill or capability in these areas among other management staff.</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> Organizational operations and programs would suffer declines in functionality and quality in the absence of the CEO but would likely continue</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> The organization has a very basic succession plan</li> </ul>

<p><b>3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reliance:</b> The organization has limited dependence on the CEO/ED. The CEO/ED has significant oversight but not sole control of key processes such as financial planning and spending and program planning and management. S/he has full control of fundraising and controls information of funding sources and approaches.</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> Organization would continue functioning in more or less the same fashion without the CEO/ED, but fundraising and program quality would suffer</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> The organization has a succession plan</li> <li>• <b>Internal Capacity:</b> No other member of management could step in (either in interim or long-term) to keep the organization functioning</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reliance:</b> The organization relies but is not dependent on the COE/ED. CEO/ED may be consulted/ have a decision-making role on key processes, financial planning and spending, program planning and management etc. but is not actively in control of all those processes. Fundraising responsibility and knowledge is diversified in the organization</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> The organization would continue to function well without the CEO/ED, fundraising not be interrupted and program quality would be maintained</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> The organization has a succession plan</li> <li>• <b>Internal Capacity:</b> One or more members of the management team could step in(either in interim or long-term) to keep the organization functioning</li> </ul>