Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)

Facilitator Guide

Organizational Management 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 (DOSA) 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.

Administration

Objective: The objective of this section is to assess the organization to operate in a systematic manner, coordinate and partner with others and grow by examining its planning processes, management of external relations, information management, and processes for identifying and capitalizing on new opportunities.

Strategic Planning

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's ability to realize its mission and goals by reviewing its strategic plan.

Strategic Planning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	No strategic plan exists for the organization	The organization has a strategic plan but it does not reflect its vision, mission and values; is not based on an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, external environment and client needs; does not include priority areas, measurable objectives, clear strategies, or is not used for management decisions or operational planning and is not regularly reviewed.	The organization has a written strategic plan that reflects its mission, is based on a review of strengths and weaknesses, the external environment and client needs, states priority areas, and measurable objectives, and clear strategies, but is not referred to for management decisions or operational planning and is not regularly reviewed.	The organization has a written strategic plan that reflects its mission, is based on a review of strengths and weaknesses, the external environment and client needs, states priority areas and measurable objectives, is referred to for management decisions and operational planning and is regularly reviewed

Strategic Planning	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Documentation:** A strategic plan has not been developed
2	• **Documentation:** A basic strategic plan exists • **Completeness:** The strategic plan is incomplete. It does not reflect the organization's vision/mission, was not developed based on an analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses (an organizational assessment and program review), does not clearly state priority areas or have measurable objectives • **Application:** The strategic plan is not used by management to make decisions or when developing operational plans and is not reviewed on a regular basis.
3	• **Documentation:** A solid strategic plan exists

	• **Completeness:** The strategic plan is comprehensive. It reflects the organization's vision/mission, was developed based on an analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses (an organizational assessment and program review), clearly states priority areas and has measurable objectives • **Application:** The strategic plan is not used by management to make decisions or when developing operational plans and is not reviewed on a regular basis
4	• **Documentation:** A solid strategic plan exists • **Completeness:** The strategic plan is comprehensive. It reflects the organization's vision/mission, was developed based on an analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses (an organizational assessment and program review), clearly states priority areas and has measurable objectives • **Application:** The strategic plan is used by management to make decisions or when developing operational plans and is reviewed on a regular basis

Workplan Development

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's readiness for program implementation by reviewing the content of annual workplan(s).
Resources: Annual organizational workplan(s)

Workplan Development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	The organization has an annual workplan but it does not have stated goals, measurable objectives, strategies, timeline, responsibilities and indicators, or those that are indicated are not adequate. Workplan is neither linked to a program budget nor developed with participation of staff and has no quarterly review plans	The organization has a workplan with stated goals, measurable objectives, and strategies, but has no stated timelines, responsibilities and indicators, and is neither linked to a program budget, nor developed with participation of staff and has no dates for quarterly review plans and is not submitted on time	The organization has a workplan with stated goals, measurable objectives, and strategies, stated timelines, responsibilities and indicators, and is linked to the program budget, but is not developed with participation of staff and has no dates for quarterly review plans and is not submitted on time	The organization has a workplan with stated goals, measurable objectives, and strategies, timelines, responsibilities and indicators, and is linked to the program budget, developed with participation of staff, has dates for quarterly reviews and is submitted on time

Workplan Development	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Documentation:** The organization may have project-related workplan(s) • **Completeness:** The workplan is incomplete. It does not have stated goals, measurable objectives, strategies, a timeline,

	defined responsibilities and indicators and/or • **Quality:** The workplan elements that exist are not adequate
2	• **Documentation:** The organization has project-related workplan(s) • **Completeness:** The workplan is incomplete. It does not have a timeline, defined responsibilities and indicators and/or • **Quality:** The workplan elements that exist are of acceptable quality
3	• **Documentation:** The organization has project-related workplan(s) • **Completeness:** The workplan is complete. It has stated goals, measurable objectives, strategies, a timeline, defined responsibilities and clear indicators • **Quality:** The workplan elements that exist are of acceptable quality • **Budget Linkages:** The workplan is linked to a program budget
4	• **Documentation:** The organization has project-related workplan(s) • **Completeness:** The workplan is complete. It has stated goals, measurable objectives, strategies, a timeline, defined responsibilities and clear indicators • **Quality:** The workplan elements that exist are of good quality, for example indicators relate to the program objectives and are reasonable and feasible • **Budget Linkages:** The workplan is linked to a program budget • **Staff Involvement:** The workplan was developed with participation of staff • **Application:** The workplan includes plans for and is reviewed on a quarterly basis to check for progress and up-dated • **Compliance:** The workplan was submitted in a timely manner.

Change Management

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's sustainability and relevance by reviewing its systems and processes for responding to emerging situations, reviewing programs and analyzing needs.

Change Management	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	The organization does not have a process to respond to internal changes, for example in staffing, leadership, budgets or to external changes such as government policies, security threats, etc.	The organization has a basic process to respond, when needs arise, to changes in the internal or external environment. It involves staff in adjustments to management systems and processes.	The organization has an established routine for involving staff in modifying existing policies, processes, programs, or plans to make ongoing program or administrative adjustments, and to managing staff involvement in implementing and responding to change	The organization has an established routine for involving staff in modifying existing policies, procedures, programs or plans to make ongoing program or administrative adjustments, and to managing staff involvement in implementing change and response to change. There is a review process for monitoring whether revisions are implemented and lead to

				improvements; staff comfort with changes is addressed

Change Management	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Systems:** The organization does not have a system to review or update policies (e.g. Personnel Policy, administrative policies) programs or plans (workplans/strategic plans) • **Responsiveness:** The organization experiences delays, problems in operations or in program implementation when personnel change, new programs are added, or external conditions shift.
2	• **Systems:** The organization has a basic system to review or update policies (e.g. Personnel Policy, administrative policies) programs or plans (workplans/strategic plans) that includes active involvement of staff • **Application:** The system is not applied • **Responsiveness:** The organization experiences delays, problems in operations or in program implementation when personnel change, new programs are added, or external conditions shift.
3	• **Systems:** The organization has a system to review or update policies (e.g. Personnel Policy, administrative policies) programs or plans (workplans/strategic plans) that includes active involvement of staff • **Application:** The system is applied (meetings are held, staff are informed and/or involved, changes are made) • **Responsiveness:** The organization experiences few delays, problems in operations or in program implementation when personnel change, new programs are added, or external conditions shift.
4	• **Systems:** The organization has a system to review or update policies (e.g. Personnel Policy, administrative policies) programs or plans (workplans/strategic plans) that includes active involvement of staff • **Application:** The system is applied (meetings are held, staff are involved, changes are made and staff response is managed) • **Responsiveness:** The organization experiences almost no delays, problems in operations or in program implementation when personnel change, new programs are added, or external conditions shift. • **Follow-up**: a review process is in place to monitor implementation of revisions or changes and whether the changes lead to desired improvements/outcomes.

Knowledge Management

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's ability to maintain a high standard of technical knowledge and implementation by reviewing linkages with other organizations and government agencies and its internal systems for sharing best practices.
Resources: Association memberships with technical organizations, staff reports on meetings attended

Knowledge Management	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	The organization has neither technical linkages with external organizations (government, national or international organizations) to share best practices or program experiences, nor an internal process for ensuring staff are continuously updated on best practices	The organization has either external linkages with organizations (e.g. government, national or international organizations) for best practices sharing or an internal sharing process but does not apply learning to the program or share these with stakeholders.	The organization has active external linkages and an internal process for sharing and plans to use best practices but has not implemented these plans or updated stakeholders and staff.	The organization has actively linked with external organizations (government, national or international organizations) and has an internal process to share technical expertise & experiences, has applied best practices to its program and shared this information with stakeholders and appropriate staff.

Knowledge Management	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Linkages:** The organization has no active technical linkages with external organizations. Technical linkages can include but should not be limited to: formal relationships with other organizations, government or private entities for service provision or technical consulting, informal links for information sharing, such as email for an association membership with organization focusing on same technical area. • **Staff Awareness:** Staff are not routinely updated on best practices or share lessons learned from their own programs either through meetings or reports
2	• **Linkages:** The organization has active technical linkages with external organizations OR • **Staff Awareness:** Staff are routinely updated on best practices and time is made to share lessons learned from their own programs either through meetings or reports • **Application:** New knowledge/best practices are not applied to ongoing programs or shared with stakeholders
3	• **Linkages:** The organization has active technical linkages with external organizations. **AND** • **Staff Awareness:** Staff are routinely updated on best practices, and share lessons learned from their own programs either through meetings or reports • **Application:** New knowledge/best practices are not applied to ongoing programs or shared with stakeholders

	• **Planning:** Annual planning process does not include a review of current best practices and discussion of how programs can be updated to reflect these best practices and systems for updating staff knowledge
4	• **Linkages:** The organization has active technical linkages with external organizations. **AND** • **Staff Awareness:** Staff are routinely updated on and share and adapt best practices from their own program and external organizations either through meetings or reports • **Application:** New knowledge/best practices are applied to ongoing programs and shared with stakeholders • **Planning:** Annual planning process includes a review of current best practices and discussion of how programs can be updated to reflect these best practices and systems for updating staff knowledge

Stakeholder Involvement

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's ability to coordinate programs and steward participatory planning processes.
Resources: List of key stakeholders, Stakeholder Report

Stakeholder Involvement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	The organization does not have information about key stakeholders and service providers in the area (geographic and technical) in which it operates	The organization has some information about stakeholders and service providers in the area (geographic and technical) in which it operates, but this is incomplete and out of date.	The organization has current information about all key stakeholders working in the same geographic and technical area, has identified where they are, what they are doing and their expectations, and how/if they can collaborate, but does not hold regular meetings with these stakeholders	The organization has complete and up to date information about all key stakeholders working in same geographic and technical area and, where appropriate, has collaborative agreements; stakeholders participate in at least yearly reviews of the relevant activities & strategy and the impact on the organization's area of operation.

Stakeholder Involvement	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Documentation:** The organization does not have a list of key stakeholders
2	• **Documentation:** The organization has a list of key stakeholders • **Quality:** The list is incomplete and/or out of date

3	• **Documentation:** The organization has a list of key stakeholders • **Quality:** The list is complete and up to date • **Application:** The organization does not hold regular meetings or share progress reports with key stakeholders to discuss service provision, advocacy, linkages/coordination and best practices.
4	• **Documentation:** The organization has a list of key stakeholders • **Quality:** The list is complete and up to date • **Application:** The organization holds regular meetings and shares progress reports with key stakeholders to discuss service provision, advocacy, linkages/coordination and best practices.

New Opportunity Development for Sustainability

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess the organization's sustainability by reviewing its ability to identify and capitalize on new business opportunities through grants and partnerships.
Resources: Business Development Plan and or Resources Development Plan, Funding strategy

New Opportunity Development for Sustainability	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	The organization has not estimated its future resource needs and has taken no steps to identify additional local, national or international resources or opportunities to support its programs and activities, either directly or through potential partnerships.	The organization has taken preliminary steps to estimate future resource needs based on an analysis of its program and has identified additional resource providers or opportunities & has learned about their interests & potential support, but has not yet managed to attract resources.	The organization knows the resources that it needs based on an analysis of its programs, has identified resource providers and has either already managed to gain support from at least one source or has a clear plan for fundraising or proposal writing, but does not have sufficient funds to support activities.	The organization knows the resources that it needs based on an analysis of its programs, has identified resource providers and has development plan for obtaining resources and has successfully bid for resources from one or more sources. The organization has sufficient funds to support activities.

New Opportunity Development for Sustainability	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Documentation:** The organization has no business plan or funding strategy for potential scale up or new program development • **Assessment:** The organization has not estimated its future resource needs or identified funding resources
2	• **Documentation:** The organization has a no business plan • **Assessment:** The organization has done basic analysis of resource needs and has a preliminary list of potential funders • **Funding/resources:** The organization has not yet gained resources and funding from potential donors

3	• **Documentation:** The organization has a no business plan or has a basic plan but it is not based on analysis of current program needs and future program interests • **Assessment:** The organization has conducted an analysis of its programs and knows financial requirements of its program development and has a strategy for how these finances will be sourced. • **Funding/Resources:** The organization has gained some funding and resources from donors and/or has a clear plan for gaining additional funding, but the organization currently does not have sufficient funds to operate all its programs.
4	• **Documentation:** The organization has a clear business plan • **Assessment:** The organization has conducted an analysis of its programs and knows financial requirements of its program development and has a strategy for how these finances will be sourced. • **Funding/Resources:** The organization has gained funding and resources from several donors and has a clear plan for gaining additional funding. The organization has sufficient funds to support current programs and any planned program expansions.

Communication

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to review the organization's internal communication approach to function effectively, maximize efficiency and foster creativity by reviewing internal dynamics.
Resources: Staff Questionnaires

Communication	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	Communication is limited between and among management and staff; few opportunities exist to exchange ideas or discuss management, program or technical issues. Staff ideas are not sought or respected; staff do not raise issues	Communication opportunities for discussion between and among management and staff exist but are rarely used. Staff are listened to but their input is not actively sought; staff feel uncomfortable raising issues	Communication between and among management and staff is open, regular opportunities for discussion on management, program or technical areas exist; staff ideas are sought and incorporated but staff are not comfortable raising challenging issues	Communication between and among management and staff is open, regular opportunities are created to exchange ideas or discuss management, program or technical issues. Staff initiate discussion, contribute ideas and feel comfortable raising issues

Communication	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **System:** No system exists for regular communication among management and staff, • **Openness:** Organizational culture inhibits free flow of informal communication and staff do not feel comfortable raising issues

	• **Staff Voice:** Staff ideas are not sought by management or respected.
2	• **System:** A system exists for regular communication among management and staff, but it is not put into practice • **Openness:** Organizational culture allows for some flow of informal communication but staff do not feel comfortable raising issues • **Staff Voice:** Staff are listened to by management, but their ideas are not sought or respected.
3	• **System:** A system exists for regular communication among management and staff and is followed regularly • **Openness:** Organizational culture allows formal and informal communication, but staff do not feel comfortable raising issues • **Staff Voice:** Staff are listened to by management and their ideas are sought, respected and incorporated into decision making.
4	• **System:** A system exists for regular communication among management and staff and is followed regularly • **Openness:** Organizational culture encourages openness and allows for formal, informal and transparent communication; staff feel comfortable initiating discussions and raising issues • **Staff Voice:** Staff are listened to by management and their ideas are sought, respected and incorporated into decision making.

Decision Making

Objective: The Objective of this sub-section is to assess how the organization makes decisions, who is involved and how decisions are communicated.
Resources: Staff Questionnaires

Decision Making	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
	Staff are not part of the decision making process; their input is rarely sought; decisions affecting the organization are not communicated or explained	Staff ideas are sometimes sought for making decisions, but decisions are not consistently communicated or explained.	Staff ideas are encouraged but seldom incorporated into decisions; Decisions are explained but staff do not fully participate in the decision making process	Staff ideas are sought, respected and incorporated into the decision making process, staff share a sense of responsibility, accountability and ownership of the decision making process.

Decision Making	
Score	**Criteria**
1	• **Process:** Controlled by leadership or Management • **Openness:** Closed • **Staff Voice:** Staff feel excluded
2	• **Process:** Controlled from above with minimal input from staff • **Openness:** Lacks clarity and rationale, staff don't understand when they can share their views, management listens but shows little interest • **Staff Voice:** Staff feel they play a minor role
3	• **Process:** Controlled from above but allows some input from staff • **Openness:** Open and clear, staff understand when they can share their views, management listens and shows some interest • **Staff Voice:** Staff feel they are not full participants in the decision making process
4	• **Process:** Controlled from above but with input of staff actively sought and used by management • **Openness:** Open and guided, staff understand when they can share their views, management is eager to listen and incorporate staff insights and/or ideas • **Staff Voice:** Staff feel empowered and accountable