OA PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Effectiveness

How effective is the organization in moving towards its mission and goals?

- What are the performance components that are identified in the material from the organization that is being assessed? Look at:
  - mission statement
  - mandate
  - charter
  - goal statements
  - other (strategies, law, etc.)

- Are the components you found in the documents suitable to the normal role the organization is supposed to play?

- What are the indicators the organization uses to measure its performance? E.g. what are the quantitative and qualitative indicators associated with its mission statement, mandate, charter, other documents etc.?

- Is data available (evidence) that can be used to analyze the effectiveness of the organization? If so, profile the effectiveness.

- What are the bases for quantitative and qualitative judgments used by the organization (i.e. benchmarks, criteria, norms)?

- Are the bases for quantitative and qualitative judgments used by the organization accepted by key stakeholders?

- Are there priorities among the various effectiveness performance components? Are these used for creating policies and programs?

Efficiency

How efficient is the organization?

- Does the organization identify ways to assess its efficiency? (This is a set of ratios which would compare its inputs to various results.)

- What are the efficiency components? (e.g. cost per client, staff per client served, overhead to overall budget, cost per outputs, cost per outcomes, percentage of overall government budget, percentage of GDP, etc.).

- If the organization does not identify ways to assess its efficiency, can you identify such components?

- Are there adequate indicators and data available to assess the efficiency of the organization? If so, create a list of indicators. If not, what do you need?

- Are the efficiency components used by the organization standard for the industry or sector? Which are missing?

- Does the organization have benchmarks, norms or other criteria to assess efficiency in order to make judgments?

- Are there set priorities among the various efficiency performance components?

Relevance

Has the organization kept its relevance over time?

- Are the key stakeholders satisfied with the way the organization is performing?

- Are clients satisfied? funders? citizens? staff? business leaders? government officials? others?

- What are the key indicators used by the organization to monitor its performance? Are there adequate indicators and data to assess the relevance?

- Are the key stakeholders in agreement with the mission and strategy? (Do key stakeholders agree on the direction the organization is taking?)

- Do key stakeholders agree with new and/or proposed innovative programs and activities?

- Are there new technologies being introduced and accepted by the organization to meet stakeholder requirements?

- What are the organization's benchmarks, norms or criteria for judging relevance? If there are none, are there some that are reasonable to use?

Financial Viability

Is the organization financially viable?

- To what extent is the level of funding suitable for the mission and priorities of the organization?

- Has there been continued and sustained support from existing sources of revenue?

- Are there adequate funds to support existing programs, operating costs and capital requirements?

- What % of new funds is set aside for:
  - programs?
  - marketing?
  - investments?

- To what extent has the organization obtained the funds it requested?

- To what extent is the organization reliant on sources of revenue that are not stable?

- Over the last 3 years, to what extent has the organization spent more than it received?

- To what extent are infrastructure and equipment assets being adequately maintained and replaced?

- To what extent can the organization raise funds for:
  - operating?
  - development?
  - capital?

- What are the organization's financial priorities?

- How are the priorities determined?

- When are they determined? Periodically?

- What standards are used to guide the setting of financial priorities?

- If the organization does not have a means of assessing its financial viability, create a financial viability performance profile by:
  - creating a list of possible benchmarks
  - developing indicators
  - gathering data

Motivation Assessment Questions

History

What are the memorable events in the organization's history?

- the milestones?
- the successes?
- the crises?

How has the organizational history affected the performance of the organization?

Mission and vision

To what extent does a mission and vision drive the behaviour of the organization's members?

- Is there a clear mission and vision driving the behaviour of the organization's members?
- Are the organization's mission and vision congruent with the organization's goals and other key documents, thereby supporting aligned behaviour?
- Have the organization's members accepted the mission and vision, and do they feel that it is one to which they ascribe?
- Have the mission and vision been reviewed recently?
- Are the key values and beliefs driving the behaviour of the organization's members linked to the mission and vision?
- Does the new staff embody the mission and vision?

How are the mission and vision of the organization affecting its performance?

Culture

What aspects of the organization's culture move it towards fulfilling its mission?

- Are there documents that describe and assess the organizational values that managers use to manage?
- Do the people in the organization identify with the organizational values?
- Is the morale in the organization good?
- Is there a high commitment to performance in the organization?
- Is there a positive attitude towards teamwork in the organization?
- Is there a positive attitude towards change in the organization?
- Are there functioning systems in place that reinforce organizational values, such as promotions, incentives, or training?
- Are decisions made in a transparent way?
- Are there biases – positive or negative – towards specific groups in the organization (women, ethnic groups, etc.)
- Does the organization promote equity amongst the workforce in its policies and in practice?
- Does the organization value participation?

- Do the values and beliefs expressed by the actions of senior managers support organizational performance?
- Do the staff and managers live the mission and vision?

How does the culture affect organizational performance?

Incentive/Rewards

Does the incentive/reward system encourage or discourage the performance of the organization's members?

- Do people feel rewarded for their work?
- Are people adequately compensated?
- Do non-monetary rewards support good organizational behavior?
- Is the incentive system managed adequately?
- Is there an ongoing review of the incentive system?
- Is there equity in the way people are treated in the organization?
- Is there a consistency between what people are rewarded for and what the organization says it will reward?

How does the incentive/reward system affect performance?

Capacity Assessment Questions

In our model we consider eight capacities that can affect the performance of an organization: strategic leadership; structure; human resources management; financial management; infrastructure; programs and services; process management; inter-organizational linkages.

Capacity #1: Strategic Leadership

Leadership

To what extent does strategic leadership affect the organization's performance?

- Do people feel goal-oriented?
- Is leadership distributed appropriately?
- Is leadership concerned about getting significant activities done well?
- Is the organization appropriately linked externally?
- Is leadership respected?
- Are staff willing to take on leadership activities?
- Are people willing to express new ideas to those in positions of power?
- Do the board and management work well together?
- Is the organization's place amongst "peer organizations" seen as important?
- Is leadership effective in acquiring and protecting resources?
- Does leadership practice participatory management?
- Is leadership flexible?
- Does leadership welcome change?

Strategic Planning

To what extent does strategic planning affect the organization's ability to achieve its goals?

- Is there a strategic plan?
- Is the strategy known by the board, senior managers, and staff?
- Is the strategy generally accepted and supported in the organization?
- Has the strategy helped clarify priorities, thus giving the organization a way to assess its performance?
- Is the strategy used as a way of helping to make decisions?
- Does the strategy improve performance?
- Does the strategy support equity?
- Does the strategy help the organization to use resources effectively?
- Is there a process for clarifying and revising the organization's mission and beliefs, for working on its goals, and for understanding its clients and users?
- Is there a process for scanning the environment in order to consider potential threats and opportunities?
- Does the organizational strategy help identify the opportunities and constraints regarding financial resources and infrastructure?
- Is there a process for monitoring the application of the strategy?
- Is there a similar process for understanding client and stakeholder requirements and changes?

- Is there a process for ongoing review and update of the organization's strategy to reflect the realities in the organization and its environment?

Niche Management

Is the organization's understanding and management of its niche affecting organizational performance?

- Is the organization's role or area of specialization understood by its constituents (stakeholders)?
- Is the role of the organization clearly defined in its mission?
- Are the areas of specialization clear?
- Are the areas of specialization supported by stakeholders?
- Do the areas of specialization integrate gender concerns?
- Does research and development occur to strengthen the unique role of the organization?

Capacity #2: Structure

Operational Structure

Is the organizational structure facilitating or hindering movement towards the mission and goals?

- Are the organization's mission and goals supported by its structures?
- Are the roles within the organization clearly defined, yet flexible enough to adapt to changing needs?
- Are departmental lines or divisions between groups crossed easily, particularly in cases when collaboration means an improved product, program or service?
- Is structural authority used to further issues of equity?
- Do staff have linkages with/access to other units in the organization important to their work?
- Are there coordinating mechanisms facilitating access to other units within the organization?
- Can staff create important coordinating units with ease?
- Are efficient means for coordinating staff and units encouraged?
- Are there clear lines of accountability (individual, group, and organizational)?
- Do people have the authority to set agendas that support accountability?
- Are there efficiently functioning work groups?
- Is decision-making sufficiently de-centralized to promote productivity and good morale?
- Does the structure relating to responsibility for performance make organizational sense and facilitate work?

Governance

To what extent does governance affect the organization's performance?

- Does the governing structure both clarify and support organizational direction?
- Does the charter provide an adequate framework for carrying out the mission of the organization and for dealing adequately with the external forces challenging the organization?
- Does the governing body scan the external and internal environment in order to understand the forces affecting the organization?
- Does the governing body respond appropriately to important environmental trends and influences, be these social, political, or economic? For instance, are both quality and equality issues reflected in the minutes and discussions? Does the governing body support principles of equity?

- Does the governing body operate effectively and efficiently?
- Is there a discrepancy between the charter and senior management's view regarding the mission and mandate of the organization?

Capacity #3: Human Resources Management

Human Resources Planning

To what extent does the organization's ability to plan for its human resources needs affect its performance?

- Are the right people in the right jobs in the organization?
- Does the organization have the ability to forecast current and future demands for human resources?
- Does the organization know how and where to identify people with the skills needed to fill its needs?
- Is the organization able to link its mission and goals to its human resource planning?
- Does the organization have a personnel policy manual and does it follow it?

Staffing

To what extent does the organization have adequate staffing procedures to ensure its performance?

- Is there a staffing system in the organization?
- Does the organization have appropriate job descriptions or equivalents to determine what it is staffing for?
- Does the organization have an appropriate system for selecting candidates (for example: reviewing curriculum vitae, conducting interviews, checking references, competitive panels)?
- Are individuals in charge of selection appropriately trained to carry out this function (interview and listening skills, politeness, good judgment)?
- Do the recruitment and selection materials (ads, posting, interview questions) allow the organization to recruit the best people from all available labour pools?
- Does the organization have an orientation program for new staff that discusses day-to-day function, as well as overall mission and goals of the organization?

Developing Human Resources

To what extent does the organization have appropriate human resources development systems and approaches to ensure its performance?

- Does the organization have a training and development policy as well as a budget for training?
- Does the organization encourage staff to continue to learn and develop (by providing incentives for learning, by supporting training costs, etc.)?
- Is someone in the organization able to identify training needs?
- Does the organization support application/ transfer of new learning on the job?
- Is training demand driven (responds to needs in the organization) as opposed to supply driven (responds to whatever is being offered by a training unit, on the market or by a donor)?
- Can and does the organization assess training and its effect on the organization's performance?
- Does the organization have plans for mentoring younger staff in their careers?
- Do people see career opportunities in the organization?

- In spite of top management changes (retirement, rationalization, etc.) is the organization able to maintain its performance?

Assessment and Reward

To what extent does the organization have appropriate assessment and reward systems that are fair and motivating?
- Does the organization have a compensation policy that complies with the rules and regulations of the country?
- Does the staff see an adequate correlation between compensation and performance?
- Is the staff generally satisfied with its compensation?
- Are compensation packages externally competitive for the sector?
- Is there internal equity on salaries and benefits (i.e. equal compensation for work of equal value)?
- Are compensation differentials appropriate to motivate staff?
- Does the organization motivate staff with both monetary and non-monetary rewards?
- Is there equitable access to promotion and reward (i.e. regardless of race, gender, ethnic or religious group)?

Human Resources Relations

To what extent does the organization have effective human resources relations?
- Are there appropriate grievance procedures inside the organization?
- Are labour management relations constructive?
- Are there measures and procedures inside the organization to deal with people in emotional or physical distress?
- Does the organization seek ways to increase the loyalty and the commitment of staff?
- Is the morale in the organization generally good?
- Does the organization have measures in place to deal with harassment in the workplace?
- Does the organization have, if appropriate, an occupational health and safety policy?
- Are work-related accidents rare?

Capacity #4: Financial Management

Financial Planning

In the organization, is there adequate financial planning being undertaken to support performance?
- Is there adequate budgetary planning?
- Are budget plans timely?
- Are budget plans updated as financial information comes in?
- Are members of the governing body involved in financial planning and monitoring?
- Are human resources adequate to ensure good financial planning?
- Are the finances of grants or loans properly managed?
- Are budget comparisons (actual to planned) monitored and analyzed for decision-making?
- Are capital and equipment forecasts made appropriately?
- Are reports provided to senior managers, the Board, and funders on a regular basis (at least once a quarter)?
- Is financial information given in a timely fashion to those who need it?

Financial Accountability

Is the organization sufficiently financially accountable?

- Are the auditors of the organization satisfied with the controls of cash and assets being utilized by the financial managers?
- Is there a clearly stated year-end date?
- Does the Board review financial statements on a regular basis?
- Are there competent staff and Board members who can interpret financial information?
- Is financial information contextualized within a strategic or business plan?
- Is there a Board committee to oversee financial issues?

Financial Statements and Systems

In the organization, are financial statements and systems appropriate to support performance?

- Is there an adequate bookkeeping system?
- Is there adequate staff to record financial information?
- Are balance sheets and income and expense statements prepared at least quarterly?
- Is there a procedure to control and record the assets of the organization?
- Are cash flow statements prepared?
- Is cash managed so that the organization can benefit when there is surplus and minimize the cost of cash shortages?

Capacity #5: Infrastructure

Facilities

Is the facilities infrastructure adequate to support performance?

- Does the organizational strategy identify the opportunities and constraints regarding infrastructure?
- Are the buildings and services (e.g. water, electricity) at the administrative center adequate to support and facilitate daily work?
- Is there an adequate transportation system to and from work for employees?
- Are communications systems (hardware) functioning at the level required?
- Are there adequate maintenance systems and procedures supported by an ongoing maintenance budget?
- Is the infrastructure, including building and equipment maintenance, being managed effectively and efficiently?
- Is there an individual or a group responsible for adequate planning to address ongoing infrastructure concerns?

Technology Resources

To what extent do technology resources affect the organization's performance?

- Is there adequate technological planning?
- Overall, is the organization's level of technology appropriate to carry out its functions?
- Is there no one unit seriously lagging behind the others in the level of technology needed to carry out its work?
- Is access to international information provided to all units through library and information management systems?

- Are there adequate systems and training in place for managing the organizational technology?
- Are there adequate information technologies in place to manage the organization?

Given your experience, are there additional infrastructure issues that can affect performance? Please list.

Capacity #6: Program and Services Management

Program and Services Planning

To what extent does the organization plan its programs and services appropriately?

- Is there a written plan for each program and services area and each major project?
- Are program, services and project plans linked to the organizational mission?
- Are there adequate program and services planning and budget programming activities to ensure that programs support the mission?
- Are the programs, services and projects consistent with the mission, needs, strategies and priorities of the organization?
- Does program and services planning take into account technological, economic, gender, social and environmental aspects to ensure applicability of programs and services?
- Are there adequate timelines?
- Are there adequate budgets?
- Is there an adequate analysis of roles and responsibilities?
- Is there a procedure outlined to monitor results?

Program and Services Implementation

To what extent does the organization implement its programs and services appropriately?

- Is there support for staff getting programs and services accomplished, and products and services to clients/beneficiaries?
- Are there good relationships among the staff that provide products and services?
- Do staff work together to provide good products and services?
- Does the program and services team have good problem-solving skills?
- Are health and safety for staff and clients always a priority in implementation?
- Are resources used efficiently to provide the product or service?
- Are schedules adhered to in a reasonable fashion?
- Is the staff motivated to work together to get things done?

Program and Services Monitoring and Evaluation

To what extent does the organization monitor its program and services appropriately?

- Are there monitoring and evaluation systems in place?
- Are program and services staff given feedback on program and services performance?
- Are there adequate opportunities to clarify roles and responsibilities?
- Are there adequate opportunities to review program and services indicators to measure progress against plans?
- Are timelines monitored to reduce overruns?
- Are budgets reviewed in a timely fashion?
- Are programs and services reviewed on a regular basis with respect to how they contribute to the overall organizational strategy?
- Are lessons encouraged?
- Are corrective actions taken when difficulties arise?
- Are monitoring and evaluation seen as ongoing and normal processes?

Capacity #7: Process Management

Planning

To what extent does the planning process contribute to the organization's performance?

- Are planning, policy and procedure development occurring in the organization at all levels, from the governing board to departments and individual projects?
- Does the process of planning contribute to the strategic direction of the organization?
- Are plans clear and do they provide adequate direction to organizational members?
- Are plans, policies and procedures generally followed?
- Is planning part of the organizational culture?
- Do organizational members feel involved in planning?
- Is planning linked to monitoring and evaluation?

Problem-solving and decision-making

Are the problem-solving and decision-making processes supporting the organization's capacity to carry out its functions?

- Is the implementation of work at various levels of the organization smooth-flowing?
- Are decisions made in a timely manner?
- Are performance gaps and opportunities identified in sufficient time to resolve them, and to the benefit of the individuals involved and the productivity of the organization?
- Are there problem-solving and decision-making mechanisms in place?
- Are there adequate organizational problem-solving and decision-making skills on the governing board and within the ranks of senior managers?
- Are problem-solving and decision-making adequate in departments and for important projects?
- Do the staff feel empowered by the problem-solving and decision-making processes?

- Does the staff try to solve problems and avoid disasters?

Communication

Is the communication system effective in supporting performance?

- Do people in the organization feel there is adequate, ongoing communication about the organization's activities?
- Do staff members receive information related to the organization's mission and about progress in fulfilling the mission?
- Does Information circulating in the organization about activities rarely become distorted?
- Are there corrective mechanisms to remedy rumors?
- Do people have easy access to those in the organization with whom they must deal, and can they easily communicate with them?
- Is there adequate written communication?
- Are meetings viewed as productive ways of communicating?
- Is technological communication used adequately?
- Is two-way communication encouraged?
- Is multi-channel communication used often?
- Is listening valued?
- Is cultural diversity considered when communicating?

Organizational Monitoring and Evaluation

Is adequate organizational monitoring and evaluation occurring to improve performance?

- Are there policies and procedures that guide evaluation and monitoring?
- Are resources assigned to monitoring and evaluation?
- Are monitoring and evaluation valued at all levels in the organization as ways to learn and to improve performance?
- Is data obtained and used to monitor and evaluate the organization's units and activities?
- Is data gathered through organizational monitoring and evaluation activities utilized?
- Do evaluation plans or performance monitoring frameworks exist?
- Are evaluation results mentioned in strategy, program and services, policy and budgetary documents?
- Do people have the skills to monitor and evaluate?
- Are monitoring and evaluation valued processes?
- Are lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation, and do changes occur as a result?

Capacity #8: Inter-organizational Linkages

Networks, Partnerships, Coalitions

Are external linkages adequately established or pursued to support performance?

- Does the organization have adequate formal and informal linkages with like-minded organizations?
- Are organizational linkages adequately supported?
- Do organizational linkages contribute to the organizational goals and mission in an efficient way?
- Are there fruitful, ongoing partnerships with external organizations that bring new ideas and/or resources to the organization?
- Is the organization communicating information about its work to external stakeholders, including the general public?

Electronic Linkages

Are external technological linkages adequately established or pursued to support the organization's performance?

- Is the organization linked electronically to the external world of colleagues, clients, markets (users) such that these relationships are active and beneficial?
- Are electronic networks supported financially and technically?
- Do electronic networks effectively respond to the needs, shared interests, and capabilities of the organization?
- Are electronic networks supporting new efficient practices?
- Are there fruitful, ongoing partnerships with external organizations that bring new ideas and/or resources to the organization?
- Is the organization communicating information about its work to external stakeholders, including the general public?

Environment Assessment Questions

Administrative/Legal Environment

How is the organization affected by the administrative/legal environment?

Administrative

- Has the organization identified other institutions/organizations/groups to which it relates or might be expected to relate?
- Has the organization been identified as influential / important to the sector by consumers, policy makers, suppliers, competitors and by other organizations in its external environment?
- Are the organization's objectives complementary to those of other organizations?
- Do the norms and values of the organization support the work that it intends to carry out?
- Are there useful (formal & informal) conflict resolution systems?
- Is the organization affected by bureaucracy (red tape)?

Legal

- Has the organization clearly defined the role played by its legal framework?
- Does the legal framework support the organization's autonomy?
- Is the organization's legal framework clear?
- Is the legal framework consistent with current practice?
- Is the legal regulatory context conducive to work?
- Is relevant legislation up to date?
- Is the judicial system responsive?
- Is the organization affected by: labour legislation? a regulatory framework? environmental laws? a public service Commission? public sector reform? global and regional agreements and standards?

Political Environment

How is the organization affected by the political environment?

- Do the political-ideological trends of the government support the kind of work the organization does?
- Does the government system facilitate collaborative arrangements?
- Does the organization have a role to play in national or sector development?
- How motivated is the organization to play its role in national or sector development?
- Does the organization have access to government funding?
- Does the organization have access to international funding?
- Does the organization have access to government knowledge and publications?
- Are there government policies and programs supporting the organization?
- What form of government is involved in the organization's internal affairs?
- What is the government's level of involvement in the organization's internal affairs?

- What effect do international relations have on the organization?
- How much does the government allow civil society to participate in its decision-making process?
- What is the level of political stability?
- How tolerant is the government of risk and the ability to manage change?
- How do political groups apply pressure to the government to affect policy and priorities?
- To what extent is the organization affected by political corruption, violence, or strikes?
- How responsive is the government system to the organization's needs and issues?

Social/Cultural Environment

How is the organization affected by the social/cultural environment?

- Does the organization take into account the effect of culture on program complexity?
- Do the values found in the social/cultural environment support the work of the organization?
- Does the organization have access to a pool of capable human resources from which it can recruit staff?
- Is the organization affected by:
    - Religious / ethnic / gender / class customs and biases?
    - Cultural values / norms (cricket, Christmas holidays)?
    - Violence and crime?
    - Security issues on project sites?
    - Nepotism?
    - Corruption?
    - Chronic diseases - health - nutrition (can be a whole new category)?
    - Cultural behavior?
    - Pre-conceived attitudes toward donor agencies?
    - Political / social instability (dons, mafias…)?

Economic Environment

How is the organization affected by the economic environment?

- Does economic policy support the organization's ability to acquire technologies and financial resources?
- Is money available to do work?
- Do donors give their support?
- Is budget allocation adequate for the organization's work?
- Is external financing available?
- Are there supportive monetary and fiscal policies (including interest rates)?
- Is the debt burden restrictive?
- Are emerging markets conducive?
- Does stable currency exist?
- Is there a competitive market environment?
- Are policies and programs threatened by the informal sector?

- Is the economic growth rate supportive of development?

- Is the public service investment program reflective of government priorities?

- Is the tax policy regressive?

- What is the industrial relations climate?

- Are employment rates acceptable?

- Are trade agreements supportive of the country's comparative advantage (globalization and free market)?

- What effects is globalization having on the economy?

- What effects is globalization having on the organization?

- Are input costs restrictive?

- Is the financial sector conducive to economic development?

Technology Environment

Is the technology needed to carry out the organization's work supported by systems in the wider environment?

- Is there an adequate physical infrastructure (power, telecommunication, transport) to support the organization's work?

- Is the technology needed by the organization to carry out its work supported by the overall level of national technology development?

- Does the government system facilitate the organization's process of acquiring needed technology?

- Is there an adequate level of human resource development to support new technology?

- How reliable are available utilities, particularly electric power?

- How stable is the cost of available utilities?

- Are trainer resources available?

- What are the organization's networking capabilities?

- How adequate are the organization's data processing facilities?

- Does the organization have access to research?

Ecological and Geographic Environment

- Will the organization's services be affected by the occurrence of natural phenomena?

- Are the natural environmental conditions conducive and supportive of the organization's work, or do they impose additional costs or technical challenges?

- Does pollution affect the pace of the organization's work?

- How will environmental and natural resources policy and legislation affect the organization's performance?

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