

Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool

This Evaluation Capacity Diagnostic Tool is designed to help organizations assess their readiness to take on information on organizational context and the evaluation experience of staff and can be used in various work areas of capacity as well as areas for improvement. When administered at multiple points in time, it can allow evaluation capacity. In addition, this diagnostic can encourage staff to brainstorm about how their organization's existing evaluation experience and skills. Finally, the tool can serve as a precursor to evaluation activities.

This tool is intended to be completed by the person within your organization who is most familiar with your organization. It is possible that the director or CEO might be the most appropriate person. This tool can be self-administered or administered by an external evaluation consultant. Ideally, your organization should plan to self-administer the diagnostic and then hire a consultant to determine the areas that your organization might focus its evaluation capacity building efforts on.

NOTE: Quantifying the dimensions of capacity is an inexact process. Scores should be seen as rough approximations of a higher level of capacity than actually exists; respondents are not always aware of how much room there is for improvement. They think that it has effective knowledge, systems and practices in place, but once it learns about other tools or approaches, it may find itself as strong as it originally thought. The results of this exercise should also be interpreted in the context of the organization's current state.



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DIAGNOSTIC

Instructions: Choose your level of agreement with the following statements and enter it in the corresponding blue box in column I.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Organizational Culture & Practice Around Evaluation	Score
Our organization sees evaluation as a tool that is integral to our work .	
Our organization models a willingness to be evaluated by ensuring that evaluations, both their process and findings, are routinely conducted and visible to others within and outside of our organization.	
Our organization has an effective communication and reporting capability to explain evaluation processes and disseminate findings, both positive and negative, within and outside of our organization.	
Our organization promotes and facilitates internal staff members' learning and reflection in meaningful ways in evaluation planning, implementation and discussion of findings ("learning by doing").	
Our organization values learning , as demonstrated by staff actively asking questions, gathering information, and thinking critically about how to improve their work.	
Organizational Commitment & Support for Evaluation	Score
Key leaders in our organization support evaluation .	
Our organization has established clear expectations for the evaluation roles of different staff.	

Our organization ensures **that staff have the information and skills that they need** for successful participation in evaluation efforts (e.g., access to evaluation resources through websites and professional organizations, relevant training).

Our organization allows **adequate time and opportunities to collaborate on evaluation activities**, including, when possible, being physically together in an environment free from interruptions.

Our organization provides **financial support** (beyond what is allocated for evaluation through specific grants) **to integrate evaluation** into program activities.

Our organization has a **budget line item** to ensure ongoing evaluation activities.

Our organization has **existing evaluation data collection tools and practices** that we can apply/adapt to subsequent evaluations.

Our organization has **integrated evaluation processes** purposefully into ongoing organizational practices.

Using Data to Inform Ongoing Work

Score

Our organization **modifies its course of action based on evaluation findings** (e.g., changes to specific programs or organizational-wide changes).

Evaluation findings are integrated into decision making when deciding how to focus our work and what strategies to pursue.

Managers look to **evaluation** as one important input to help them **improve staff performance and manage for results**.

EVALUATION SKILLS OF STAFF

Existing Evaluation Knowledge & Experience

Score

Our organization has staff that have a **basic understanding of evaluation** (e.g., key evaluation terms, concepts, theories, assumptions).

Our organization has staff that are **experienced in designing evaluations** that take into account available resources, feasibility issues (e.g., access to and quality of data, timing of data collection) and information needs of different evaluation stakeholders.

Our organization can **identify which data collection methods are most appropriate for different outcome areas** (e.g., changes in norms require determining what people think about particular issues, so surveys, focus groups and interviews are appropriate).

Our organization has staff with experience **developing data collection tools and collecting data** utilizing a variety of strategies, such as focus group sessions, interviews, surveys, observations and document reviews.

Our organization has staff that know how to **analyze data and interpret what the data mean**.

Our organization has staff that are knowledgeable about and/or experienced at **developing recommendations** based on evaluation findings.

Developing a Conceptual Model for our Work/Designing Evaluation

Score

Our organization has **articulated how we expect change to occur** and how we expect specific activities to contribute to this change.

Our organization has **clarity about what we want to accomplish in the short term** (e.g., one to three years) and we agree on concrete examples of what success will look like.

Our organization has **articulated how our goals and strategies connect to broader change efforts**.

Our organization's **evaluation design has the flexibility** to adapt as needed to changes in external conditions affecting our work (e.g., political climate, economic conditions, policy environment). For example, evaluation benchmarks and indicators can be modified as the project evolves.

Our organization has **tools and methods for evaluating the dynamic or changing elements** of our work.

Defining Benchmarks & Indicators

Score

Our organization **measures outcomes, not just outputs**. Outputs are quantifiable activities, services or events while outcomes are measurable results or changes a program/organization would like to see take place over time and that stem directly from the intended result of specific strategies (e.g., an output might be the number of legislators attending a briefing event while an outcome would be the change in the legislators' behavior as a result of attending the event).

Our organization can identify **outcome indicators** that are important/relevant for our work.

Our organization has identified **what indicators are appropriate for measuring the impact of our work** (e.g., did our programs change attitudes?, did our interventions change policy?, did our efforts raise money or increase volunteer hours?, did our work result in more children in schools?).

Our organization can identify **what indicators are appropriate for measuring how we do our work** (e.g., has our organization strengthened its relationships with elected officials? Have we tested our assumption that "raising awareness" will result in changed behavior?).

Since many of the problems nonprofits tackle are multi-faceted and complex, and social change goals can take years to achieve, our organization **identifies and tracks interim outcomes that can be precursors of longer-term or more lasting change**, such as new and strengthened partnerships, higher program enrollment numbers, new donors, greater public support, and more media coverage, that tell us if we are making progress and are on the right track.

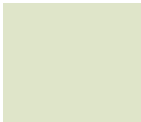
Now that you have finished entering your levels of agreement, move over to the "Scoring" sheet to see the breakdown of your score. For more interpretation on your score, see the "Your Score" sheet.

on many types of evaluation activities. It captures
ays. For example, the tool can pinpoint particularly strong
lso calibrate changes over time in an organization's
zation can enhance evaluation capacity by building on
with an external evaluation consultant.

ur evaluation efforts. Within small organizations, it is
d, but could also be completed with the assistance of an
d then have a follow-up conversation with an external
ts.

roximations. In addition, self-assessments often indicate
is for improvement. For example, an organization might
r practices, it might realize that its current capacity is not
ie organization's scope and stage of development.

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SCALE
Strongly Agree - 4
Agree - 3
Disagree - 2
Strongly Disagree - 1

SCALE

Strongly Agree - 4

Agree - 3

Disagree - 2

Strongly Disagree - 1