

Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)

Background

The past three decades have seen many international NGOs shift their programs from direct implementation to working through local structures and organisations. In so doing they took on the responsibility of building the capacity of their local, often very inexperienced partners in order to maximise the benefits accruing to the communities with whom these partners worked. With this shift in philosophy came a number of 'support' or 'intermediary' NGOs whose primary goal was to build the capacity of their partners. It was about this same time (late 1980s) when organisational development of the INGOs themselves also became 'fashionable'. Tools had been developed to measure the quality of program interventions at a community level, but little thought had been given at that time as to what constituted organisational capacity and how this could be measured. The Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) was first developed in Cambodia in 1997 for use by nascent local NGOs but has been subsequently modified for use in Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

Rationale

A core principle of those involved in facilitating organisational change and development is that change must come from within an organisation, and that this can often be encouraged by 'introducing an organisation to more of itself'; that is, by holding up a 'mirror' so that the various stakeholders can see their organisation as others see it. Once stakeholders are brought face-to-face with the deficiencies within their own organisation, they are very likely to want to do something to address them. Outsiders may see these areas of weakness or vulnerability and can facilitate the 'discovery' by the staff, but they cannot force the process or address these concerns directly. A presentation of weaknesses and solutions is unlikely to motivate staff and will most likely meet resistance. Staff need to discover these for themselves. This tool is primarily intended to facilitate self-discovery and not for use by staff of a support agency to assess the capacity of a partner organisation.

The components and indicators should be considered a guide and a "work in progress". Users of this tool should feel free to adapt the contents to their socio-political environment and/or partner profile. The worksheets need to be translated into local language(s), using words and expressions that are familiar to the intended users.

Limitations

The assessment tool appears to be highly prescriptive and reflects a certain (western) model of a well-functioning organisation. It is very important to decide whether the given criteria are relevant and desirable, or whether they need to be changed for certain types of organisations or settings. The value of this tool is in the discussions and commitments to change that it generates, rather than the exact nature of the standards. The skill of the facilitator is very important in achieving the right balance between process and product.

A strength and weakness of this tool is that it is highly subjective. It is a strength in that it encourages the airing and discussion of different perspectives that can lead to valuable insights into an organisation. The weakness is that the tool cannot readily be used to compare the capabilities or overall levels of development between organisations. The worksheets intentionally use a rating scale denoted by letters rather than numbers to discourage users from aggregating 'scores' and comparing themselves with other agencies, as if the total scores are somehow meaningful.

In using this tool there is a danger of focusing on organisational capacity at the expense or irrespective of the quality and impact of the program. Unless organisational changes are resulting in or leading to improved performance at the community level then they should be seriously questioned.

Possible uses

There are a number of uses that this tool can be put to, depending on the intent of the user. These are:

- i) *Structured reflection*. This tool introduces users to aspects of organisational capacity that they may not have previously considered. By calling on judgements to be made it encourages them to think deeply and reflect on the internal operations of their organisation.
- ii) *Awareness-raising*. People who have had limited opportunity to witness or experience strong, well-functioning organisations often “do not know what they don’t know.” This tool allows users to discover for themselves what skills and capabilities are possible and are needed in the future if they are to strengthen the functioning of their organisation.
- iii) *Internal discussion*. By bringing different people together and enabling each group to assess the organisation from their perspective, users can learn how different stakeholders value, measure and experience different aspects of an organisation’s capacity. For example, it provides an opportunity for management to gain an insight into the perspectives of their donors, governing body, their staff and even the communities with whom they work.
- iv) *External perceptions*. Differences between how a support agency rates a partner and how the partner rates itself can lead to clarification of expectations and a better understanding of how an organisation is perceived from the outside.
- v) *Trends and commonalities*. It is possible for a support agency to examine the ratings of various partners to identify those components that have been overlooked or inadequately supported in the past, across partners, and to develop common capacity building interventions to address these.
- vi) *Target setting*. This tool breaks organisational capacity into its various components and then presents a range of verifiable indicators. This simplifies the task of identifying and agreeing on specific targets to be achieved within a certain timeframe.
- vii) *Monitoring change*. By using the same criteria to measure capacity over time it is possible to monitor the areas where capacity has been enhanced and discover areas where it may have inadvertently declined. If targets have been set, then this tool can serve to measure how the organisation is progressing towards those targets.
- viii) *Impact assessment*. It is possible to compare (baseline) ratings given at the beginning of a partnership (possibly both by the partner and the support agency) with the level of capacity measured after a certain period. This will help to identify which interventions have been most successful and highlight for both parties the changes that have occurred over the time. This comparison can also be used by support agencies in reporting to their back-donors on the impact of capacity building component of their program.
- ix) *Verifiable benchmarks*. Most support agencies (should) enter into partnerships with a common understanding of when the agreement will cease or need to be reviewed. Often this relates to back-funding but can also be tied to the capacity of a partner. Exit strategies often include capacity benchmarks that both parties try to achieve to ensure the sustainability of the partner after the end of the partnership. This tool allows concrete benchmarks to be established and progress towards these monitored.

Procedure (for the facilitator)

Assessment

1. Together with the partner organisation, decide on the exact purpose (from the list of possible uses provided above) and who should be involved. Participants could include donors, government authorities, governance body members, agency management, program and support staff, and community members.
2. Decide on the time available. This could be in one block but preferably spread over a period of time. Then decide how many components / worksheets can be covered. (It will take up to half day, i.e. 4 hours, to cover one sheet and may take much longer if disagreement and lengthy debate arise.)
3. Agree on the components and the order in which they will be tackled, based on the priorities of both support and partner organisations. (It is recommended that the exercise start with one component only so that everyone becomes comfortable with the process and can start work on the outcomes before making a larger commitment.)
4. Ask participants to individually read the chosen worksheet by row, selecting where on the scale they believe their agency lays. If there is some uncertainty between two levels e.g. "a" or "b" then they can choose the mid-point, i.e. "a+". (Participants should be given all the time they need to make their choices as it is this private reflection on their organisation that will lead to their eventual commitment for change.)
5. Ask staff to form "affinity groups", e.g. governance body members, management, program staff, administrative staff, community members, etc. and discuss their individual ratings before agreeing on a group rating. (Individual reasons for ratings should be recorded by the group for use later.)
6. Bring several or all the different affinity groups together to compare their ratings. (By listening to the rationale of other groups participants can see their organisation from different perspectives.) Ask the groups to reach agreement on the various ratings, if possible, but record any significant differences in their assessments.
7. Plot the mutually agreed ratings on the "summary sheet". (The identified capacity against each variable can be made obvious by presenting the ratings in the form of a bar chart.) Participants can then choose which of the various aspects of the component to target immediately or can wait until other worksheets have been completed before deciding where their priorities should lay.
8. Having chosen the component(s) participants can identify the aspects to work on and set targets for the coming agreed period. (The individual and group rationale for different initial ratings can be used to inform these decisions.)
9. Finally, the organisation, together with the facilitator, can discuss how these targets are to be achieved, what is needed from both parties and by when.

Measuring change

The tool can be used to monitor progress by repeating the above procedure for a component(s) only. However, the capacity of an organisation does not always increase over time as staff changes, changes in working environment or program focus, or simply complacency can negatively affect the level of capacity against various components.

Impact of a long-term intervention can be measured by comparing a recent assessment with the baseline rating. This process highlights for staff how far (or little) the organisation has progressed. The tool can also signal when a partner organisation has reached pre-agreed benchmarks as part of an exit strategy.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
1.0 Legitimacy and Governance					
1.1 Vision and mission	1.	• No vision of the society that the organisation wants to achieve.	• Vague idea of society desired but nothing written down.	• Written vision statement but few of the Governing Body (GB) and staff know or use it to guide their work.	• Clear vision statement written down, known and held by all.
	2.	• No one is aware of the basic principles of development organisations.	• Leader is clear about the organisation's principles & values, but most staff & GB members are not.	• Some staff and/or Governing Body members can articulate the organisation's values.	• All stakeholders (staff, GB & community members) can articulate the organisation's core values.
	3.	• Work reflects no consistent value base.	• Values of the organisation are sometimes reflected in the work, but not consistently.	• Values are referred to and decisions generally reflect these values.	• Decisions and work of the GB & staff consistently reflect these values.
	4.	• There is no clear mission for the organisation, or no one is aware of it.	• Chairperson/Leader has ideas about the mission. Mission statement may have been written but not shared.	• GB members & key staff are clear about the mission and may have participated in its writing or modification.	• A written mission statement exists, which all agree on and are able to explain externally.
1.2 Registration	1.	• Organisation has no clear idea what by-laws are. Any written documents are more promotional than regulatory.	• Organisation has a constitution, but most staff and Governing Body members are not aware of it.	• Organisation's constitution is known but is rarely used to guide the operations of the organisation.	• Constitution is consistently applied in running the organisation and is reviewed regularly.
	2.	• Organisation has not registered with local authorities or the Ministry.	• Organisation has started process of registration, but this is not complete.	• Organisation is registered with the government locally and/or with the Ministry but does not consistently comply with reporting requirements.	• Organisation has registered at all government levels and consistently complies with reporting requirements.
1.3 Governance	1.	• There is no Governing Body (GB) formed or they are not functioning.	• Organisation operates without reference to or support from the Governing Body.	• Organisation has a GB which meets irregularly and whose role is unclear. Used for advice rather than policy direction/ decision making.	• The organisation has a well-balanced, experienced and functioning Governing Body with clear roles and responsibilities.
	2.	• There are no defined set of members of the Governing Body.	• Governing Body members do not understand their roles and responsibilities and are not trained. They are often not replaced on leaving.	• Elections for Governing Body members occur occasionally, and some training is given to new members.	• Elections for Governing Body are held in accordance with the constitution. Members are clear about their role and responsibilities.
	3.	• All staff believe or act as if the organisation belongs to the Leader or the founding members.	• Staff believe or act as if the organisation belongs to them and don't want to listen to the Governing Body.	• Staff consult the Governing Body occasionally but make most important decisions themselves.	• Staff understand and accept the obligations of public ownership and accountability to society.
1.4 Constituency and Target Groups	1.	• No clearly defined target group. Willing to work with whomever donors suggest.	• Has a stated target group but no genuine attempt to reach them. No clear selection processes.	• Target group is clearly defined. There are selection criteria in place, but these are not always applied.	• Organisation is consistently working with its target group.
	2.	• Program activities are not coherent and do not support ongoing relationships with any particular community groups.	• Program activities are only loosely connected to the needs of this target group and actual beneficiaries are still inconsistent with target group.	• Target group needs are identified, but some activities may still be inappropriate or actual beneficiaries may vary from the intended target.	• Organisation is constantly and consciously refining program activities to more effectively address the needs of their beneficiaries.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d
2.0 Organisational Management				
2.1 Structure	1. • No organisational structure. An organogram may exist on paper but does not reflect actual roles & responsibilities of the staff & Governing Body.	• Staff recognise and respect lines of power and authority but not those of responsibility and communication. Most staff are unclear about the organisational structure.	• Structure exists but is not completely appropriate to the efficiency needs of the organisation. Management / GB members ignore correct channels of communication.	• Clearly understood lines of responsibility and communication, which reflect the efficiency needs and major activities of the organisation.
2.2 Policies & Procedures	1. • The need for organisational policies and procedures is not recognised and they are not in place or not used.	• Written policies are few, unclear and often ignored in practice. Few staff know the policies and follow the procedures.	• Policies and procedures are written to cover most areas of need and are applied fairly consistently. Most staff are aware of them.	• Policies and procedures reflect the organisation's values and purpose and are regularly reviewed. All staff know and comply with them.
	2. • Personnel decisions by Management are ad hoc, often inconsistent and sometimes unfair.	• Informal personnel policies have been developed but are not applied consistently.	• All staff know their rights but are reluctant to claim them. Sanctions are usually fair and justified.	• Staff recognise the needs of the organisation and are involved in improving policies in that light
2.3 Leadership	1. • Leader and Governing Body do not have a clear vision for the organisation.	• Leadership is clear on purpose of the organisation but is not consistent in their interactions with staff.	• Leadership practices reflect the organisation's purpose and effort is made to communicate this purpose to staff.	• Staff and Governing Body members have a clear sense of purpose and direction of the organisation and work accordingly.
	2. • Management is respected only because of the power they wield.	• Management is respected for their experience & status.	• Management is respected for their knowledge and skills.	• Management is respected for their management style and skills.
	3. • Management treats staff as ignorant subordinates and simply orders them about.	• Management treats staff nicely but rarely asks their opinions or shares information	• Management seeks the opinions of staff but restricts information shared with them.	• Management truly respects the opinions of staff & involves them in most major decisions.
2.4 Problem Solving & Decision Making	1. • Problems are ignored or dismissed lightly. Solutions only delay or make the problem worse. No attempt made to analyse problem.	• All problems referred to the Management. Management offers solutions but does not analyse root causes.	• Staff try to solve some problems themselves. Management analyse and address causes of problems, but not in a systematic way.	• Entire staff engaged in and analysing and resolving root causes of problems in an systematic manner.
	2. • Management is indecisive and avoids responsibility or is autocratic and makes most decisions without consultation or explanation.	• Management occasionally consults with some staff but often makes unilateral decisions. Information is often kept from staff.	• Management values and encourages participation, but some decisions are already made before consulting with staff. Information is shared selectively with staff & Governing Body.	• Management values team decisions and is open to ideas from staff & GB members. Information is freely shared with all stakeholders to encourage input and good decision-making.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
3.0 Staffing					
3.1 Recruitment	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No set procedure for staff selection. Recruitment is based on relationships (relatives or friends), not on commitment or skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no recruitment policy, or it is not used. New positions are announced, and applicants interviewed. Selection based on personal not professional attributes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation has a clear recruitment procedure, which is generally followed. Internal appointments do not follow agreed procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear recruitment policy is developed and consistently followed for internal and external candidates.
	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment is used to gain favour or repay debts. It is ad hoc, often determined by available funding rather than program needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies determined by program needs but selection is by Leader alone. Friendships may influence decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions are made by more than one staff and based on commitment and skills, but selection process is not systematic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vacancies are filled by qualified and appropriate people. Plans made for career development and longer-term needs of the organisation.
3.2 Roles & Responsibilities	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No written job descriptions or they are not used. Staff are unclear about their specific responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job descriptions exist but are outdated or incomplete. Some understanding of roles and responsibilities but most are not clear. Management is doing extra tasks to keep things going. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job descriptions are written and adequate, but not kept up to date They are followed either rigidly (individuals refuse to do additional tasks) or inconsistently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job descriptions are clear and periodically updated. They are followed consistently but staff readily take on additional responsibilities in response to changing circumstances and needs
	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader does most important tasks her/himself and staff simply support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management allocates tasks to staff, but often without adequate explanation and without the authority needed to carry them out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are given the information and authority to undertake delegated tasks, but management is still overloaded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate levels of responsibility, information and authority are delegated to all staff. No one is overburdened
	3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff take no responsibility for the completion and quality of their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff often blame others when deadlines are not met or quality is poor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff try hard to meet deadlines but are less worried about quality and process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are very concerned about their work and take full responsibility for doing it well.
3.3 Supervision	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management do not tell staff what is expected of them and how they could work better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision is concerned with control rather than support and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance and follow-up with staff is provided, sometimes hastily and inconsistently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate levels of advice and support are provided routinely.
	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff receives no guidance or feedback other than orders and criticism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback is irregular and inconsistent and rarely acknowledges good work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback is consistent and constructive but remains top-down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff provide constructive feedback and support to each other.
	3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mechanism for reviewing work or staff performance. Incentives/discipline at the sole discretion of Leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews and performance appraisals occur occasionally but staff experience these as highly threatening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up on reviews & appraisals planned, but rarely implemented. Little self-reflection takes place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews are undertaken regularly, clearly linked to staff development and welcomed as a source of learning.
3.4 Staff Capacity	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have had little or no training and lack the skills necessary to do their jobs. No plans for staff development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have some basic skills but not enough to perform their tasks satisfactorily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have sufficient skills to do their jobs, but lack the ability or desire to constantly improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have a high level of skills to do their jobs and to assess and constantly improve their work.
	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff lack the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have basic knowledge of participatory techniques but use this to simply extract information rather than facilitate learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good communication and facilitation skills exist but staff are weak on analysis and participatory problem solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well developed skills and a choice of participatory techniques used in all work with the community.
	3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader attends most training and delegates others to staff on an ad hoc basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior staff attend training, but choice of training and staff is often inappropriate and ad hoc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation has strategy for staff development but lacks commitment or resources to implement. Focus on learning through training courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High priority given to staff development in line with organisational needs. There is a vision of individual potentials and future roles for staff.
	4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge is used as power over others. Learning is rarely shared or put into practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some learning is shared but actual changes in work practices are limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning is shared with appropriate staff and attempts made to put this into practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different learning methods are valued and opportunities for staff development are actively sought.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
4.0 Administration and Logistics					
4.1 Meetings	1.	• Meetings of all staff do not occur or occur very rarely. Few issues are discussed, and most information shared on a one-to-one basis.	• Staff meetings occur occasionally but without a clear purpose or agenda. Little or no participation from the staff. Decisions are unclear or not followed up.	• Staff meetings are held regularly with some staff participation but agenda items are usually determined by the Management. Decisions often not recorded or followed up.	• Regular staff meetings held with agenda items added by staff. Good participation of all staff in discussions. Decisions are clearly documented and consistently followed up.
	2.	• General Meetings of community members never held or are held very rarely.	• General Meetings held occasionally but very few members attend. No elections for GB & committees.	• General Meetings are held regularly and are well attended. Elections of GB & committee members are held.	• Active interest & participation from communities in the make-up of committees and operations of organisation.
4.2 Documentation & Record keeping	1.	• Minutes, records and reports are rarely written and don't follow a consistent format. They are not distributed or used.	• Documents are produced but lack relevant information in an understandable format. Mainly used to satisfy donors.	• Documents contain relevant information and are clear, but lack analysis. Available internally and externally but often late and of limited use.	• Relevant, clear and informative documents are produced. They are submitted to all relevant parties on time and are routinely used for monitoring and follow-up.
	2.	• No systematic procedures for gathering information on program or organisational activities. Communications are rarely recorded.	• Some systems in place but not consistently used and maintained. Information is rarely used to inform decisions and not shared.	• Systems are in place and used by most staff. Stored information is occasionally used in making decisions.	• Comprehensive systems in place for collecting, using and disseminating information.
	3.	• Files or records are not maintained. Information is contained in scattered stacks of papers and often not available to staff.	• There are files and records, but they are not organised or maintained. They tend to be treated as personal rather than organisational files.	• Files are kept in reasonable order but never archived or discarded. Information is often difficult to retrieve.	• Filing system is well maintained. Information is accessible and readily available to all staff.
4.3 Procurement & Stock Control	1.	• No procedures set up for purchasing goods and services. Purchasing often done only by Leader.	• Some purchasing procedures exist but are not practical and are often ignored by Management.	• Clear purchasing procedures are in place, and proper authorisation is obtained in most instances.	• Procurement procedures in place and followed. Proper quotations obtained for purchases over certain limit.
	2.	• No inventory or asset register kept. No stock control system set up.	• Inventory established but records are not systematically maintained. Items are often missing when needed.	• All major items are listed and labelled. Stock control is still loose and not always up to date.	• All significant items are listed and labelled with inventory list routinely updated and verified.
4.4 Assets	1.	• Facilities (office space, services, furniture and equipment) are totally inadequate for organisation's needs and are often privately owned.	• Basic facilities are available, but shortages cause constant frustration and inefficiencies. Limited access to phones and email, making outside communication difficult.	• Facilities are adequate but are often old and not maintained. Computers are available but most staff do not and cannot use them.	• Facilities are adequate to allow the organisation to function efficiently.
	2.	• No one maintains the assets of the organisation. Things are left broken and unusable.	• Maintenance of assets is done only when items are needed. Items often not working properly.	• One person is responsible to maintain the assets, but this is not done routinely.	• All items, including computers, are serviced regularly in accordance with a maintenance schedule.
4.5 Transport	1.	• Organisation has no means of transport. Staff use own transport or rent vehicles.	• Organisation has some transport, but it is old and not sufficient.	• Organisation has sufficient means of transport for its needs, but most is old and unreliable.	• Transport is adequate for current needs, well maintained and periodically replaced.
	2.	• No policy on use of transport or other assets. Use is at Leader's discretion.	• Policies for use of transport and other assets exists but is not followed. Senior staff benefit most.	• Transport and asset use policies established and followed fairly well but allocation does not always reflect program need.	• Transport and other assets are used in accordance with policy, which ensures the most efficient and fair use of assets.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
5.0 Finances					
5.1 Bookkeeping	1.	• No one other than the Leader understands or is responsible for bookkeeping.	• Task of bookkeeping is assigned to one person but no one follows up to ensure that it is done.	• Designated person takes responsibility for records but very few staff have access to or can understand them.	• One person is responsible, but all staff have access to information, and most can understand the process.
	2.	• No reliable records of financial transactions are kept and receipts are not retained.	• Transactions are recorded in a cashbook but not kept up to date. Funds from different sources often confused. Many transactions lack supporting vouchers or receipts.	• Most transactions recorded accurately and promptly but supporting documents are not always available or filed in a systematic manner.	• All transactions are recorded accurately and promptly with all supporting documentation readily accessible.
5.2 Financial & Cash Management	1.	• Financial policies or procedures have not been established.	• Some financial procedures have been developed but are often ignored in practice.	• Written financial policies and procedures are in place but need improvement.	• Financial policies and procedures are adequate and meet current needs.
	2.	• Organisation has a bank account but no cash box or safe. Cash is held by one person, usually the Leader.	• Organisation has a cash box or safe from which staff borrow money, occasionally confusing petty cash with personal money.	• Organisation has bank account & regulates funds held in bank and in cash. At least two signatories required to access bank account.	• Organisation carefully monitors currency exchange rates, money transfer fees and cash-flow.
	3.	• The need for reconciliations is not recognised and none are conducted. Little distinction between organisation's money and personal funds of holder.	• Reconciliations of cash & ledger are rarely conducted, if at all. Bookkeeper may also hold and issue petty cash.	• Reconciliations of cash & ledger/bank statements conducted quite regularly. Functions of bookkeeper and cash holder are distinct.	• Reconciliations of cash & ledger/bank statements conducted monthly on all accounts. Independent checks on cash-in-hand undertaken periodically.
	4.	• No idea of how or why to predict cash flow needs. Work is often stopped due to lack of funds on hand.	• No cash-flow predictions are made and cash on hand is often too much or too little for needs.	• Cash-flow predictions are made occasionally, and cash-on-hand is generally consistent with needs.	• Cash-flow predictions done regularly, and available cash usually meets current needs.
5.3 Financial Reporting	1.	• Financial reports are only prepared when required by a donor and don't present an accurate account of income and expenditure.	• Financial reports are occasionally prepared but reflect what is thought will satisfy a donor rather than the reality. Reports are often late.	• Reasonably accurate reports are prepared regularly but often confuse projects and sources of income. Reports are usually on time.	• Accurate reports are done, clearly differentiating projects and income sources. Reports are completed and sent out by or before the due date.
	2.	• Staff and Governing Body members never see reports and can't understand them anyway. No one in the organisation clearly knows the financial situation.	• Some reports are made available to Management and GB members but not regularly. No explanations are given to help people understand the report.	• Management and GB members receive reasonably accurate and timely reports. Some information is shared with staff.	• Management and GB members receive complete, accurate and timely reports on which to base decisions. Staff regularly have access to most financial information.
5.4 Budgeting	1.	• No one knows how to prepare budgets and requests for funds are unsubstantiated and often unrealistic.	• Project budgets are prepared by financial staff but there is no program or organisational budget.	• Project and program / organisational budgets are prepared by financial staff after consulting program staff.	• Project and program / organisational budgets are prepared by financial and program staff together.
	2.	• Expenditure is governed solely by funds on hand.	• Little or no attention is paid to budgets when choosing activities and spending the funds.	• Expenses are monitored against budgets, but no action is taken when potential problems are identified.	• Expenses are closely monitored against these budgets and corrective action taken when problems arise.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
6.0 Program/Project Management					
6.1 Goals & Program Plans	1.	• Organisation has no long-range program goals or strategy of how to achieve their vision.	• Organisation has program goals but these are vague, unrealistic or simply a list of planned projects/activities.	• Organisation has reasonably clear program goals and strategy. These are loosely related to vision and mission.	• The organisation has clear, specific program goals and strategy, which are consistent with the vision and mission.
	2.	• Project activities and target beneficiaries are solely determined by funding opportunities and donor preferences.	• Goals are not known by the GB members and most staff and are not used to guide the organisation.	• Only the Management and several GB members can clearly articulate the goals, but activities mostly fit with these.	• All staff and GB members are aware of and can clearly articulate the goals of the organisation.
6.2 Planning	1.	• No planning is done. Staff are not aware of the need or do not have the capability to plan their work in advance.	• Short-term work plans prepared occasionally but rarely followed. Longer-term plans (6-12 months) are rare, unrealistic and not used.	• Short-term work plans done by all staff. Annual plans done but are not realistic and not used during the year.	• Realistic program plans for 2-3 years developed and revised at least annually. Plans used to guide operations.
	2.	• Staff wait to be told what to do by the Leader. Staff do not know what they or others are to do each day.	• Staff know their duties but are unable to plan their work in advance. Little coordination between projects and staff.	• Staff prepare individual work plans, but responsibility for tasks often confused due to limited coordination.	• All staff prepare individual plans routinely and coordinate their work with others.
6.3 Effectiveness	1.	• Activities either totally ignore or are rigidly fixed to the original proposal.	• Implementation follows the original plan with little accommodation of changes sought by community.	• Implementation is sensitive to changes in the program environment, but community treated as subordinate.	• Community is considered an equal partner in deciding program direction and design.
	2.	• No real concern about the quality and outcomes of activities.	• Emphasis is on increasing the quantity rather than quality of activities.	• Organisation is aware of the need to improve program quality and is trying to make improvements.	• Organisation is constantly working to improve quality and effectiveness, occasionally in lieu of program expansion.
6.4 Monitoring	1.	• No outputs defined, or standards set. Staff are unaware of the need to monitor activities.	• Performance indicators may be identified but are often not measurable. No baseline surveys done, and little effort made to systematically collect information on progress.	• Procedures are in place for routinely collecting and analysing mainly quantitative information. Baseline surveys are standard.	• Project staff identify both quantitative & qualitative indicators and prepare regular, clear monitoring reports on all activities.
	2.	• Staff work without guidance or without understanding the rationale and desired outcomes of the tasks set.	• Management monitors progress informally, and staff follow instructions. Little initiative taken by staff to improve their own work.	• Activities monitored regularly by project staff who take some initiative to rectify problems as they arise. No involvement of community.	• Community is very involved in monitoring activities and suggesting changes to improve effectiveness.
6.5 Evaluation	1.	• No real thought given to assessing progress towards goals and objectives of the program or projects.	• Organisation understands importance but does not make the time to evaluate its own performance.	• Management evaluates projects on an irregular basis, with little participation from staff or GB members.	• All staff involved in regularly evaluating performance. Community participation is also actively sought.
	2.	• Organisation doesn't recognise or value the benefits of learning from experience.	• Occasional evaluations done but are not used. Lessons are not shared and discussed within the organisation.	• Formal evaluations held at project/program end. Findings discussed with GB members and community but rarely influence future projects.	• System of continuous reviews/evaluations in place with active involvement of community. Results used to inform strategies & activities.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
7.0 Community Intervention					
7.1 Needs assessment	1.	• Community needs determined by organisation staff with little or no input from GB or community.	• Needs and problem analysis undertaken with GB but with no direct community consultation.	• Needs and problem analysis undertaken regularly, with some involvement of target group.	• Community, and particularly target group, actively involved in analysing own needs and problems.
	2.	• Needs identification often reflects donor priorities. No problem analysis undertaken.	• Little understanding of power dynamics and specific needs of target group.	• Good understanding and relationships established with target group members.	• Good understanding and relationships with most members of community.
7.2 Ways of working	1.	• No objectives set. Activities are disparate and are carried out without a clear strategy or plan.	• Project objectives are set but are not specific or simply represent a list of disparate outputs.	• Staff set realistic objectives for work but focus solely on functional change and only at a local level.	• Staff set realistic objectives that seek both structural and functional change at all levels.
	2.	• Activities determined by donor priorities and do not necessarily address target group needs.	• Activities often determined by Management with little consideration to available resources.	• Staff participate in deciding activities but little or no community involvement.	• Community actively involved in determining and implementing activities.
	3.	• Activities intended to deliver resources and services to community. Interventions designed to meet needs, not rights.	• Activities include capacity building component but are primarily concerned with service or resource delivery.	• Interventions include clear community capacity building and advocacy components but are conceived of within a project framework.	• Interventions are informed by a clear rights-based approach to development and recognise the mutual and systemic nature of change.
7.3 Targeting and inclusion	1.	• No attempt made to define or reach the stated target group. Community treated as homogenous.	• Actual participants are not consistently from the stated target group and no effort made to identify those not participating.	• The majority of participants are from the stated target group and some follow-up with targeted people not participating.	• Interventions may involve the wider community, but benefit intended target group. Organisation constantly monitors who is benefiting.
	2.	• Little or no involvement of community, especially target group members, in any stages of the work.	• Participation of target group limited to implementation phase and amounts to doing what the organisation wants and/or providing contributions.	• Target group involved in minor decisions related to design and implementation of activities, but no consideration given to participant dynamics.	• Target group actively involved in decision-making and execution of intervention. Special effort made to include marginalised individuals.
	3.	• No thought given to gender issues or other marginalised groups in design and implementation of activities.	• Organisation claims to address gender and diversity issues, but this is not reflected in their ways of working or the profile of their beneficiaries.	• Participation of women and marginalised groups is actively sought but no clear strategies for addressing discrimination.	• Interventions seriously address root causes of gender and diversity issues from a rights-based perspective.
7.4 Sustainability	1.	• Organisation is not concerned with ensuring sustainability of activities or benefits. No ongoing support to past interventions.	• Sustainability is concerned with project activities and measured in terms of inputs/resources. No value given to community capacity.	• Knowledge and skills of target group considered in measurement of sustainability but emphasis still on retaining physical inputs/resources.	• Interventions clearly aimed at bringing about structural changes in society and increasing capabilities among the target group.
	2.	• Interventions do not take the sustainability of natural resources into consideration.	• Environmental concerns are considered but are given low priority.	• Consideration is given to environmental impact of all interventions but often thought unimportant by communities.	• Protection of environment is given serious attention by the community in the design and implementation of activities.
7.5 Accountability	1.	• Organisation doesn't see any need to report on its activities to donors or communities and rarely does it.	• Organisation provides information on activities and expenditure to donors but not communities. Information is kept to a minimum accepted.	• Information on activities and expenditure is regularly provided to donors but not to communities. Reports may include problems/failures.	• Organisation regularly provides information on activities to donors and communities in appropriate ways.
	2.	• Organisation is not concerned about opinions or ideas of donors & communities.	• Organisation is concerned about pleasing donor/s but little attempt to listen to & respond to complaints of communities.	• Various complaints mechanisms have been set up in communities but are not used or are not taken seriously by the organisation.	• Mechanisms put in place to enable both donors and communities to sanction organisation if work is unsatisfactory.

Stages Indicators	Planting a	Seedling b	Maturing c	Harvesting d	
8.0 External Relations					
8.1 Fundraising	1.	• No one can satisfactorily prepare a basic project proposal.	• Leader can prepare a basic project proposal but usually with little or no input from staff.	• Senior staff can prepare project proposals. GB members are involved in developing longer-term program plans.	• Most staff can prepare basic project proposals and management is able to develop comprehensive program proposals.
	2.	• Organisation has little or no idea of how to approach potential funding partners for support.	• Organisation lacks strategic approach to identifying and approaching possible funding partners. Some knowledge of funding sources and donor criteria.	• Organisation targets relevant funding agencies on a project by project basis. Regular project funding from several sources but no long-term partnerships.	• Organisation is selective in choice of funding partners and always seeks longer-term program support. Secure long-term partnerships with multiple donors.
	3.	• No thought given to local fundraising.	• Local funding consists of community contributions.	• Some success in raising cash and in-kind support from within community, local government & local business.	• Some funds raised from a range of different sources within country on a regular basis.
8.2 Partnerships	1.	• No understanding of the value in building relationships with donors.	• All contact with donors made by Leader or English-speaking staff member.	• Management regularly contacts current and potential donors.	• GB members regularly join staff in meetings with funding partners.
	2.	• Proposed projects and activities determined solely by donor priorities.	• Projects and organisational changes heavily influenced by donor requirements.	• Projects and organisational changes in line with needs of community and long-range plans of organisation but influenced by donor priorities.	• Program focus and organisational changes determined by organisation, in consultation with funding partners.
	3.	• Little or no information shared with funding partners. No one has clear idea how to prepare narrative or financial reports.	• Relationship mainly limited to exchanges of funds and reports. Reports are usually vague, inaccurate and always late.	• Maintains positive working relationship with funding partners and usually complies with reporting requirements in a timely manner.	• Management and project staff regularly exchange ideas and information with funding partner.
	4.	• Problems, mistakes and lack of capacity are hidden from funding partner.	• Problems and training needs raised but mistakes admitted only when uncovered by funding partner.	• Some mistakes acknowledged and advice proactively sought. Some volunteering of information.	• Mistakes and inadequacies openly acknowledged. Regular exchange of information and learning.
8.3 Networks	1.	• Little or no contact with other agencies and government.	• Some contact with other agencies and/or government authorities in area. Little or no collaboration on projects.	• Regularly attends inter-agency coordination meetings and meets with local government authorities. Occasionally initiates contact with others.	• Actively participates in inter-agency coordination meetings at local and national levels. Committed to cooperation and collaboration with others.
	2.	• Organisation is not well known within community and not known at all outside.	• Organisation is known in the area but not its activities or achievements.	• Organisation has good reputation in district but is little known elsewhere.	• Organisation is highly respected locally and is known in some national forums.
	3.	• No knowledge of local sources of technical assistance and no attempt to discover them.	• Some knowledge of locally available technical resources but no attempt to use them.	• Recognises needs & seeks technical advice. Attends technical seminars with other agencies and government.	• Initiates contact with technical experts and shares experience, information and lessons.
8.4 Advocacy	1.	• No interest or understanding of the role of advocacy in development work.	• Aware of the need for advocacy but is afraid of getting involved. Avoids all contentious issues.	• Attends inter-agency meetings on some issues but doesn't participate actively. Unclear stand on most issues.	• Actively participates in actions advocating change, in line with clearly articulated position on policy issues.
	2.	• Has no knowledge of advocacy strategies.	• Advocacy strategies determined by limited knowledge of techniques.	• Different strategies known but organisation lacks the required skills and experience.	• Organisation is competent and effective in chosen fields of advocacy.

OCAT SUMMARY SHEET

Organisation name

Date:

Indicator	a	b	c	d	Comments
1.0 Legitimacy & governance					
1.1 Vision & mission	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
1.2 Registration	1				
	2				
1.3 Governance	1				
	2				
	3				
1.4 Constituency and target groups	1				
	2				
2.0 Organisational management					
2.1 Structure	1				
2.2 Policies and procedures	1				
	2				
2.3 Leadership	1				
	2				
	3				
2.4 Problem solving & decision making	1				
	2				
3.0 Staffing					
3.1 Recruitment	1				
	2				
3.2 Roles and responsibilities	1				
	2				
	3				
3.3 Staff supervision	1				
	2				
	3				
3.4 Staff capacity	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
4.0 Administration and logistics					
4.1 Meetings	1				
	2				
4.2 Documentation & record keeping	1				
	2				
	3				
4.3 Procurement & stock control	1				
	2				
4.4 Assets	1				
	2				
4.5 Transport	1				
	2				

OCAT SUMMARY SHEET

Organisation name

Date:

Indicator	a	b	c	d	Comments
5.0 Finances					
5.1 Bookkeeping	1				
	2				
5.2 Financial and cash management	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
5.3 Financial reporting	1				
	2				
5.4 Budgeting	1				
	2				
6.0 Program/project management					
6.1 Goals and program plans	1				
	2				
6.2 Planning	1				
	2				
6.3 Effectiveness	1				
	2				
6.4 Monitoring	1				
	2				
6.5 Evaluation	1				
	2				
7.0 Community intervention					
7.1 Needs assessment	1				
	2				
7.2 Ways of working	1				
	2				
	3				
7.3 Targeting and inclusion	1				
	2				
	3				
7.4 Sustainability	1				
	2				
7.5 Accountability	1				
	2				
8.0 External relations					
8.1 Fundraising	1				
	2				
	3				
8.2 Partnerships	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
8.3 Networking	1				
	2				
	3				
8.4 Advocacy	1				
	2				

Average ratings for ECCSO partners

