



APPENDIX A.3

A Six-Week Needs Assessment Implementation Guide

Completing a comprehensive needs assessment in a short period, for instance six weeks, requires a fair amount of planning and flexibility. To help with quick assessments, we have created a simple guide that illustrates the major considerations and tasks that should be completed during each of the weeks. The guide focuses on four major categories of activities, each defining an important component of the overall assessment. The categories represent activities that distinct subgroups may work on during the assessment or that the whole team may collaborate on in all four categories.

1. **Partner commitment:** Gaining and maintaining the commitment of partners to support your needs assessment is essential, especially when you will be moving quickly to identify and to analyze needs so that you can make decisions.
2. **Planning (desired results):** Defining the desired results at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels provides for the important comparison of current and desired performance. Do not assume that desired results are clear or that adequate indicators and measures are available.
3. **Data collection (current results):** Defining needs (that is, gaps in results) requires data regarding the current achievements with parallel indicators and measures of the desired results. Especially in quick assessments, the data collection process must be efficient to be able to properly identify needs.
4. **Process management:** Organizing and administering your needs assessment is critical to your success.

Use this guide (along with the other tools and techniques included throughout this book) to plan your next assessment, but keep in mind that planning for a successful needs assessment requires both patience and flexibility.

Needs Assessment				
	Partner tasks commitment tasks	Planning tasks (desired results)	Data collection tasks (current results)	Process management tasks
Pre-needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan kickoff meeting. Identify team. Identify and meet with sponsor. Get team members out of other work so that they can participate fully. Determine initial scope and needs assessment questions to propose to partners. Identify potential team roles (and subteam roles). Create a basic project plan for the needs assessment to propose to partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect current strategic plans (SP) and related documents (previous needs assessments included). Identify key partners in defining desired results at multiple levels (strategic, tactical, operational). Hold kickoff meeting with partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review currently available data. Identify needs assessment questions to be answered. Specify data requirements to complete the needs assessment. Lay out data collection plan. Hold kickoff meeting with partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan or organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup working on the assessment. Communicate with sponsor and partners. Establish budget and finalize project plan.
Week 1: Specify requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and contact partners. Plan the partners meeting. Get buy-in for needs assessment scope and process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With partners, conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Complete balanced scorecard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify data sources, and inform them of the needs assessment. Meet with sources, and provide data requirements. Specify data collection instruments (surveys, interview protocols, and so on). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup. Communicate with sponsor and partners. Monitor progress and budget.
Week 2: Collect initial information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine desired or required performance. Determine others who must be involved. Review data collection protocols. Bring in others for buy-in (such as other ministries, NGOs, community groups, and so on). 			

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match strategic plan elements with data collection requirements (see current results column). Define desired results at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin data collection. 	
Week 3: Complete data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask partners to review work to date. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define desired results at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify additional data requirements to match the indicators and measures identified for the desired results. Complete data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup. Communicate with sponsor and partners. Monitor progress and budget. Assist in data collection and analysis.
Week 4: Analyze data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask partners to review work to date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add indicators and measures where necessary to the desired results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data. Match data for current results with that of desired results to identify gaps (that is, needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data. Match data for current results with that of desired results to identify gaps (that is, needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup. Communicate with sponsor and partners. Monitor progress and budget. Assist in data collection and analysis.
Week 5: Analyze needs and identify potential solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review data and analysis. Review draft findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare draft report of desired results (including alignments with current processes, structures, and resources). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze needs for causal factors. Complete initial needs analysis to define leading factors contributing to needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze needs for causal factors. Complete initial needs analysis to define leading factors contributing to needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup. Communicate with sponsor and partners.

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	Partner commitment tasks	Planning tasks (desired results)	Data collection tasks (current results)	Process management tasks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least two alternative activities for improving results in relation to each need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress and budget. Assist in preparing draft reports.
Week 6: Decide what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to prioritize needs. Work with partners to identify and prioritize alternative activities for improving performance. Prepare a draft report of findings—both current results and gaps. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and organize meetings. Prepare documents required for each subgroup. Communicate with sponsor and partners. Monitor progress and budget.
Post-needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop required change strategy. Conduct performance analysis to define the characteristics of the selected activities for improving performance. Define the performance-improvement process, and establish monitoring and evaluation plans. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for the dissemination of needs assessment findings. Assist in writing final reports and creating presentations about the findings. Evaluate the success of the needs assessment.