

POET User's Manual

Participatory Organizational Evaluation Tool

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1. Introduction

What is POET?

POET is an acronym that stands for Participatory Organizational Evaluation Tool. It's also two concepts rolled into one: a tool, and a process. As an organizational capacity assessment tool, CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and their partners use POET to measure and profile organizational capacities and consensus levels in seven critical areas, and assess, over time, the impact of these activities on organizational capacity (benchmarking). As an organizational development process, CSOs and their partners use POET to build capacity by bringing staff together in cross-functional, cross-hierarchical groups for open exchange; to identify divergent viewpoints to foster growth; to create consensus around future organizational capacity development activities; and, to select, implement and track organizational change and development strategies

POET was developed in 1998 by Beryl Levinger of Education Development Center and Evan Bloom of Pact with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme and numerous CSO colleagues. Based on a methodology called PROSE (Participatory, Results-Oriented Self-Evaluation), POET focuses on the needs of a very specific user population, Southern CSOs and their partners.

What is PROSE, the methodology behind POET?

PROSE stands for Participatory, Results-Oriented, Self-Evaluation, a new methodology for assessing and enhancing organizational capacities. PROSE is designed for use by service organizations, schools, and government units committed to dramatically improving their ability to promote significant, positive, and lasting change. PROSE is suitable for assessing capacity and catalyzing organizational change in relation to such concerns as: practices related to exceeding customer expectations, organizational effectiveness in achieving mission, community participation, equity, decentralization, and managerial effectiveness.

The following steps outline the PROSE methodology:

- Critical organizational capacities are identified in relation to a potential user population
- Items are created to measure the critical capacities
- Facilitators are trained
- The tool is applied
- Scores are tabulated
- Scores are reported
- Capacity-building efforts are launched

Using the PROSE methodology, POET is designed to:

- Promote organizational learning and capacity-building among CSOs
- Assist CSOs in strengthening their local partners
- Enable UNDP to track the impact of its support to CSOs
- Facilitate communication and information-sharing about capacity-building within the CSO community

The Role of the Cohort in PROSE

A cohort is composed of organizations that want to improve performance, want to engage in deep organizational learning, and are open to change. Although most cohorts are comprised of organizations in related fields, what's most important is that cohort members agree, a priori, in general terms what issues they intend to focus on (e.g., quality of customer service; operational efficiency; the quality of linkages and partnerships with other institutions). Additionally, the cohort concept enables PROSE users to benchmark their organization's performance against a wider group of like entities in order to accelerate progress toward goal achievement. A cohort data manager and member organizations may choose to employ internet technologies to maintain anonymity, report results or facilitate communication among cohort members in different geographical areas. Cohort creation is intended to foster a network of innovative organizations that can lend support to one another as they pursue their individual change efforts.

Using PROSE without a Cohort

PROSE may be used to address the needs of a cohort, but it is also designed to assess and enhance the capacity building of a single organization. Organizations that are not part of a cohort will not be able to study their scores in comparison with peer organizations for benchmarking purposes. However, individual organizations can still engage in the analysis of absolute and relative scores generated through the PROSE methodology and utilize companion tools.

How POET works

This POET Manual is designed for three different types of users; a CSO as part of a cohort, a cohort administrator, or an independent CSO. The manual makes reference to three distinct entities:

- The POET Assessment Team - the participants in the POET session and review of the results
- Scoring Team - the team charged with tabulating POET results
- (In the case of a cohort) Cohort Data Manager - The entity responsible for tabulating the cohort's score sheets, and reporting the individual CSO and cohort results.

An CSO wishing to apply POET either independently or as a member of a cohort, would:

- Establish a cross-functional, cross-hierarchical organizational capacity assessment team.
- Select a facilitator trained in POET's methodology.

During a POET capacity-assessment session, team members alternate between group discussion and individual reflection as follows:

- The facilitator leads the assessment team through a set of two to four discussion questions about "critical incidents."
- Team members reflect independently on the discussion by responding anonymously to statements that can be answered using Likert-type scales ("strongly agree-strongly disagree").
- This sequence of group discussion and individual reflection is repeated until the group completes all 100 POET questions which usually takes five to six hours.

After the POET capacity-assessment session:

- Results are scored and profiled using a variety of reporting formats and POET companion tools.
- Additional capacity- and consensus-building work is planned based on POET results.

How POET is unique

POET was designed as a robust, easy-to-use assessment process that efficiently and effectively assists CSOs and their CSO partners in achieving meaningful, lasting change. POET differs from other organizational capacity assessment tools in several ways. It:

- uses a "critical incident" technique to focus group discussion on common data which bolsters reliability and validity.
- includes a consensus dimension that measures diversity of opinion among team members to enrich organizational analysis and encourage capacity-building through the analysis of divergent viewpoints.
- offers companion tools that help participants to apply their POET results to the design of change initiatives that are firmly rooted in organizational realities.
- employs advanced statistical techniques to ensure construct validity and reliability.
- is easy to administer (relatively little facilitator training is necessary for effective results)
- models of sound organizational learning processes that serve as a springboard for capacity building (i.e., POET is simultaneously a tool for measuring and building capacity)

In addition, when used with a cohort of peer organizations, POET:

- enables users to benchmark individual organizational results against a cohort of peer organizations.
- uses the Internet where appropriate to foster communication among CSOs concerning POET findings and results as well as capacity -building efforts within the CSO community

What POET measures

POET produces two kinds of measures, a capacity score, which indicates how an organization perceives its strengths and weaknesses with respect to the capacity areas, and a consensus score, which indicates the degree to which assessment team members agree on their assessment of organizational capacity. These two scores reflect the key concept underlying POET: meaningful organizational development occurs at the intersection of two processes--identifying perceived organizational strengths and weaknesses and exploring differences of opinion regarding these perceptions.

The seven capacity areas measured by POET are:

Capacity Area	Focus
Human Resource Management	staff development, recruitment, compensation (salary and benefits), personnel evaluation, and grievance and conflict resolution
Financial Resource Management	budgeting, forecasting, fundraising, and cash management
Equitable Participation	field-based program practices related to project access and project benefit
Sustainability of Program Benefits	the impact of environmental, economic, political, institutional, and cultural factors
Partnering	collaboration with other CSOS, donors policy makers, and private sector entities
Organizational Learning	teamwork, information-sharing and capacity for generating information that leads to improvement of current practice
Strategic Management/ Governance	board practices; planning practices; and, commitment to goals, mission and philosophy

2. Conducting a POET Session

The POET session: an overview

POET combines *group* discussion and analysis of organizational strength and weakness with *individual* reflection and response. Team members are prompted through a series of structured questions to recall critical events and incidents. Collectively, team members consider the pattern of these events and incidents and draw inferences based on their understanding of this pattern. Individually, using score sheets which maintain their anonymity, team members reflect on the group's discussion and respond to a series of items using Likert-type scales. This process of group discussion and individual reflection alternates over the course of the five to six hours that it typically takes to complete the POET exercise.

In the case POET is used by a CSO which is part of a cohort, the CSO will select a pseudonym to maintain its confidentiality. The cohort data manager will instruct a third party to collect the score sheets that are sent to a post office box. The third party will then repackage the score sheets before sending it to the cohort data manager for processing. In this way, score sheets cannot be identified by the stamped mark of origin on the envelope. Total organizational anonymity is carefully maintained, and all POET results are reported via the Internet or some other means using pseudonyms.

Before the Session

For each individual CSO interested in participating in POET it is important to first learn about the purpose and objectives of POET and then to review the instrument carefully. Before conducting a POET session, it is necessary to:

- Gain a commitment to the entire process (including follow-up) from senior management.
- Determine a reasonable and adequate amount of time that the assessment team can devote to the exercise.
- Advocate the benefits of completing such an assessment.
- Discuss ways in which the organization can create a "safe environment" for those participating in the self-assessment. This could include; off-site assessment, discussion ground rules that
- Emphasize mutual respect, and the use of an external facilitator.

Before launching the POET process, the organization's senior management needs to determine its specific objectives in relation to the self-assessment. Options range from benchmarking capacity and monitoring change over time to using the tool to initiate a comprehensive organizational development program.

Facilitating POET

Opening a POET Session

Sessions often open with welcoming and other introductory comments by the convener or senior manager. Once the session is ready to get underway, the facilitator generally assumes the role of session leader, and in various ways proceeds to guide the group through its agenda and its various tasks to its desired outcomes. The facilitator's goal in opening a group session is to begin the process of creating an environment in which participants:

- Know what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Believe the POET session is a good investment of their time and energy.
- Develop trust in the facilitator and the other participants.
- Have confidence in the process.

Your first words to participants give you a chance to set a positive tone and begin to demonstrate how you will conduct yourself. It's best to be yourself, a difficult goal when you may be a bit nervous about the task ahead of you. Speak informally, in a friendly tone, and in the same way you would speak to colleagues, for example say:

"Good morning, everyone. My name is Rebecca Katumbo, and I'm going to be your facilitator today. We are about ready to begin using POET, but before we do, I'd like to start by saying 'welcome' to all of you."

If all participants know each other well, then participant introductions are not necessary. If you're not sure how well they know each other, ask one or two of the participants before the meeting begins. For the purpose of POET, we recommend participants give their:

- Name.
- Department
- Nature of current work assignments.

How To Introduce the POET Work Session

Since there is important information to be conveyed about the POET work session at the beginning, it is helpful to have the key points you want to make on a series of flipcharts. There is flexibility regarding the order in which you present this information and the particular information you cover, but, at a minimum, do the following:

Step 1: Set the context of the session, explain why they are participating and how the day's session fits into the POET framework.—results will be submitted and scores will be analyzed.

Step 2: Inform the participants of the POET time frame-- deadlines to submit results, date scores will be posted, and dates to reconvene and discuss results.

Step 3: Review the meeting schedule -- Meaning the start and stop times of the capacity areas and indication of tea or coffee breaks

Step 4: Present the objectives for the meeting--Describe what specifically participants are expected to accomplish, for example: to discuss each set of questions in the seven capacity areas and answer the corresponding questions on the score sheet.

Step 5: Review the POET agenda--What is planned to happen when, and how each agenda item will be handled, e.g., when are results due, the password process, analysis by the POET team, etc.

Getting Started

Flipcharts are an important tool to facilitators. First, writing on flipcharts increases participants' comprehension and retention of the information that is presented or developed in a meeting. Second, each time the facilitator writes a participant's idea on a flipchart, he or she shows respect for that idea. This has the effect of encouraging participants to put more ideas forward. Third, flipcharts transform the individual comments of participants into a group product; once a set of ideas is flipcharted, the ideas belong to the group. Participants are generally more willing to deal objectively with ideas that have been listed on a flipchart than they are with ideas at the moment an individual puts them forth. Last, flipcharts create a record of the group's work which is very valuable for preparing minutes of key outcomes of the meeting after it is over.

Flipcharts are used in two ways in POET sessions: first to identify the objective level data, i.e., the critical incident, and second to help collect information to be the subject of follow-up meetings. Facilitators can, for example, use flipcharts to assist them in presenting the purpose, objectives, and schedule at the opening of the meeting.

Pass out the POET questionnaire and score sheet. Explain that the score sheet will be used for purposes of statistical analysis. No individual results will be attributed to specific team members. Team participants can keep copies of the completed survey for their own reference by marking their responses in the margin of the questionnaires. Team members should be encouraged to identify their department on the score sheet.

"I am going to read a series of discussion questions related to different facets of organizational capacity. I'll lead our team through approximately ten minutes of discussion for each set of questions. After our allocated time has passed, I will invite you to read and respond to one or more statements from the POET questionnaire. You should each respond individually to the numbered statement that appears in bold faced print by marking the

separate score sheet using a scale of 1-5. The scale is "strongly agree-strongly disagree," with one equal to "strongly disagree," two equal to "disagree," three equal to "neutral," four equal to "agree" and five equal to "strongly agree." Don't forget to fill out the separate score sheet which will be submitted to the Scoring Team for processing."

In general, it is a good idea for the facilitator or a volunteer to read aloud the numbered, bold-faced items as team members get ready to complete their score sheets individually.

A successful POET assessment team should be comprised of between eight and ten members. If a group gets much larger than this, be prepared for an exponential increase in the amount of time that it takes to complete the assessment. An assessment team should also be representative of the organization; e.g., members should be from most or all levels of the hierarchy, from most or all departments, and represent the full range of tenure. To the extent possible, try to gain participation through strong encouragement. If no one in a critical department is willing to take part, it might be necessary for senior management to "assign" a staff member to the team.

Groundrules in meetings serve as an informal contract that lays out how things will work and how people will act in the meeting. They are presented after expectations have been gathered. Two kinds of groundrules typically appear on facilitators' lists:

Process groundrules, for example:

- _ Make decisions about breaks and time allocation by consensus
- _ Post decisions on a flipchart.
- _ Track follow-up or action items as you go

Behavioral groundrules, including such considerations as:

- _ Attend all sessions and be on time
- _ Treat all ideas with respect
- _ Raise differences openly and constructively

How To Use the POET Discussion Question Sets

Introduce the discussion topic and pose the first, general, open-ended question. You will lead the team through approximately ten minutes of discussion for each set of questions followed by a volunteer or you reading a statement from the POET questionnaire. The team then marks their response to the question on their individual score sheet. Be ready to wait for the first response and be patient. Try counting to 15 silently. It often takes time for the first person to organize a thought and decide to express it. Once the first person speaks up, others will generally follow without delay. When comments begin, treat each one with respect. To speak up in a group session involves at least a little bit of risk for participants. If they feel you may dismiss or criticize their comments, they may prefer not to speak up at all.

Resist the urge to change the discussion questions. They have been designed to foster conversation specific to the Likert-type statements that follow. Discussion questions generate individual reflection necessary so that participants can meaningfully complete their individual score sheets and use a “critical incident” technique to focus group discussion on common, objective level data. The group questions are designed to promote discussion around critical events and incidents and to help team members draw inferences based on their understanding of organizational behavior patterns that emerge from this discussion. The very act of responding to the discussion questions builds organizational capacity. The use of the discussion questions also bolsters the assessment's reliability and validity which makes POET useful as a benchmarking tool.

The first rule for facilitators is to listen carefully to each comment. Restate or paraphrase comments from time to time to show participants that you are listening and subtly reaffirm the value of participants' points. It is very important that the facilitator not evaluate comments either positively or negatively; rather, you should acknowledge them supportively, but neutrally. Definitely DO NOT criticize participants or cast their comments in a negative light.

Do say: "I see what you are saying--it will take a lot of resources." or
"So, you found that the last training from that contractor was very valuable."

Don't say: "That doesn't sound like a very fair evaluation of the Manager's comments." or "You're probably the only person who would look at this subject that way."

The facilitator also has a role in reinforcing the group's efforts in the discussion, saying, for example:

"This discussion has brought up some interesting points; I can see that there are a lot of opinions about fundraising strategies in this group. Does anyone else have a comment?" or

"This topic has proven more complex than it appeared to be; your discussion raises a number of issues about staff training. Are there any more ideas?"

It is helpful to the participants for the facilitator to restate the initial discussion question from time to time to help them stay on track, especially if a sub-point or related but different topic has absorbed the group's attention for several minutes.

Plan on spending anywhere from 5-10 minutes for each set of discussion questions. At the beginning of the exercise, this will be difficult as participants will want to get many issues out on the table. Treat these parameters, therefore, as an average time for discussion. Participants may need to be reminded that this exercise is not intended to generate solutions to problems or in-depth analyses. Subsequent meetings will be scheduled for these tasks. In order to foster broad participation ask for volunteers to read each of the

response statements (the bold-faced numbered items on the questionnaire). To keep the discussion on track, it is highly recommended that each group appoint a scribe to jot down on a flipchart topics that arise in the course of the discussion that should be revisited at another meeting. This “scribing” function can be rotated among assessment team members.

Distribution of POET items:

Capacity Area	Total Number of Scored Items	Item Numbers	Total Number of Discussion Question Sets	Total Number of Discussion Questions
Human Resource Management	13	1-13	6	15
Financial Resource Management	16	14-29	6	15
Equitable Participation	13	30-42	6	15
Sustainability of Program Benefits	16	43-58	4	9
Partnering	12	59-70	3	9
Organizational Learning	14	71-84	8	24
Governance/ Strategic Management	16	85-100	6	16
Totals	100	100	39	101

Participation

The facilitator’s goals are to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate, to enable the group to have the benefit of everyone's thinking, and to help the group form a common view of a subject. It is not important that everyone speak up a certain number of times or that all participants contribute at the same rate. Some people naturally talk more, others less. It is desirable for most participants to join in a discussion for it to be of greatest interest and value to the group, but it is most important that all participants know that they can contribute at any point they choose to.

Welcome comments from quiet participants, but don't call on people by name or be too insistent:

Do ask: "Does anyone who hasn't spoken up yet have any thoughts on this?"

Don't say: "What do you have to say, TJ?"

Respond to quiet participants' unspoken, but apparent concerns (a quizzical look, a furrowed brow), but don't try to interpret them. Invite questions or comments in a general way:

Do ask: "It looks like there might be a few questions or comments...."

Don't say: "You look confused, Mira."

Your goal is to ensure that the behavior of some people does not reduce the value of the discussion to the whole group. Often "problem" behavior can be avoided if you establish clear groundrules and ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.

How To Respond To Challenges

Don't over-react, just acknowledge the points the participant makes. If possible, find merit in what he or she has said, agree with what you can, then move on. If a participant expresses a concern or argument you cannot resolve to his or her satisfaction, ask if someone else in the participant's group would like to give it a try. Anticipate people will have questions about the exact meaning of POET wording, but be informed that POET is designed and thus most effective when the participants define and infer the meaning for themselves. If no one can persuade or reassure the participant adequately, acknowledge the concern, write it on a flipchart if it seems significant, and move on.

"I appreciate your concern, Ako, but we need to go on with the meeting. If you'd like, you and I can talk about this issue some more after the close of the session today."

Do not cause embarrassment to the participants. The best tack is to talk with persistently disruptive people during a break. If you feel you need to do something during the meeting, do it gently, for example, you might try:

Option 1: If only two people are engaged in a side conversation, you can glance at them, or if that doesn't help, walk toward them (without changing your own behavior--continue making your points or facilitating the discussion); once you get their attention they will usually stop talking on their own.

Option 2: If two or more side conversations start up, you can refer the group as a whole to the groundrules (assuming you have a germane one), or if no groundrule looks appropriate, you can say something like: "We need to have just one conversation at a time"

If the group does not have a groundrule you can use to reduce side conversations, for example one addressing side conversations or one on the importance of listening, you might suggest that the group add one. If your relationship with the group is a close one, this situation can sometimes be addressed with humor.

If a participant brings the same point up over and over, acknowledge it the second time (Yes, I heard you say that...), paraphrase it the next time (It sounds like you are saying you're very concerned about the ministry's policies...), and write it down on a flipchart if it's brought up again. If the participant still persists, which would be very unlikely, offer to talk with him or her about it at the next break.

Sometimes a participant makes a comment that does not appear to be on topic, or that introduces a side track you'd rather not have the group pursue. If that happens, wait for the point to be made, acknowledge it, write it on the flipchart if you are recording other ideas, integrate it if possible, and restate the intended subject of the discussion before you ask for the next comment from the group.

If one participant seems to speak up too often for others to have a chance to talk, look around for others who want to talk and call on them for a while. If needed, give the too-talkative participant a special job. That will give him or her another way to contribute to the session. For example, you can ask a participant to assist you by recording others' comments on the flipchart.

Conflict is inevitable when people work in groups to develop, explore, expand, and make decisions about subjects that matter to them. It is not only a natural human behavior, but in its positive form (differing, as opposed to arguing) it is also an important part of the creative process. Without the freedom to differ, groups may find themselves limited to only the most conventional, accepted kinds of thinking and problem solving. Furthermore, conflict is essential to critical thinking. Groups in which members do not effectively express their differences can fall into group think, a mode of group behavior in which ideas, even ideas which are not well thought through, may prevail despite the individual group members' ability to know the ideas are not useful, or worse, actually harmful to the group's goals.

Conflict is of at least three kinds: based on emotional responses, based on cognitive differences, or based on a combination of the two. The ideas that follow can help group members understand and work through conflict in a constructive way, regardless of its source(s).

People differ for many reasons, but the rationally-based conflict generally stems from people operating with:

- _ Different facts
- _ Different experiences

- _ Different values
- _ Different assumptions
- _ Different constraints

POET uses structured discussion sets to address the sources of rationally-based conflict. The discussion sets are modeled on the O.R.I.D method which serve to guide discussion through the following four stages:

- _ **Objective:** objective level data is identified to help clarify facts and sort out experiences. In terms of POET the objective level data is referred to as a “critical incident.”
- _ **Reflective:** assessment team members can align their values and assumptions through POET’s structured discussion.
- _ **Interpretive:** objective level data is analyzed to help understand constraints.
- _ **Decisional:** individual participants score the POET items.

It is also important to understand the emotional responses that may be called forth in sessions, and to have some ideas about how to respond to them in a positive and supportive way. People remain eminently human at work, and emotions do play a part in people's behavior. Facilitators need effective ways to recognize emotionally-based conflict and to ensure that it can be managed. Most important, facilitators need to learn to resist their own emotional responses when participants have reacted emotionally, a reaction that may be expressed toward the facilitator, regardless of the real focus of the participants' frustration. Regardless of the source of the conflict, strategies can be employed with groups which will resolve conflicts constructively in almost all instances. They include:

- _ Acknowledge conflicts as they emerge--If differences of a cognitive nature arise within a discussion or while working on a task, recognize them openly at the time they occur, before frustration has a chance to grow and create an emotional situation.
- _ Use groundrules-- The first point of return when the group experiences difficulties, whether of an individual or group nature, is to the groundrules. It's a good idea for one of the groundrules to make it acceptable to differ and for another to call for all ideas to be treated with respect. A review of the groundrules may help group members get back into control when emotional behavior arises. If you know in advance that a POET discussion question is likely to prompt emotional reactions, it is useful to discuss that fact ahead of time, and how discuss to avoid emotional conflict before it happens.

- Help individuals resolve conflict--If conflict between individuals is affecting the group's ability to do its work, you can try to help the people who are in conflict by gently asking them to work out their differences after the POET session..

Sources consulted in the preparation of this facilitation section include: How to Facilitate Groups (A Quick Reference Handbook on Active Facilitation Techniques) by the Iowa School-to-Work Institute, 1997
<http://www.stw.ed.gov/products/handbook/handbook.htm>

Facilitating DOSA: A Guide by Beryl Levinger and Evan Bloom
<http://www.edc.org/INT/CapDev/dosafac.htm>

A MANUAL FOR GROUP FACILITATORS
 by the Center for Conflict Resolution, 731 State Street Madison, Wisconsin 53703
<http://www.spunk.org/library/consensu/sp000763.txt>

3. Scoring and Interpreting POET

How POET Scores Are Derived

It should be noted that the POET methodology relies on organizational self-assessment. Findings are valid only to the degree that team members are objective, candid, and knowledgeable about their organization. Organizational assessment team members respond to each POET item using a 1-5 scale. The raw score scale is designed to suggest the following inferences:

Raw Score	Interpretation
1	CSO has little or no capacity in this area
2	CSO's capacities fall below acceptable performance standards in this area
3	CSO's capacities approximate acceptable performance standards in this area
4	CSO's capacities fall above acceptable performance standards in this area
5	CSO's capacities are far above acceptable performance standards in this area

Directions for Scoring POET

It is recommended that an external entity do the scoring of POET. However, it is possible for users to do the scoring themselves. All the necessary instructions and worksheets follow. For an average self-assessment team of 10 members, two people can complete the data entry in 1-2 hours. All worksheets necessary for scoring POET (*Individual Score Sheet, 7 Score Worksheets, and 1 GRID Worksheet*) are located in Section 5 of this manual, the Worksheet Annex.

Tabulating the Raw Capacity Scores

The raw capacity score is the average team response to a given capacity area. The score is tabulated by obtaining each respondents' total score for the section and then obtaining an average score for the section (i.e., take the mean of the respondents' totals). This will yield a total of seven raw capacity scores.

Step 1: To facilitate data entry, assign a code name to each of the respondents and enter that name in columns 2-9, top row, of the *Score Worksheet* (#1).

Step 2: Enter each respondents' total for the capacity area (from the *Individual Score Sheet*) in the row marked "x" of the *Score Worksheet*.

Step 3: Add all the values from row x of the table and enter the new value into the column marked "SUM" of the *Score Worksheet*.

example: $(48+48+51+48+52+56+40+53) = 396$

Step 4: Divide the value in the "SUM" cell by the number of team members to get the raw capacity score.

Score worksheet: Example 1

Columns a- h represent the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	SUM
x = Total	48	48	51	48	52	56	40	53	396
x² = Total X Total									

example: $396 / 8 = 49.5 = \text{Raw Capacity Score}$

Tabulating the Standardized Capacity Score

The standardized capacity score uses an index to allow different POET capacities to be compared meaningfully. The standardized score is tabulated by dividing a capacity area's raw score by the area's maximum number of points and then multiplying by 100 to get an indexed score.

Step 5: Divide the raw capacity score by the maximum number of points for that capacity area (provided on the *Score Worksheet*).

example: $49.5 / 80 = .62$

Step 6: Multiply the value from Step 5 by 100. This will give you the Standardized Capacity Score. Repeat for all capacity areas.

example: $.62 \times 100 = 62 = \text{Standardized Capacity Score}$

The key for interpreting standardized scores is offered in the following table:

Standardized Score	Interpretation
20-39	CSO has little or no capacity in this area
40-59	CSO's capacities fall below acceptable performance standards in this area
60-70	CSO's capacities approximate acceptable performance standards in this area
71-80	CSO's capacities fall above acceptable performance standards in this area
81-100	CSO's capacities are far above acceptable performance standards in this area

Tabulating the Raw Consensus Score

The consensus score measures the degree to which team members agree with one another concerning their assessment of a given capacity area. The consensus score is obtained by taking the standard deviation to measure the spread of answers, and then tabulating the coefficient of variance (i.e., the standard deviation as a percentage of the raw capacity score, worksheet #1) to express how widely these answers are dispersed as a percentage.

$$\text{Note: Standard Deviation} = \sqrt{\frac{n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2}{n(n-1)}}$$

Where *n* = the number of respondents and *x* = sum of the respondent’s values in a given capacity area.

Step 1: Multiply each respondent’s total (the values in the columns marked by a letter) by itself and put that new value in row *x*² of the *Score Worksheet* (do not multiply the “SUM” column).

Score worksheet: Example 2

Columns a- h represent the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	SUM
x = Total	48	48	51	48	52	56	40	53	396
x² = Total X Total	2304	2304	2601	2304	2704	3136	1600	2809	19,762

Step 2: Add all the values from row *x*² of the table and enter that new value into the column marked “SUM” of the *Score Worksheet*.

example: (2304+2304+2601+2304+2704+3136+1600+2809)
= 19,762 = *z**

Step 3: Multiply the “SUM” of row *y* by itself (i.e. square the total) to get *y**:

example: 396 X 396 = 156,816 = *y**

Step 4: Multiply the number of participants by the number of participants minus one:

$$\text{example: } (8) \times (8 - 1) = 56 = n^*$$

Step 5: Multiply the number of participants by z^* (from step 2) and subtract y^* (from step 3):

$$\text{example: } (8) \times (19,762) - (156,816) = 1,280 = m$$

Step 6: Divide m (from step 5) by n^* (from step 4)

$$\text{example: } 1,280 / 56 = 22.86 = p$$

Step 7: Take the square root of p (from step 6)

$$\text{example: } \sqrt{p} = \sqrt{20} = 4.78 = \text{SD}$$

Note: to obtain the square root of p you can use the calculator function on Windows 3.1 or 95. Simply go to the programs menu and select accessories. There you will find the calculator icon. Click on the icon and when the calculator appears place the value of p into the number field. Then click your mouse on the button reading "sqrt" and your answer will be transformed in the number field.

Step 8: Divide SD (from step 7) by the range of possible scores for that section (provided on the *Score Worksheet*). Then multiply by 100:

$$\text{example: } (4.78) / (64) \times 100 = 7.47 = \text{Raw Consensus Score}$$

Note: the range of possible scores is the maximum number of points possible for the section minus the minimum number of points possible for the section, i.e. [(number of questions in the section) X (5)] - [(number of question in the section) X (1)].

Tabulating the Standardized Consensus Score

Standard deviation and the coefficient of variance are measures of dispersion, therefore the raw consensus score expresses disagreement. It follows that the raw consensus score must be inverted and converted to a 1-100 scale in order to be graphed in the same way as the capacity dimension.

Step 9: To transform your score you must first multiply the raw consensus score by 2. Next, subtract the new value from 100.

Example: $100 - (7.47 \times 2) = 85.06$

This will give you a consensus score that can be graphed just as was done for the capacity dimension score above. Repeat this process for the remaining six capacity areas.

The key for interpreting consensus scores is offered in the following table:

Consensus Score	Interpretation
20 - 39	very low level of consensus
40 - 59	low level of consensus
60 - 70	moderate level of consensus
71 - 80	high level of consensus
81 - 100	very high level of consensus

Interpreting Capacity Areas

Capacity Area #1: Human Resource Management: Items in this section of POET focus on staff development; staff deployment; recruitment; compensation (salary and benefits); personnel evaluation; opportunities for professional advancement; grievance and conflict resolution; and supervisory practices.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as having regular staff training; adequate staff in terms of numbers and skills; human resource practices that significantly contribute to staff retention, accomplishment and morale; and supervisory practices that contribute to the professional development of staff.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would be characterized as having little or no ongoing staff development; staffing patterns that are inadequate to accomplish assigned tasks; human resource practices that weaken staff retention, accomplishment and morale; and, supervisory practices that are more punitive than developmental.

Capacity Area #2: Financial Resource Management: Items in this section of POET focus on procedures and practices to maintain an appropriate balance between expense and

revenue; budgeting; accuracy and utility of financial reports; management of cash flow and maintenance of appropriate levels of cash reserves; and fundraising.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as agile in avoiding deficit operations; highly prone to allocate financial resources in ways that support strategic priorities and overall mission; highly competent in generating accurate and timely financial reports that support managerial decision-making; consistent in making efforts to maintain adequate reserves and cash on hand to meet organizational needs; and successful in gaining and diversifying financial support.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would be characterized as frequently operating with little regard for the relationship between expenses and revenue; highly prone to allocate financial resources in ways that are unrelated to strategic priorities and overall mission; highly unlikely to generate accurate and timely financial reports to support managerial decision-making; inconsistent in their efforts to maintain adequate reserves and cash on hand to meet organizational needs; and unsuccessful in gaining and diversifying financial support.

Capacity Area #3: Equitable Participation: Items in this section of POET focus on stakeholder participation in project functions, especially with regard to traditionally under-represented stakeholders, constituent-initiated project change, and the role of local knowledge and best practice.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as having a high degree of stakeholder participation in all aspects of the project cycle, high levels of participation by traditionally under-represented groups; well developed systems for adapting programs to changing constituents needs, and well developed capacities build on local strengths and best practices.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would be characterized as having limited capacity to adapt project activities to changing stakeholder needs; relatively low levels of stakeholder participation in key project processes; and limited ability to build on local strengths.

Capacity Area #4: Sustainability of Program Benefits: Items in this section of POET focus on five different kinds of sustainability that lead to the continuing, long-term flow of project benefits (environmental, economic, political, institutional, and cultural) within three phases of the project cycle: design, implementation, and assessment.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as giving thorough attention to all five types of sustainability throughout the project cycle.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would be characterized as giving attention to a more limited array of sustainability issues and/or focusing their concern for sustainability of program benefits on some, but not all, phases of the project cycle.

Capacity Area #5: Partnering: Items in this section of POET focus on an organization's capacity to forge meaningful alliances with other institutions in order to better achieve its mission.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as agile in creating partnerships to achieve institutional priorities; skilled in developing relationships with a diverse array of partners. Such organizations are also capable of negotiating and sustaining partnerships that are both equitable and beneficial to all participating entities.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would be characterized as having difficulties in working with other entities to achieve mission or priorities. These organizations, if they engage in partnership at all, are likely to work with a narrow array of partners. Typically, organizations scoring low in this area also have limited skills or practice in sustaining or negotiating partnerships that result in equitable and mutual benefit to all partners.

Capacity Area #6: Organizational Learning: Items in this section of POET focus on how information flows within organizations; quality, timeliness, and utility of shared information; the degree to which information is used to improve organizational performance; support for effective teamwork; participatory management practices; and the quality of staff meeting practices.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as having their internal communications flow in multiple directions; internally generated information accessible to those who need it that is timely, useful and accurate; a culture that successfully promotes the identification of lessons learned to improve organizational performance; highly effective deployment of teams to resolve organizational issues; highly participatory management practices; and successfully employing whole systems thinking to solve problems, and highly productive staff meetings.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would tend to be characterized as having a one-way, top-down communication flow; a culture that does not support or encourage the systematic gathering of lessons learned to improve organizational performance; poor or infrequent deployment of teams to resolve organizational issues; autocratic management practices; isolated islands of information, and ineffective staff meetings.

Capacity Area #7: Strategic Management/Governance: Items in this section of POET focus on strategic planning practices; governance practices; organizational commitment to mission, goals, and philosophy; capacity to adapt to changes in the external environment; and strategic objectives.

Organizations scoring highly in this category would be characterized as using strategic planning to "refit" the organization to its environment in an ongoing fashion; having a system of governance that contributes significantly to the accomplishment of organizational mission; demonstrating a pattern of managerial decision-making that is

highly consistent with mission, goals and philosophy; and employing a well developed system for setting and tracking strategic objectives.

Organizations scoring poorly in this category would tend to be characterized as engaging in little or no strategic planning to "refit" the organization to its environment; a system of governance that makes little or no contribution to the accomplishment of organizational mission; a pattern of managerial decision-making that is highly inconsistent with mission, goals and philosophy; and a nascent or minimal system for setting and tracking strategic objectives.

4. Follow-up Activities

The POET Profile Tool

In the case of a cohort, the POET Profile Tool has two primary components. The first component consists of 7 separate graphs for capacity and consensus scores totaling 14. Each individual graph will represent the consensus or capacity scores for all participating CSOs in a given capacity area. Each CSO will be listed by code name and the cohort's mean score for either the capacity or consensus dimension and the capacity area will be imposed on the graph (see figure 1). Additionally, the cohort data manager may wish to provide each CSO with a single graph that presents their results for both dimensions of all seven capacity areas together also with the mean scores of the cohort included (see figure 2). For individual CSOs the scoring team can provide graphs similar to figure two without the comparison to the cohort mean.

The second component is called GRID which stands for Guided Reflections for Institutional Development. GRID provides a graphic representation of a CSO's POET results. The scales included in this manual allow POET scorers to convert their consensus and capacity scores into plot points on the enclosed graph. An assessment team may choose to plot their scores by capacity area to explore their relative strengths and weaknesses of their individual organization, this is called the GRID capacity area profile. Additionally, in the case of a cohort, the cohort data manager can plot each organization by its average consensus and capacity scores thereby putting the entire cohort on the same graph, this is called the GRID cohort profile. In this way, GRID not only serves to benchmark past performance, but also provides quadrant profiles that help POET participants plan their change strategies in accordance with their POET findings.

POET assessment team members are encouraged to prepare a profile or "organizational report card" based on their POET results. There are several important advantages inherent in developing such a profile. The very process of preparing the profile causes assessment team members to become more knowledgeable about their organization's performance on POET and the implications of that performance for future organizational development.

A profile can communicate succinctly a great deal of information about organizational capacities to those who did not take part in the POET exercise and can be useful in enlisting new support in the change process. A profile is an especially useful vehicle for sharing information about organizational capacities with the CEO and others charged with key leadership responsibilities.

The profile preparation process is a simple but powerful means for beginning the process of translating POET results into a comprehensive program for organizational change and development. All the information needed to prepare the POET Profile can be found on the POET Results Graphs and in the GRID presentation.

Assessment team members are urged to review these following POET components carefully.

- In the case of a cohort, the first 14 graphs which are organized by capacity area and present, on a comparative basis, capacity and consensus scores for all CSOs in the POET cohort, as shown in *figure 1*.
- The graph which presents your individual CSO's POET results, scaled capacity and consensus scores, as shown in *figure 2*.
- GRID Results and Quadrant Profiles for the cohort's or the individual CSO's score for each capacity area.
- GRID's accompanying Change Strategies

Graphing POET Results

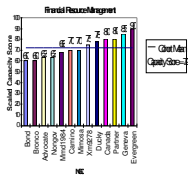
POET can be graphed for a comparative look at the cohort CSOs. Graphs can be made to illustrate the *capacity dimension* and *consensus dimension* for each of the seven capacity areas yielding a total of 14 graphs. Additionally, the cohort data manager may wish to compile individual graphs for every participating CSO that consists of individual scores for both POET dimensions.

To graph capacity score by POET capacity area use the standardized scale of 1-100 on the vertical or y axis and list the CSOs, from lowest to highest score, on the horizontal or x axis. Next, obtain the mean capacity score for the cohort in a given capacity area by dividing the total cohort score for the capacity area by the number of CSOs in the cohort and use a mean line as a reference point for the cohort as shown below.

$$60+60+63+63+68+70+70+75+78+80+80+85+90 = 942$$

$$942 / 13 = 72.5 = \text{cohort mean capacity score}$$

Figure 1:



To graph an individual CSO, the scoring team or cohort data manager should group the capacity dimension score and the consensus dimension score of each capacity area together. Then plot the cohort mean score for both the capacity dimension and the consensus dimension in each of the seven capacity areas as illustrated below.

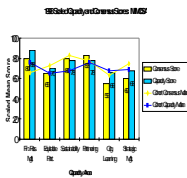


Figure 2:

The GRID process: an overview

In order to maximize POET's contribution to organizational capacity development, we have created a companion tool, Guided Reflections for Institutional Development, or GRID. As is the case with POET, GRID is actually more than a tool; it represents a structured process that leads participants to assess their organizational reality and plan change initiatives firmly rooted in these realities. GRID is designed to be used once POET assessment team members have reviewed their capacity and consensus scores.

POET is intended to help assessment team members focus on internal realities and standards. In contrast, GRID enables CSOs to situate themselves in relation to external realities and standards by using other organizations participating in the POET exercise as a reference point for comparative analysis.

The GRID process entails the following steps:

1. Team members locate their organization and/or capacity area within one of GRID's four quadrants based on either the scaled capacity and scaled consensus scores or their averages. GRID quadrants categorize CSOs and capacity areas according to whether they are low consensus-low capacity; low consensus-high capacity; high consensus-low capacity; or high consensus-high capacity.
2. Team members actively discuss, analyze and reflect on their quadrant placement to determine whether it accords with individual and collective perceptions of organizational capacity and consensus. Discussants also review whether the organizational characteristics identified with their quadrant match the reality of their organization. If there is a substantial discrepancy between an organization's self-perception and its quadrant profile, team members may elect to position themselves in a quadrant that appears to be more descriptive of organizational realities.
3. GRID offers several recommended change strategies that organizations falling into each quadrant may wish to consider. Team members review the recommended change strategies for their particular quadrant and gather whatever additional information they need to select from among these methodologies. Their task is to identify the change approach that is best suited to their organizational climate and culture. Information-gathering on strategies may include reviewing articles in books and organizational development journals, networking with other POET users through the Internet, and the use of external consultants.
4. Team members adopt their preferred change strategy and begin implementing it.

GRID's purpose and uses

The GRID framework has been designed to assist organizations that wish to benchmark their self-assessment results and search out standards of comparison. To facilitate such comparative analysis, GRID's construction is based on an exponential scale where the value between rankings increases approaching 100, the highest scaled score attainable in both consensus and capacity. Using this system, the GRID framework serves as a benchmark for year on year comparison and a graphical representation of POET's highest standards.

Some words of caution: GRID results are subject to a variety of influences, including, most importantly, organizational perception. If assessment team members hold challenging, high expectations for their organization, capacity scores may be lower than those assigned by a team comprised of complacent individuals. In short, quadrant placement may reflect differences in internal standards as much as--or even more than--objective differences.

The GRID, therefore, should be viewed strictly as a tool that compares an organization's self-assessment in each of the seven capacity areas and to organizational self-assessments made by peer organizations, as presented by the assessment team. CSOs with high capacity scores are cautioned to challenge themselves by questioning the degree to which scores reflect complacency as well as capacity.

How GRID works

GRID uses four quadrants differentiated by horizontal and vertical axes. Capacity scores are measured on the horizontal axis while the level of consensus among assessment team members in assigning these scores is shown on the vertical axis. The point where the two axes intersect represents the mid-point scaled value for both the capacity and consensus scores.

The POET tool measures perceived functional capacity in human resource management, financial resource management, equitable participation, sustainability of program benefits, partnering, organizational learning, and governance/strategic management. Because scores are based on perceptions rather than an objective set of standards, an additional measure-- the consensus score-- was constructed to reflect the degree of agreement among team members in reaching each of the seven capacity scores. Based on their capacity and consensus scores, organizations fall into one of four possible quadrants:

<p>Low Capacity / High Consensus</p> <p>The most highly leveraged change efforts are those that address issues of need and agreement. For capacity areas that fall in this quadrant, team members agree that there is a problem and agree on the nature of the problem. Success in harvesting these "low hanging fruits" builds the confidence and abilities of team members while preparing them to address, over time, more challenging and contentious issues.</p>	<p>High Capacity / High Consensus</p> <p>Where capacity and consensus scores are both high, team members should make deliberate efforts to build on areas of strength. Capacity areas that fall in this quadrant may be models of excellence that can be studied for clues as the team seeks to determine how best to address weaknesses.</p>
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<p>Low Capacity / Low Consensus</p> <p>Where need is high but agreement is low and change can only come after the team reaches agreement on the nature of the problem to be addressed.</p>	<p>High Capacity / Low Consensus</p> <p>Where the need is low but agreement is also low and further discussion is warranted to ferret out hidden problems and uneven performance. Capacity-building efforts should not be undertaken until greater agreement on the nature of the problems to be addressed is achieved.</p>
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Plotting GRID

For each of the seven capacity areas, find your consensus and capacity scores within the intervals listed in the columns marked “A” of the table below. Next, find the scaled score from column B that corresponds with your score in column A. These new values are the ordered pair to plot on the GRID Worksheet. Scaled capacity scores are represented on the x, or horizontal axis and scaled consensus are represented on the y, or vertical axis. A blank GRID worksheet accompanies this manual in Section 5, the Worksheet Annex.

Table for Converting POET standardized capacity scores and consensus scores into GRID scaled scores

<u>A</u> Standardized Score	<u>B</u> Scaled Score
0 - 22	5
23 - 32	10
33 - 39	15
40 - 45	20
46 - 50	25
51 - 55	30
56 - 59	35

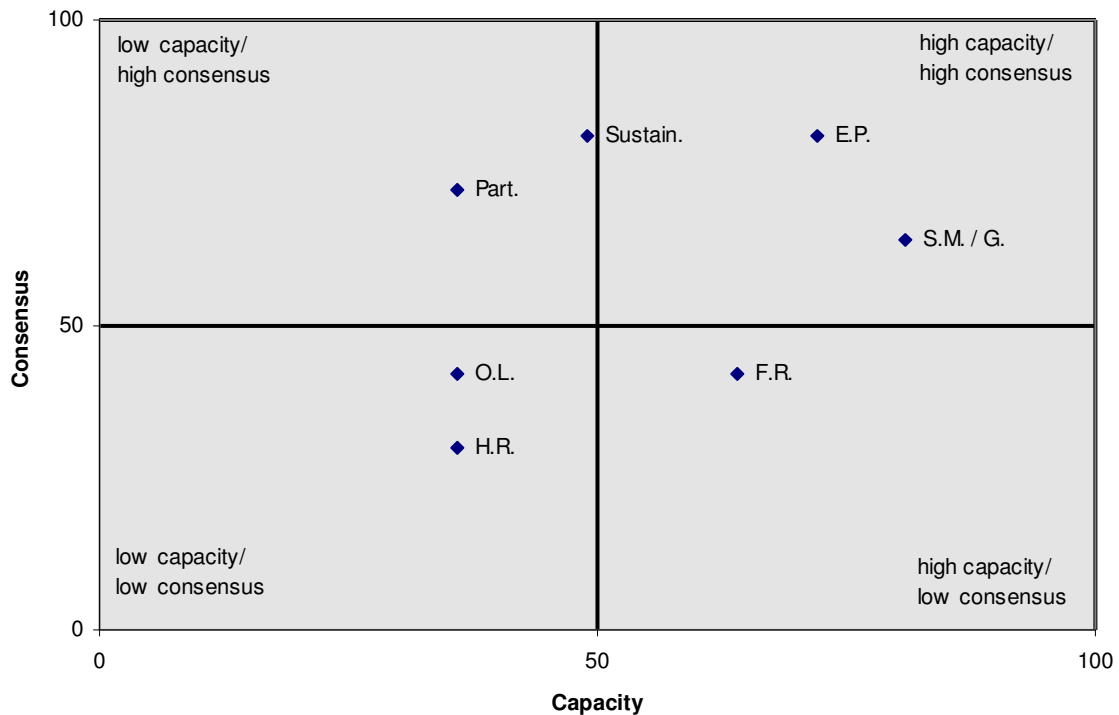
60 - 63	40
64 - 67	45
68 - 71	50
72 - 74	55
75 - 78	60
79 - 81	65
82 - 84	70
85 - 87	75
88 - 89	80
90- 92	85
93 - 95	90
96 - 98	95
99 - 100	100

Example CSO results:

Capacity Area	<u>A</u> Standardized Capacity Score	<u>B</u> Scaled Capacity Score	<u>A</u> Standardized Consensus Score	<u>B</u> Scaled Consensus Score
Human Resource Management	60	40	56	35
Financial Resource Management	78	60	62	40
Partnering	58	35	82	70
Sustainability of Program Benefits	68	50	88	80
Equitable Participation	81	65	90	85
Organizational Learning	59	35	66	45
Strategic Management/ Governance	86	75	78	60

GRID example using the above plot points and labeled by capacity area:

GRID Example:
organization capacity area profile



The example CSO is characterized by having low capacity but high consensus in the areas of Equitable Participation and Sustainability of Program Benefits. For Organizational Learning and Human Resource Management the CSO scores in the lower left quadrant, low capacity / low consensus. Financial Resource Management stands alone in the high capacity / low consensus quadrant and Strategic Management/Governance and Equitable Participation are scored high in both capacity and consensus and are thus placed in the upper right quadrant.

A cohort data manager that wishes to plot an organization's **TOTAL** score for cohort comparison can do so by following a simple procedure. Obtain the average scores in both consensus and capacity. Average scores are calculated by adding all seven capacity area scores for both consensus and capacity and then dividing both by seven. Next, consult the GRID Scaled Scores Table, as you have done for the individual capacity areas, and then plot accordingly. For example, using the table on the previous page we find an CSO with the following capacity scores:

$$60 + 78 + 58 + 68 + 81 + 59 + 86 = 490$$

$$490 / 7 = 70 = \text{organization's average capacity score}$$

The GRID's Accompanying Change Strategies

Low Consensus-Low Capacity Quadrant. Reaching consensus on organizational strengths and weaknesses should be a prerequisite to long-term action planning. Organizations could begin with a simple assessment of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) to review the major POET findings. Organizations falling in this quadrant should consider the following change methods: Appreciative Inquiry, Coaching for Breakthroughs, and TQM (*refer to the following section*).

Low Consensus-High Capacity Quadrant. Organizations falling in this quadrant might attempt to identify highly contentious issues through brokering and interactive planning. Some consideration should be given to the possibility of a rhetoric-action gap within the organization. Low consensus may in part be due to "compartmentalization" of information within the organization. Work teams that cut across departmental functions should be explored. These organizations should be careful to select change methods that take into account organizational identity and vision. Reaching consensus on organizational strengths and weaknesses should be a prerequisite to long-term action planning. Organizations falling in this quadrant should consider the following change methods: Appreciative Inquiry, Problem-Solving Method, and TQM (*refer to the following section*).

High Consensus-Low Capacity Quadrant. Organizations falling in this quadrant are likely to be prepared for organization-wide change and thus should consider the following change methods: Coaching for Breakthroughs, and TQM (*refer to the following section*).

High Consensus-High Capacity Quadrant. These organizations are likely to be prepared for new challenges and initiatives. Attention should be given to reviewing performance standards. High consensus-high capacity organizations must remember that established organizations are as likely to face a "turn around" period as emerging organizations and should therefore be prepared for the inevitability of a downturn caused by changes in the external environment. Appropriate change methods must match the current identity and vision of the organization. Organizations falling in this quadrant should consider the following change methods: Intentional Systems Transformation, Advanced Information Technologies and TQM (*refer to the following section*).

Description of Change Methods

A capable organization is able to identify problems with respect to its mission, formulate effective policies to respond to these problems, design effective programs to reflect these policies, and manage their implementation in ways that optimize impact. Organizational capacity building depends on the availability of people with appropriate skills; work and

incentive systems that enable individuals to make productive use of those skills; and sets of systems that bring together individual efforts to make a joint impact.

While there are many approaches that help organizations achieve these important competencies, seven command special attention: Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Total Quality Management (TQM), Coaching for Breakthroughs (CB), Organizational Learning, the Problem Solving Method, Intentional Systems Transformation (IST), and Advanced Information Technologies (AIT). We will discuss each of these methods individually, emphasizing best practices and complementary ways POET can be used to achieve organizational transformation.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is built on two framing principles: appreciation of people and the organizational system, and articulation of organizational best practices as a means of creating a better vision for the future. AI assumes that negative realities within the organization can be reconstructed by adopting new language, beliefs and perceptions about the workplace. By examining existing strengths and possible futures, AI shifts the conversation towards a new view of what is possible, while simultaneously generating non-defensive consideration of what is not working.

Getting Started

Start by asking the question "What is working well around here?" How does the organization rise to meet challenges and crises? How do responses to work challenges demonstrate the vital life-force within the organization. Explore the POET results to identify ways to transfer successful organizational procedures to relatively weaker capacity areas. For example, do high levels of competency in financial resource management highlight procedures/methods for professionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems within the organization? Can rich informational resources flowing within the organization be incorporated into public relations/marketing instruments to improve external relations? Might the organization leverage a previously unnoticed comparative advantage utilizing teams to resolve human resource concerns?

For additional information on Appreciative Inquiry:

Keating, Charles et al. "Reflective Inquiry: A Method For Organizational Learning," *The Learning Organization*. V3(4) 1996 (35-43). Available online:
<http://www.odu.edu/~bac/p.RefInq.html> (6/19/98)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is the idea of "continuous improvement." The process of getting better at what an organization does is ongoing and is supported by a number of key "quality control principles." These include:

Customer-focus--All organizations have customers, both internal and external, that are served through the organization's activities. For the CSO, the external customer may be both donors and those singled out by the mission statement; internal customers, on the other hand, may include the program manager who uses data supplied by the finance department. Having a customer focus means that everything

an organization does must be evaluated in terms of the degree to which it contributes to customer satisfaction. It also entails determining with precision what it is that the customer wants as well as introducing procedures and standards to make sure that this is what the customer gets.

Setting standards of excellence--TQM entails setting precision standards for all significant aspects of an organization's operations and then monitoring against those standards to ensure compliance. Monitoring also leads to corrective actions as necessary. The underlying notion is that "quality is free," meaning that it always costs more to correct errors than to avoid them in the first place.

Empowering front-line workers--TQM advocates argue that front-line workers are the people who have most direct contact with the customer and, thus largely determine the degree to which customers will be satisfied with the organization's performance. They therefore suggest that these front-line workers become empowered to make decisions to resolve customer dissatisfaction without having to consult with individuals higher up on the chain of command. For example, in an CSO, services might be tailored to individuals and communities more flexibly without having to get authorization from some central supervisory unit for changes in design or delivery of services.

Cross-functional teams--TQM teaches that most organizational problems do not neatly fall into bureaucratic categories. Customers don't care whether a faulty product is the result of a production failure or a design error. CSO customers aren't interested in whether the service they receive fails to meet expectations because of inadequate funding or incompetent staff.

Getting Started

TQM is meant to equip organizations with the skills they need to identify customers, determine customer levels of satisfaction with current operations, pinpoint customer needs, and assess current operations. Specific assistance in restructuring operations to reflect customer focus should also be part of a capacity-building effort. GRID offers a lens through which to view how a single CSO's POET scores relate to the overall cohort's performance.

For additional information on Total Quality Management please see:

Crosby, Philip B. Completeness : Quality for the 21st Century. New York: Dutton, 1992.

----. Quality without tears : the art of hassle-free management. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1984.

Hoffherr, Glen D. et al. Breakthrough Thinking in Total Quality Management. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : PTR Prentice Hall, 1994.

Coaching for Breakthroughs (CB) shares with Appreciative Inquiry the notion that organizational life is a constructed reality that can be transformed. The heart of CB is a view of the manager or consultant as a "coach" rather than a "controller." Individual and organizational "breakdowns" are seen as opportunities for new "breakthroughs."

Getting Started

Throughout the facilitated POET process, assessment-team members are asked to consider the pattern of critical events and incidents within the organization and to draw inferences based on their understanding of emerging patterns. Managers of organizations wishing to apply the principles of CB should listen to POET-generated discussions about organizational capacity very carefully in order to plan follow-up sessions designed to achieve greater clarity in organizational communication. Based on the manager's perceptions of POET discussions, future conversations might examine such issues as the following: Are discussants exploring opportunities or proposing an action? Is leadership making commitments that require follow-up? The objective in clarifying these patterns is to create new and more productive styles of communication that, in turn, create new and more productive patterns of behavior.

For additional information on Coaching for Breakthroughs please see:

Flores, Fernando. "The Impact of Information Technologies on Business Communication," speech given to the ACM97 Conference, March 4, 1997. Available online: <http://www.bdaus.com/html/speech.html> (6/19/98)

Organizational Learning (OL) highlights five requisite disciplines for successful organizations: systems thinking; personal mastery; mental models; shared vision; and, team learning. The organizational learning framework highlights how mastery of these five disciplines can reduce the all-too-common gap between organizational beliefs and actions. OL encourages "assumption-testing" as a means of replacing dysfunctional "mental models" with new patterns of interaction.

Getting Started

Organizations utilizing the principles of OL to achieve organizational change can rely on POET to help direct a thorough discussion of the five disciplines, each of which is discussed in turn. An essential tenant of OL is that teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations. POET relies on teams to assess organizational realities and models the OL principle of team learning. Accordingly, the POET assessment team should be seen as an internal force for organization-wide learning and change. Shared vision is the practice of identifying shared perceptions of the present and of the future. Organizations are encouraged to work on achieving consensus as a prerequisite to long-term action planning.

Testing mental models, the practice of rigorously examining assumption of reality in dialogue with others, is facilitated through one of the framing methodological principles

behind POET: "critical incident." Organizations participating in POET have held a series of structured discussions around critical events or incidents effecting the organization. Organizations are encouraged to continue to use these structured discussions as an opportunity to test organizational assumptions. Without genuine assumption-testing, the value of capacity measurements based on organizational perception are of limited value. Learning organizations can contribute to personal mastery, the discipline of intellectual and spiritual mastery of the self, by offering appropriate training opportunities to employees.

Traditional approaches for human resource development should be complemented by innovative approaches for disseminating information throughout an organization, changing organizational culture to promote innovation, and creating an atmosphere that embraces the ongoing nature of organizational development. Organizations can begin to focus on the discipline of personal mastery by examining the Human Resource Management results from POET.

Seven of the most important principles of training and technical assistance that can be applied to personal mastery are summarized below:

1. All training and technical assistance activities should create conditions that facilitate the transfer of knowledge to new settings. Knowledge transfer is not automatic, and organizational settings change rapidly because of changes within the internal and external environments. Training and technical assistance that place emphasis on observation, rule making, underlying principles, and situational analysis as well as exposure to varied kinds of organizational problems in authentic settings are best suited to the promotion of knowledge transfer. The use of case studies may be especially appropriate if they are structured in a way that allows participants to extract principles and apply them to new problems.

2. All training and technical assistance activities should facilitate the construction of organizational development knowledge by appropriate stakeholders working together in social contexts. The shaping and testing of ideas with others in a group setting is a skill that must be learned and that underlies broad-based participation in organizational strengthening. In turn, such broad-based participation undergirds all efforts designed to achieve sustainable development.

3. All training and technical assistance activities should emphasize collaboration (rather than competition) among peers. This ethos is a prerequisite for helping individuals grow in their abilities to function as problem solvers, contributors and analytic discussants. Training and technical assistance that incorporate interactive and community-oriented approaches to organizational development provide individuals with the support they need to work and learn interdependently rather than independently.

4. All activities should enhance the self-confidence of participants. One way to achieve this goal is to build on what individuals already know or do, the strengths that already exist

within an organization, and the formal and informal groupings within an organization that can act as internal resources for the change process.

5. Good training and technical assistance are based on a pragmatic approach to change. There is no single service delivery model or approach that is definitively best under all circumstances. Rather, emphasis should be given to accommodating local needs, resources, and preferences. Consequently, an appropriate organizational development strategy for a given organization may reflect such diverse elements as formal training, informal advice-giving, networking, linking to appropriate resources, collaborative problem-solving, and provision of reference materials or relevant tools.

6. Good training and technical assistance requires methodological consistency. Development agencies cannot use participatory approaches with their clients, while retaining traditional top-down, bureaucratic forms of communication and learning within their own operations. Organizations cannot be expected to promote collaborative approaches to development problems while engaging in didactic training and technical assistance activities.

7. Good training and technical assistance allows institutional stakeholders to observe, engage in, invent or discover expert strategies for dealing with a particular type of problem. This is best accomplished when the training and technical assistance help organizational learners to:

- identify all the relevant processes within a task by making these tasks transparent to participants;
- situate abstract organizational principles in authentic contexts so that the relevance of the principle is apparent and the participant can embed this new knowledge within an organizing structure;
- actively interpret--rather than record--information so they can construct new knowledge for themselves;
- have the opportunity to work at group problem-solving by actively sharing skills and expertise with one another;
- unbind knowledge from a single specific context in order to maximize knowledge transfer;
- recognize and respect what they already know as well as the knowledge that exists within the entire organization;
- move from the known to the unknown in terms of knowledge, patterns of relationships, and contexts;
- develop an ability to recognize those circumstances in which new knowledge should be used;
- explore many examples of a new concept and how its essential features are reflected in a range of settings.

POET encourages Systems Thinking through a holistic assessment process focusing on core organizational competencies. Perceived weaknesses and strengths are presented as part of a dynamic system.

Special care should be taken to pinpoint those competencies that have the greatest cross-cutting effect on the organization (e.g. strategic management and external relations may exert profound influence over all other capacities). Occasionally, the selection of leveraging points for change can be counter-intuitive. This is especially true in organizations where symptoms and causes of problems are frequently disconnected (e.g. those located in the low capacity-low consensus quadrant of GRID).

For additional information on Organizational Learning please see:

Senge, Peter M. The Fifth Discipline : The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. 1st ed. New York : Doubleday, 1990

Senge, Peter M. et al. The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook : Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization. New York : Currency, Doubleday, 1994.

A Comprehensive Reference List on Organizational Learning and Related Literatures (with special focus on Team Learning). Version: 1.0 - 2. March 25, 1996. Compiled by Murat H. Polat.
<http://engineering.uow.edu.au/Engineering/Resources/Murat/olref.html> (6/19/98)

The Problem Solving Method, sometimes called the Soft Systems Methodology, begins with the description of an organizational situation (and, by implication, a "perceived problem"). The process of describing the situation results in a reformulation of the original problem and the development of alternative solutions. The Problem Solving Method is particularly helpful for organizations that have a low level of consensus regarding organizational strengths, weaknesses and opportunities (e.g. low consensus - high capacity organizations).

Getting Started

In organizations where open and honest communications about root problems are rare, the Problem Solving Method can be used to intentionally orchestrate conflict to engender open, participatory dialogue. The method can also be used to promote consensus through a four-staged discussion process: (1) perceiving problems, (2) predicting outcomes, (3) comparing alternatives and (4) deciding on action.

Use the POET results to identify areas of lowest consensus and reconvene the POET assessment team to discuss why there is fundamental disagreement on specific organizational competencies. Use the POET discussion questions to "script" actual work scenarios and have the discussants look for associated problem areas. Have the team brainstorm problem areas and then try to reach group consensus on a root problem cause.

Identifying root problem causes will highlight alternative change options. The team should evaluate these alternatives against agreed upon criteria before deciding on a action plan.

For additional information on the Problem Solving Method please see:

Checkland, Peter. Systems Thinking, Systems Practice. New York : J. Wiley, 1981.

Intentional Systems Transformation (IST) is more of an overarching framework than a well defined change method. Its purpose is to awaken individuals within an organization to their "responsibility and stewardship," with the ultimate goal of energizing the collective organizational culture. The growth of individual capability within an organization is viewed as the primary an engine for expanding agency-wide competencies.

Getting Started

Organizations can use IST, in conjunction with other change approaches (e.g., Problem Solving Method, Organizational Learning, TQM), to review individual performance standards. Such a review is intended to engender a broader, but equally relevant discussion about organization- wide performance standards. Once this two-pronged review is completed, POET assessment team members should reconvene to discuss the degree to which POET results are consonant with the standards that have been discussed. Team leaders/facilitators may also wish to draw upon the POET results for human resource management as a departure point for highlighting the interdependence between individual and organization-wide capacity development.

For additional information on Intentional Systems Transformation please see:

The Center for Organizational Systems Engineering. Department Of Engineering Management, College Of Engineering & Technology, Old Dominion University.
<http://www.odu.edu/~bac/index.html> (6/19/98)

Advanced Information Technology (AIT) can engender substantial, sometimes unanticipated, organizational change. This approach includes introducing new computer applications and communication methods (groupware, email, Internet) for either or both of the following purposes: (1) to make routine, recurring organizational processes more effective and efficient; (2) to support the achievement of a new strategic vision or objective.

AIT contributes to effectiveness and efficiency by enabling time-consuming processes to become automated and more predictable; by engendering richer data sets that contribute to substantially improved decision-making; by facilitating the consideration of complex, alternative scenarios in environments of rapid change; and, by allowing organizations to increasingly deploy staff to work on non-routine, challenging, strategically important tasks. In other words, the emphasis is placed on doing something better rather than on doing something entirely new. Examples of AIT applications that are geared to improving effectiveness and efficiency include software for the management of budgets, accounts

receivable/payable, donor lists, and cash management.

AIT supports strategic change when a CSO uses technology to accomplish functions that result in organizational repositioning in relation to the external environment. In other words, the emphasis is placed on doing something entirely new rather than on doing something better. Examples of AIT applications that are geared to strategic shifts include those that facilitate the following functions: fundraising via the Internet; staff development via on-demand, computer-based distance learning methods; constituency mobilization and education through listserv-generated electronic discussion lists or related "chat" forums; decentralization of operations supported by enhanced networking; and, resource-generation through ancillary, fee-for-service ventures conducted over the World Wide Web.

Getting Started

Managers interested in exploring AIT as a change approach should review their capacity area scores and their organization's position on GRID. CSOs with low consensus scores might wish to focus on technologies that enhance internal communications and disseminate data needed for effective decision-making. Enhanced networking through connectivity is one option worthy of exploration.

Organizations with low scores in one or more POET capacities should consider, probably with the help of a consultant, AIT applications that improve effectiveness and efficiency in the relevant areas. Automation of routine but currently time-consuming functions may result in significant capacity gains.

Organizations that fall in the high capacity-high consensus quadrant may choose to explore new technologies that support a more challenging strategic vision. Technology choices should be the outgrowth of a broader strategic planning exercise.

For more information on Advanced Information Technologies please see:

Lipnack, Jessica and Jeffrey Stamps. Virtual Teams : Reaching Across Space, Time, and Organizations with Technology . New York: Wiley, 1997.

Additional Organizational Change References:

Clemson, Barry and Ernest Lowe, "Choosing a Path for Change," *Engineering Management Journal*. V5(4) December, 1993.

Organizational Development and Capacity-Building Links

<http://www.edc.org/INT/CapDev/odlinks.htm> (6/19/98)

Richard Holloway's Civil Society Toolbox

http://www.pactworld.org/richard_holloway.html#ass (6/19/98)

5.

Worksheet Annex

- *Individual POET Score Sheet*
- *Score Worksheets*
- *GRID Worksheet*

Individual POET Score Sheet

Organization name: _____ Department: _____ Individual Name (encoded): _____

I. Human Resource Management		II. Financial Resource Management		III. Equitable Participation		IV. Sustainability of Program Benefits		V. Partnering		VI. Organizational Learning		VII. Governance/ Strategic Management	
Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score
1		14		30		43		59		71		85	
2		15		31		44		60		72		86	
3		16		32		45		61		73		87	
4		17		33		46		62		74		88	
5		18		34		47		63		75		89	
6		19		35		48		64		76		90	
7		20		36		49		65		77		91	
8		21		37		50		66		78		92	
9		22		38		51		67		79		93	
10		23		39		52		68		80		94	
11		24		40		53		69		81		95	
12		25		41		54		70		82		96	
13		26		42		55				83		97	
		27				56			84		98		
		28			57		99						
		29			58		100						
Total =		Total =		Total =		Total =		Total =		Total =		Total =	

Scale: 5=Strongly Agree; 4=Agree; 3=Neutral; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree

I. Human Resource Management

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: Sum of Row X / Number of Participants = _____ = Raw Capacity Score

Step 5: Raw Capacity Score / 65 = _____

Note: 65 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: Step 5 Result X 100 = _____ = *Standardized Capacity Score*

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: Sum of the row x² = _____ **Step 3:** Sum of Row x X Sum of Row x = _____

Step 4: Number of Participants X (Number of Participants - 1) = _____

Step 5: Number of Participants X Step 2 Result - Step 3 Result = _____

Step 6: Step 5 Result / Step 4 Result = _____ **Step 7:** = Square Root of Step 6 Result = _____

Step 8: Step 7 Result / 52 X 100 = _____ = Raw Consensus Score

Note: 52 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: 100 - [Raw Consensus Score X 2] = _____ = *Standardized Consensus Score*

II. Financial Resource Management

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: Sum of Row X / Number of Participants = _____ = Raw Capacity Score

Step 5: Raw Capacity Score / 80 = _____

Note: 80 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: Step 5 Result X 100 = _____ = *Standardized Capacity Score*

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: Sum of the row x² = _____ **Step 3:** Sum of Row x X Sum of Row x = _____

Step 4: Number of Participants X (Number of Participants - 1) = _____

Step 5: Number of Participants X Step 2 Result - Step 3 Result = _____

Step 6: Step 5 Result / Step 4 Result = _____ **Step 7:** = Square Root of Step 6 Result = _____

Step 8: Step 7 Result / 64 X 100 = _____ = Raw Consensus Score

Note: 64 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: 100 - [Raw Consensus Score X 2] = _____ = *Standardized Consensus Score*

III. Equitable Participation

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: Sum of Row X / Number of Participants = _____ = Raw Capacity Score

Step 5: Raw Capacity Score / 65 = _____

Note: 65 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: Step 5 Result X 100 = _____ = *Standardized Capacity Score*

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: Sum of the row x² = _____ **Step 3:** Sum of Row x X Sum of Row x = _____

Step 4: Number of Participants X (Number of Participants - 1) = _____

Step 5: Number of Participants X Step 2 Result - Step 3 Result = _____

Step 6: Step 5 Result / Step 4 Result = _____ **Step 7:** = Square Root of Step 6 Result = _____

Step 8: Step 7 Result / 52 X 100 = _____ = Raw Consensus Score

Note: 52 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: 100 - [Raw Consensus Score X 2] = _____ = *Standardized Consensus Score*

IV. Sustainability of Program Benefits

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: Sum of Row X / Number of Participants = _____ = Raw Capacity Score

Step 5: Raw Capacity Score / 80 = _____

Note: 80 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: Step 5 Result X 100 = _____ = *Standardized Capacity Score*

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: Sum of the row x² = _____ **Step 3:** Sum of Row x X Sum of Row x = _____

Step 4: Number of Participants X (Number of Participants - 1) = _____

Step 5: Number of Participants X Step 2 Result - Step 3 Result = _____

Step 6: Step 5 Result / Step 4 Result = _____ **Step 7:** = Square Root of Step 6 Result = _____

Step 8: Step 7 Result / 64 X 100 = _____ = Raw Consensus Score

Note: 64 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: 100 - [Raw Consensus Score X 2] = _____ = *Standardized Consensus Score*

V. Partnering

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x ² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: $\frac{\text{Sum of Row X}}{\text{Number of Participants}} = \text{_____} = \text{Raw Capacity Score}$

Step 5: $\frac{\text{Raw Capacity Score}}{60} = \text{_____}$

Note: 60 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: $\text{Step 5 Result} \times 100 = \text{_____} = \text{Standardized Capacity Score}$

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: $\frac{\text{Sum of the row } x^2}{\text{Number of Participants}} = \text{_____}$ Step 3: $\frac{\text{Sum of Row x}}{\text{Number of Participants}} \times \text{Sum of Row x} = \text{_____}$

Step 4: $\frac{\text{Number of Participants}}{\text{Number of Participants}} \times (\text{Number of Participants} - 1) = \text{_____}$

Step 5: $\frac{\text{Number of Participants}}{\text{Step 2 Result}} \times \text{Step 3 Result} = \text{_____}$

Step 6: $\frac{\text{Step 5 Result}}{\text{Step 4 Result}} = \text{_____}$ Step 7: $\sqrt{\text{Step 6 Result}} = \text{_____}$

Step 8: $\frac{\text{Step 7 Result}}{48} \times 100 = \text{_____} = \text{Raw Consensus Score}$

Note: 48 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: $100 - [\frac{\text{Raw Consensus Score}}{2}] = \text{_____} = \text{Standardized Consensus Score}$

VI. Organizational Learning

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
x = Total																
x ² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: / = _____ = Raw Capacity Score

Step 5: / 70 = _____

Note: 70 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: X 100 = _____ = ***Standardized Capacity Score***

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: = _____ **Step 3:** X = _____

Step 4: X (- 1) = _____

Step 5: X - = _____

Step 6: / = _____ **Step 7:** = = _____

Step 8: / 56 X 100 = _____ = Raw Consensus Score

Note: 56 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: 100 - [X 2] = _____ = ***Standardized Consensus Score***

VII. Governance / Strategic Management

Score Worksheet: In columns 2- 16 place the encoded name of each individual respondent

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	I	j	k	l	m	n	o	SUM
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----

x = Total																
x² = Total X Total																

Tabulating Capacity Score

Step 4: $\frac{\text{Sum of Row X}}{\text{Number of Participants}} = \text{_____} = \text{Raw Capacity Score}$

Step 5: $\frac{\text{Raw Capacity Score}}{80} = \text{_____}$

Note: 80 is equal to the maximum number of points for this section (number of questions X 5)

Step 6: $\text{Step 5 Result} \times 100 = \text{_____} = \text{Standardized Capacity Score}$

Tabulating Consensus Score

Step 2: $\frac{\text{Sum of the row } x^2}{\text{Number of Participants}} = \text{_____}$ **Step 3:** $\frac{\text{Sum of Row x}}{\text{Number of Participants}} \times \text{Sum of Row x} = \text{_____}$

Step 4: $\frac{\text{Number of Participants}}{\text{Number of Participants}} \times (\text{Number of Participants} - 1) = \text{_____}$

Step 5: $\frac{\text{Number of Participants}}{\text{Step 2 Result}} \times \text{Step 3 Result} = \text{_____}$

Step 6: $\frac{\text{Step 5 Result}}{\text{Step 4 Result}} = \text{_____}$ **Step 7:** $\sqrt{\text{Step 6 Result}} = \text{_____}$

Step 8: $\frac{\text{Step 7 Result}}{64} \times 100 = \text{_____} = \text{Raw Consensus Score}$

Note: 64 is the maximum number of points minus the minimum number of points possible

Step 9: $100 - [\frac{\text{Raw Consensus Score}}{2}] = \text{_____} = \text{Standardized Consensus Score}$

POET

Participatory Organizational Evaluation Tool: *Measuring the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations to Support Sustainable Human Development*

Directions:

All 100 numbered, **bold-faced items** should be scored individually by each member of the organizational assessment team using the following scale which appears on the accompanying score sheet: 5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=neutral; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree.

Questions that appear under the heading “discussion,” should be addressed through facilitated, whole group review. Team members should spend *approximately* five to ten minutes considering *each set* of discussion questions as a whole group. Despite the fact that discussion questions appear as a *set*, they should be addressed sequentially, one by one. Numbered items that follow each discussion question should be scored by each team member *individually* before the facilitator invites the group to consider the next set of discussion questions. Team members who cannot participate in the full set of structured, group discussion questions should not submit their answer sheets for scoring.

Please refer to the *POET Users’ Manual* for additional information on POET administration, scoring and interpretation.

I. Human Resource Management

Discussion:

- a) When was our most recent staff training?
- b) How often over the last 12 months have we held staff training events?

1 We routinely offer staff training.

Discussion:

- a) For our three most recent staff training events, what evidence is there that they strengthened staff capacity and performance?
- b) To what degree did these training events prepare staff to respond to our organizational priorities?
- c) To what extent is our staff training relevant to our human resource needs?

2 Our staff training directly contributes to the achievement of our organization’s priorities.

Discussion:

- a) What are three primary, ongoing functions that we carry out to achieve our mission?
- b) To what extent do staff, as a group, have the necessary *skills* to carry out these functions?
- c) To what extent is the *number* of employees carrying out these functions appropriate?

3 We have the appropriate staff *skills* to achieve our mission.

4 We have the appropriate staff *numbers* to achieve our mission.

Discussion:

- a) For the same three functions identified in the proceeding question set, to what degree are female employees in critical leadership positions?
- b) To what extent does the composition of our staff reflect the population we serve?

5 Our staff reflects the diversity of our constituents.

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, to what extent have we experienced *loss* of competent staff?
- b) How (if at all) have the following factors contributed to this *loss*: recruitment; compensation; personnel evaluation; promotion; conflict resolution; staffing; and supervision?
- c) How (if at all) have the following factors contributed to *retention* of competent staff: recruitment; compensation; personnel evaluation; promotion; conflict resolution; staffing; and supervision

The following systems or practices help us to achieve desirable levels of staff retention:

6 Recruitment

7 Compensation (salary and benefits)

8 Personnel evaluation

9 Promotion (professional advancement)

10 Grievance and conflict resolution policy

11 Staffing (allocation of tasks and responsibilities)

12 Supervision

Discussion:

- a) Consider three recent supervisor-supervisee interactions with which you are familiar (these examples should be *representative* of prevailing supervisory practices).
- b) To what degree did these interactions enhance the supervisee's ability to meet organizational expectations?

13 Supervisory practices enhance our staff's capacity to meet the organization's objectives.

II. Financial Resource Management

Discussion:

- a) What practices and procedures do we have in place to help us avoid deficits?
- b) How effective are these practices and procedures?

14 We regularly use established procedures to maintain our revenue and expenses in balance.

Discussion:

- a) What are our organizational priorities this fiscal year, and, to what extent are these priorities mirrored in our current budget?
- b) What *specific features* of this year's budgeting process facilitated consideration of organizational mission and priorities?

15 The budgeting process leads us to allocate funds in a way that closely reflects our organizational priorities.

Discussion:

- a) How accurate were last year's financial projections in relation to our final results?
- b) How timely is the distribution of reports on financial projections versus our final results?
- c) What contingency measures do we have in place if projected revenues fail to materialize?

16 Our financial projections are accurate.

17 We modify our expenditures on a timely basis whenever we have revenue shortfalls.

18 Our financial contingency measures prevent operational disruptions.

Discussion:

- a) Over the past year, what problems, if any, have we had regarding delayed transfer of funds to projects or to our partner organizations?
- b) What mechanisms are in place to ensure that money flows to projects or to partner organizations in a timely manner?
- c) How effective are these mechanisms?

19 Our cash management procedures lead to the timely disbursement of funds.

Discussion:

- a) What concrete measures have we taken over the last 12 months to diversify our funding?
- b) How effective have these measures been?
- c) To what degree is our organizational viability dependent upon the continued support of just a few large donors?

We take concrete measures to increase our financial support from each of the following donor categories:

- 20 Private individuals**
- 21 Corporations**
- 22 Foundations**
- 23 Public Sector/Government**
- 24 Bilaterals/multilaterals**

Discussion:

- a) What are the *current* levels of financial support provided by donors in each of the following categories: private individuals; corporations; foundations; public sector/government; bilaterals/multilaterals?
- b) For the following five categories, how do the *current* levels of financial support compare to those of last year: private individuals; corporations; foundations; public sector/government; bilaterals/multilaterals?

The level of financial support from donors in each of the following categories is remaining steady or increasing:

- 25 Private individuals**
- 26 Corporations**
- 27 Foundations**
- 28 Public Sector/Government**
- 29 Bilaterals/multilaterals**

III. Equitable Participation

Discussion:

- a) Identify three representative projects in our current program portfolio. Who are the stakeholders in these projects?

- b) For the three projects identified, what are some concrete examples of stakeholder involvement in each of the following processes: needs assessment; project design; implementation; monitoring, and impact assessment?

Our projects reflect *high* levels of stakeholder participation in:

- 30 Assessing needs**
- 31 Designing projects**
- 32 Implementing projects**
- 33 Monitoring projects**
- 34 Assessing project impact**

Discussion:

- a) For the three projects identified in the preceding question set, what specific measures have we taken to ensure that traditionally under-represented stakeholder groups (e.g., rural poor, women, ethnic minorities) have *equitable access* to project activities?
- b) For these same three projects, what specific measures have we taken to ensure that traditionally under-represented stakeholder groups derive *equitable benefit* from project activities?
- c) For the same three projects, to what degree are *traditionally under-represented* groups engaged in each of the following processes: needs assessment; project design; implementation; monitoring, and impact assessment?

- 35 Traditionally under-represented stakeholder groups have *equitable access* to project activities.**
- 36 Traditionally under-represented stakeholder groups derive *equitable benefit* from project activities.**
- 37 Our projects consistently promote equity at all stages of their design and implementation.**

Discussion:

- a) Choose three projects that are *at least three years old*. To what degree have the needs of our project participants changed since each of these projects began?
- b) For these same three projects, what modifications have we introduced over the last 12 months to meet the changing needs of our participants?
- c) Who (e.g., staff, project participants, funders, evaluators) was instrumental in identifying these needs and proposing the modifications?

- 38 We regularly examine project participant *needs* to assess if they are changing.**
- 39 We modify projects to reflect changing participant needs.**

Discussion:

- a) For the same three projects identified in the preceding question set, what steps were taken over the last twelve months *to examine* the capacities of formal and informal leaders at the local level?
- b) For the same three projects, what specific measures were taken over the last twelve months *to build* the capacity of these formal and informal leaders?

40 We ensure that local leadership has the necessary skills to carry out programs.

Discussion:

- a) For the same three projects identified in the preceding question set, what *activities* have we undertaken to help us identify specific areas of local expertise, strengths, and best practice related to project objectives?
- b) For the same three projects, what examples can we cite of local expertise, strengths, and best practice that were incorporated into project designs or project activities?

41 Our programs routinely build on local knowledge and best practices.

Discussion:

- a) Over the past 12 months, what has been the frequency and nature of our organizational contacts with policy makers?
- b) To what degree are these contacts part of a formally defined advocacy strategy?
- c) To what degree do these contacts promote equitable and participatory development?

42 We regularly engage relevant policy makers and institutions in dialogue that contributes to equitable and participatory development.

IV. Sustainability of Program Benefits

Discussion:

- a) For the three *most recent project design efforts* in our current portfolio, to what degree did we address the following five kinds of sustainability: (a) *environmental* (how project activities influence the quality of water, air, soil, and biodiversity); (b) *economic* (how recurrent costs associated with project activities will be met); (c) *political* (how project-supported innovations will be accommodated within the framework of existing laws, policies, and political institutions); (d) *institutional* (how the long-term viability of institutions created through project activities will be maintained); and, (e) *cultural* (how project-supported innovations fit within the framework of existing norms, values, roles, and practices)?
- b) For which kinds of sustainability (environmental, economic, political, social, cultural) do we have written policies that influence how we *design* projects?

When doing project *design* work, we routinely give adequate attention to:

- 43 Environmental sustainability**
- 44 Economic sustainability**
- 45 Political sustainability**
- 46 Institutional sustainability**
- 47 Cultural sustainability**

Discussion:

- a) Select three *current projects* from our portfolio that are at least three years old. To what degree have we addressed each of the following kinds of sustainability during the project's *implementation*: environmental, economic, political, social, and cultural?
- b) For these same three projects, to which kinds of sustainability (environmental, economic, political, social, cultural) have we paid *most* and *least* attention during *implementation*?

When *implementing* projects, we routinely give adequate attention to:

- 48 Environmental sustainability**
- 49 Economic sustainability**
- 50 Political sustainability**
- 51 Institutional sustainability**
- 52 Cultural sustainability**

Discussion:

- a) For the three *most recently completed projects* in our portfolio, to what degree have we addressed each of the following categories of sustainability in our *monitoring and impact assessment* activities: environmental, economic, political, social, and cultural?
- b) For these same three projects, to which kinds of sustainability (environmental, economic, political, social, cultural) have we paid *most* and *least* attention when doing *monitoring and impact assessment*?

When doing *project monitoring and impact assessment* we give adequate attention to:

- 53 Environmental sustainability**
- 54 Economic sustainability**
- 55 Political sustainability**
- 56 Institutional sustainability**
- 57 Cultural sustainability**

Discussion:

- a) Choose three projects that are *representative* of our current portfolio. What technical support to grassroots communities and organizations have we provided through these projects?
- b) To what degree has this technical support been timely and appropriate?
- c) What discernible impact has this technical support had on meeting project objectives?

58 The *quality* of technical support for our field-based activities contributes to project sustainability.

V. Partnering

Discussion:

- a) Over the past 12 months, what were our most important *new* contacts with policy makers, private business, and other NGOs?
- b) Which specific organizational priorities did we hope to advance through these new contacts?
- c) To what degree were these new contacts useful in advancing our organizational priorities?

We establish valuable new linkages to:

- 59 Relevant policy makers.**
- 60 Private business sector representatives.**
- 61 Other NGOs.**

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, in what *formal* institutional partnerships have we engaged?
- b) What evidence is there that each of these partnerships is helping us to meet our organizational objectives?
- c) What have been our *most* and *least* successful partnership efforts over the last 12 months?

- 62 We actively engage in productive partnerships with other organizations.**
- 63 We monitor the effectiveness of our partnerships with other organizations.**

Through partnering we gain:

- 64 *financial benefits* that enhance our ability to accomplish our mission.**
- 65 *technical skills* that enhance our ability to accomplish our mission.**
- 66 *new networks and relationships* that enhance our ability to accomplish our mission.**

Discussion:

- a) For our three most significant partnerships, what practices, if any, demonstrate the partners' commitment to work openly?
- b) For these same three partnerships, to what degree do all partners both contribute and benefit appropriately?
- c) What mechanisms are in place in these three partnerships to foster information-sharing and to resolve disputes among partners?

67 Partners openly share information.

68 Partnerships have mechanisms in place to foster trust and cooperation.

69 Individual partners contribute appropriately to shared goals.

70 Individual partners share in the benefits of the cooperative effort.

VI. Organizational Learning

Discussion:

- a) For three representative projects in our current portfolio, what impact indicators do we use to track our progress in meeting project objectives?
- b) What are some lessons that we have learned through our review of these impact indicators?
- c) For these same three projects, what indicators do we use to monitor whether project *implementation* matches project *plans*?

We routinely:

71 use results-based indicators to assess project *impact* on those we serve.

72 *monitor* project implementation against project plans.

73 achieve intended impact as captured through internal or external evaluation.

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, what is the single most *significant problem or challenge* that we have chosen to address?
- b) To what degree did our analysis of this problem focus on how each unit, department or division has been *affected* by it?
- c) To what degree did our analysis of this problem focus on how each unit, department or division could *contribute to its solution*?

74 We routinely recognize the interdependence of our organization's units, departments or divisions when *analyzing* problems.

75 We routinely involve multiple units, departments or divisions in meeting our major organizational challenges.

Discussion:

- a) What are two or three current organizational priorities?
- b) What information must be shared with people *throughout our organization* to respond effectively to these priorities?
- c) To what extent is this sharing currently occurring?

76 Important information is openly shared throughout our organization.

77 We have adequate information to respond to our priorities.

Discussion:

- a) Over the last month, what examples do we have of information that has been widely shared?
- b) How timely was this information?
- c) To what degree did this information help people do their jobs more effectively?

78 Shared information is timely.

79 People routinely have the information they need to do their jobs effectively.

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, what are some of the most difficult organizational challenges that we have faced?
- b) To what degree have we used teamwork to resolve these challenges?
- c) To what degree did team efforts help us meet these challenges?

80 We use teamwork effectively to respond to organizational challenges.

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, what are two or three important *significant* decisions that we have had to make?
- b) For each of these decisions, to what degree did we get an appropriate mix of viewpoints and an appropriate level of staff participation?
- c) In each of these instances, how *influential* was staff input in the shaping the decisions taken by our leadership?

81 Our leadership effectively uses staff input to strengthen decision-making.

Discussion:

- a) To what degree did staff meetings held during this past month lead to progress in achieving organizational objectives?
- b) What are some specific examples of organizational learning that emerged from these meetings?

- c) To what degree did these meetings help us to identify new and better ways of achieving our organizational mission?

82 Our staff meetings directly contribute to organizational learning.

Discussion:

- a) To what degree did meetings held during this past month include the expression and discussion of dissenting opinions?
- b) Over the last twelve months, what examples of innovation can we identify within our organization that represent *significant* departures from prevailing practice?
- a) To what degree are these innovations the product of personal or organizational risk-taking?

83 Even when they know that their opinions are not widely shared by colleagues or supervisors, people generally feel comfortable expressing themselves in staff meetings.

84 Our organization is a safe place for risk-taking innovators.

VII. Governance and Strategic Management

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, to what kinds of donors (e.g., bilateral, multilateral, major foundations, corporations) have we submitted narrative or financial reports?
- b) What is the quality of the information we have provided in these reports?
- c) To what degree have these reports increased donor confidence in our work?

85 The information contained in our reports to donors is of high quality.

86 Our reporting to donors demonstrates a clear understanding of their needs and requirements.

Discussion:

- a) With respect to each of the following areas, what are some representative actions that our board has taken in the last 12 months: fund raising; public relations; advocacy; financial oversight; policy definition; and, strategic direction-setting?
- b) What has been the discernible impact of these actions on our organization?
- c) To what degree is our board representative of our key constituencies and stakeholders?

Our board has contributed competently in carrying out such functions as:

87 Fund raising

- 88 Public relations**
- 89 Advocacy**
- 90 Financial oversight**
- 91 Policy definition**
- 92 Strategic direction-setting**

- 93 Our board has adequate representation from our key constituencies**

Discussion:

- a) Identify two or three major decisions that our *board* has taken in the last 12 months. To what degree have these decisions been consistent with our mission, goals, and philosophy?
- b) Identify two or three major decisions that our *staff* has taken in the last 12 months. To what degree have these decisions been consistent with our mission, goals, and philosophy?
- c) For the last two months, what are some actions taken by non-supervisory staff that demonstrate commitment to our mission, goals, and philosophy?

Commitment to our mission, goals, and philosophy is routinely reflected in:

- 94 decisions made by staff.**
- 95 decisions made by board members.**
- 96 the day-to-day actions of non-supervisory staff.**

Discussion:

- a) Over the last 12 months, in what strategic planning activities have we engaged?
- b) What conclusions about our external environment did we draw as a result of these activities?
- c) What changes did we make in our internal operations to reflect an enhanced understanding of the external environment in which we operate?

- 97 We use strategic planning to examine ourselves in relation to our external environment.**
- 98 We modify our strategic objectives based on findings generated through strategic planning exercises.**

Discussion:

- a) What are the three initiatives over the past year that have accounted for the most staff time and organizational resources?
- b) To what extent do these initiatives reflect our strategic and operating plans?

99 Our initiatives are developed and implemented in ways that are consistent with our strategic and operating plans.

Discussion:

- a) What are our major strategic objectives?
- b) What evidence do we have that we are meeting our strategic objectives?

100 We routinely track progress in achieving our strategic objectives.