Implementation Tips
for USAID Partners

Sharing Resources and Knowledge Among the Global CSO Community

Definitions

Active Listening—A communication technique that requires the listener to focus on understanding, interpreting and reflecting upon what the other person is saying.

Performance Review or Appraisal—A structured process to review and discuss an employee's performance of assigned duties, achievement of goals and fulfillment of responsibilities over a specific time period.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)—A structured, measurable plan to help an underperforming employee improve to the expected level of performance in his/her position.

360° Review—A type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients and others into the review process.

Supervision—The process of fostering and reviewing staff performance according to the defined standards of the organization.

Supportive Supervision—A process that uses dialogue and constructive feedback to help staff, volunteers or entire organizations improve their performance in pursuit of the organization's mission, while also setting goals for personal growth and development.

References

WHO
[Training for Midlevel Managers: Supportive Supervision](#).

Performance Reviews

Q. Why and how should our organization review staff performance?

A. Regular performance reviews (also called performance appraisals) can help create a culture that promotes individual and organizational success, along with teamwork. Performance appraisals allow management to track employee strengths and weaknesses, identify the best candidates for promotion, offer feedback for improvements and promote professional development. The performance review process helps:

- *Align staff responsibilities and goals with organizational or program objectives.* Performance appraisals often include reviewing an employee's job description and goals to ensure that responsibilities and goals are consistent with those of the organization or program.

- *Align staff attitudes and performance to the organization's values.* When planning performance goals, identify the values the organization wants to see reflected in an employee's performance beyond the execution of tasks related to job duties.

- *Recognize and reinforce good performance.* The review process provides an opportunity for recognizing and reinforcing good performance. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to engage in their work and, as a result, be more productive.

- *Identify and formally address issues.* Reviews reinforce ongoing communication by providing a forum for employees and supervisors to discuss problems or challenges and document the issues discussed.

- *Identify training and professional development needs.* When developing performance goals, the employee and the supervisor can plan for any training or support required to help the employee meet performance goals.

Items To Consider

An effective performance review process is:

- **Participatory**—Both the supervisor and employee should provide input. Feedback from peers and other managers may also be included.

- **Transparent**—All staff should understand the process and criteria used for performance assessment.

- **Applied consistently**— Regardless of whether the individual employee appraisals are conducted in phases or simultaneously, they should be done uniformly with all staff to ensure fairness and consistency.

- **Reviewed regularly**—The review process as well as the tools used should be checked regularly to ensure relevance, accuracy, and consistency with organizational needs.

How to Establish a Performance Review Process

Employees need the reinforcement of knowing that their contributions are valued by management and the organization. During a performance review, employees essentially want two questions answered: 1) What do you expect of me? and 2) How am I doing at meeting your expectations? To set up a performance review process, consider the following.

1. **Outline the purpose and objectives of the performance review.** Defining the purpose and objectives helps staff and the organization to understand and monitor the process.

Performance Review Process Sample: Step 1

Purpose

- To strengthen the organization by fostering improved performance and linking individual performance to organizational success.

Objectives

- Review and update job descriptions.
- Open a dialogue between the employee and supervisor.
- Identify professional development needs and desires.
- Establish and agree upon performance goals.

2. **Map the process for your organization.** With input from staff at different levels, tailor the process to the needs of your organization and decide on the following:

- What type of performance appraisal system do you want? One-on-one, 360° review—a type of performance appraisal that incorporates feedback from management, subordinates, peers, clients and others into the review process—or a combination?

- How often should appraisals occur? Annually, annually with a six-month review or as part of a probationary period?

- Will appraisals be customized for different staff—management, general staff and volunteers?

- Who will conduct the appraisals and for whom?

- How will information be gathered during the appraisal process and how will it be documented and used?

- How will the performance review process be linked to other organizational processes, such as pay period, supervision or quality assurance?

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Performance reviews—done with care and understanding—help employees see how their jobs and expected contributions support the mission of their organization.

For More Information

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3. **Develop performance review materials.** When developing forms and tools, consider fairness, consistency and functionality. Keep tools simple and user-friendly and test them prior to implementation. Update them regularly to reflect changes in the organization and workforce. The table on the next page outlines some useful performance evaluation tools.

4. **Establish a plan for implementing and monitoring the performance review process.** Develop a clear timeline of activities and list of participants in the process.

- *Establish indicators to measure the effectiveness* of key milestones during the review process. (For example, deadlines for developing, testing and revising performance review forms, dates for finishing a pilot process and number of performance reviews completed in a specified time period).
- *Pilot the approach with a small group of staff* to observe how the process flows, determine how easy it is to use and make adjustments as needed.
- *Launch the process* (in stages if needed) throughout the organization.
- *Assess and address lessons learned* to improve the process, make it easier for supervisors and employees to use and increase overall effectiveness.

5. **Train staff and supervisors to take advantage of the performance review process.** Conducting a performance appraisal is not intuitive. Supervisors and staff need training in how to complete the forms, communicate with one another and set goals.

- *Supervisor training should include:* explaining the purpose and objectives of the performance review, how to facilitate the performance appraisal using active listening, how to give feedback and encourage dialogue and set performance goals.
- *Employee training should include:* explaining the purpose and objectives of the performance review process, what to expect during a review meeting, how to handle feedback and communicate with supervisors and set performance goals.

When conducted by supervisors with care and understanding, performance reviews help employees see how their jobs and expected contributions support the mission of the organization.

Performance Review Tools

TOOL	USE	PROCESS ELEMENTS
Employee Performance Plan	Developed at the start of employment. Updated periodically by the supervisor and employee.	• Attach current job description. • Set and document performance goals for the upcoming year. • List professional development activities (based on organizational priorities and available funding).
Employee Self-Evaluation	Completed by employee first and given to the supervisor to incorporate into his or her evaluation of the employee.	• Review job description. • List achievements and constraints in meeting goals set in the Employee Performance Plan. • Rate performance according to the agreed-upon criteria. • List performance objectives for coming period. • List professional development activities. • Give feedback on supervision and support received.
Supervisor's Evaluation of Employee	Completed by supervisor after receiving the employee's self- evaluation.	• Review job description. • Assess performance indicators, such as job skills, dependability, communication, teamwork and professionalism. • Assess achievement of performance goals set for the period under review. • Include comments on overall performance.
360° Performance Evaluation (if conducted)	Used to assess the employee's performance by supervisor, peers, subordinates; results may be provided to the employee and/or incorporated into the supervisor's evaluation.	• Assess performance indicators, such as job skills, dependability, communication, teamwork and professionalism. • Comment on employee's areas of strength and areas for improvement.
Performance Improvement Plan	Used when an employee's performance does not meet the expectations of the position.	• Encourage dialogue and mutual problem solving. • Identify the job duties or responsibilities that are not being performed at the expected level. • Outline specific work-related examples of performance (poor, acceptable). • Indicate acceptable work performance standards and expectations that must be completed on a consistent basis. • Specify clear timeline for follow-up. • Identify how progress will be measured and evaluated.