

OCA
Assessment *action plan*
organizational assets management
capacity building

Chapter 4: Appraising Your Organization

4.1 Overview

4.2 Getting Started

- 4.2.1 What Is Capacity Building?
- 4.2.2 Linking Current Organization to Long-Term Goals
- 4.2.3 Who Should Lead the Assessment Process?
- 4.2.4 Five Tips for Building Organizational Capacity

4.3 Conducting Your Organizational Assessment

- 4.3.1 Organizational Capacity Assessment Tools
 - 4.3.1.1 The Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)
 - 4.3.1.2 The Technical Organizational Capacity Assessment (TOCA)
 - 4.3.1.3 The Close-Out Organizational Capacity Assessment (CLOCA)
- 4.3.2 Considering Organizational Assets
 - 4.3.2.1 The Board of Directors and Good Governance as Assets
 - 4.3.2.2 Inventory Organizational Assets
- 4.3.3 Inventory Activities
 - 4.3.3.1 Activity Wish List

4.4 Guide to Systems and Structures Needed to Succeed

- 4.4.1 Defining Your Capacity-Building Objectives and Creating an Action Plan

4.5 Summary

4.1 Overview

Whether you have received your first PEPFAR award, have been working as a subrecipient on another organization's award, or have never received funding from the U.S. Government (USG) or other major donors, your organization can achieve its goals by focusing on a common mission and building the systems and structures necessary to support it.

Organizational development, technical expertise, quality programming, and growth are not attained automatically. Most organizations achieve their goals by using a number of methods, including:

- **Organizational Assessments**—Analyzing your organization's current activities, resources, and capabilities.
- **Building Organizational Capacity**—Expanding your ability to manage additional work.
- **Long-Term Strategic Planning**—Defining where your organization hopes to go in the future, and developing plans for how to get there (see [Section 8.5](#)).

This chapter contains information and a set of assessment activities that can help an organization better understand its policies and [managerial, financial, and administrative systems \(4.3.1\)](#). Such assessments are not required, but many organizations choose to do them during start-up and yearly thereafter. Should you decide to conduct an organizational self-assessment, this chapter provides guidance on how to examine your organization's [assets, such as funding, reputation, and skills \(4.3.2\)](#), as well as its [activities and the services it provides \(4.3.3\)](#). Taken together, this information will help you create a [capacity-building action plan \(4.4.1\)](#), which will enable your organization to effectively carry out its HIV/AIDS programs and serve the communities in which you work.

Objectives

- Determine what systems and structures your organization should have to be eligible for USG funding and achieve its goals.
- Discover your organization's role by better understanding its unique abilities and assets as an HIV/AIDS service provider.
- Review the activities and services your organization provides to better meet the needs of beneficiaries.
- Unite your organization behind a common mission and plan of action going forward.

Key Terms and Acronyms

- **Activity Manager or "Field Activity Manager"**—For NPI, the USG representative designated to serve as an organization's in-country point of contact. This person may be from any of the USG agencies involved with PEPFAR implementation in your country.
- **Governance**—The process of providing overall vision, direction, purpose, and oversight to an organization through a structure—a Board of Directors—separate from the day-to-day management of the organization.
- **Management**—The day-to-day operation of the organization.

Skip Ahead

- ▶ [Five Capacity-Building Tips](#)
- ▶ [Organizational Assessment](#)
- ▶ [The Importance of Good Governance](#)
- ▶ [Guide to Systems and Structures Needed to Succeed](#)
- ▶ [Creating Your Capacity-Building Action Plan](#)

4.2 Getting Started

Around the world, thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are taking up the struggle against HIV/AIDS. They range from small groups of community-based volunteers and faith-based organizations to regional and international NGOs. While some of these organizations employ full-time staff and secure significant donor funding, others operate on a small budget, relying on volunteers and the efforts of the community leaders who support them.

Organizations like these may see incredible needs in their communities, but have very limited resources to address them. Often one or two individuals shuffle between positions to temporarily perform some functions with vacant positions. Frequently impeded by lack of funds, personnel, and leadership, these organizations are successful at meeting some needs, but may want to increase their services or their scope to better serve beneficiaries and achieve lasting results. To do this, organizations need to build their capacity.

4.2.1 What Is Capacity Building?

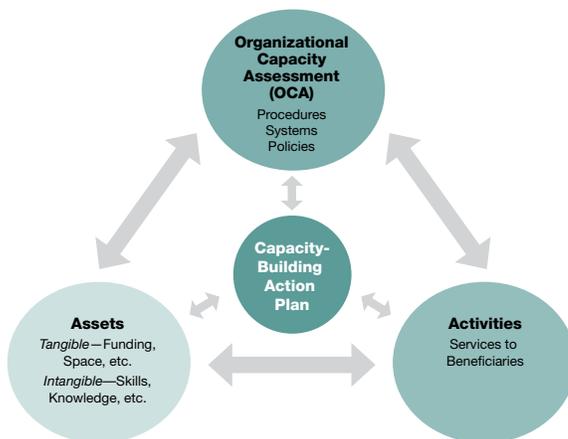
Capacity building is the process of strengthening the management and technical abilities of an organization. This results in delivering quality services more effectively.

Specifically, capacity building attempts to:

1. Build a stronger, more sustainable organization—including establishing formal or systematic organizational structures and developing long-term planning and strategies.
2. Improve administrative and program-management systems and abilities—including setting up an accounting system, improving the process of planning and managing projects, or hiring a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist.
3. Strengthen technical expertise—through hiring or training staff or volunteers in program design, best practices, and other similar technical areas.

This chapter provides three ways to view your organization, first by looking at its systems, policies, and procedures; second, by focusing on its assets (not just money); and, third, by examining its activities and/or services. Each perspective offers different insights into the organization's strengths and challenges. Those insights provide the building blocks for helping you create your Capacity-Building Action Plan (see Figure 16).

Figure 16—The Components of a Capacity-Building Action Plan



4.2.2 Linking Current Organization Goals to Long-Term Goals

The first step is taking a thorough look at an organization's systems, assets, and activities and asking the question, "Where are we now?" There are numerous activities that an organization may pursue to answer this question. However, determining which activities to undertake is a challenge, because organizations often do not know what systems are best suited for the tasks in hand, unless they go through a checklist of requirements and assess their own systems against this list.

Later, when the organization is ready, it may ask, "Where do we want to go from here? Are there new services for beneficiaries or new areas we should pursue?" To answer these questions, the organization needs a plan. Strategic planning is the process of creating the bridge that links current activities and funding to a longer-term vision and plan. Chapter 8 of the *Guide* provides a framework for undertaking a strategic planning process.

4.2.3 Who Should Lead the Assessment Process?

Organizational assessments and capacity building are generally inspired by a desire to grow as an organization or to improve effectiveness and efficiency. That desire may come from the Board of Directors, management team, staff, beneficiaries, donors, or a combination of these. Regardless of the source(s), once begun, it is important that everyone in the organization take ownerships of the assessment process and the results and action steps it yields. The organization's leadership must be willing to approve staff time and resources to make the effort successful, and the staff must have the time and commitment to make these efforts successful.

Therefore, the first key decision is to determine who will facilitate capacity building overall. As part of the New Partners Initiative (NPI) program, the organizational capacity of a grantee is assessed by one of the technical assistance (TA) providers. There are several benefits to using external experts to conduct an assessment. A consultant to the organization has an objective view of the organization, while the staff may be more comfortable offering ideas. Ideally, a good consultant brings knowledge of what other organizations have gone through in similar situations and helps to tap in to a network of other experts who can help you. That said, this process can be managed effectively by organization staff, particularly if financial resources are not available to pay for consultants.

As grantees receive TA from providers and strengthen their organizational and technical capacity, they may want to share their new knowledge and skills with their subrecipients (subs). By applying lessons learned via its own assessment and planning process, the prime recipient can help lead its subs in identifying organizational assets, gaps, and priorities. Building subs' capacity helps them to better implement projects and grow as organizations. It also can strengthen the relationship between the partners, with the goal of contributing to their mutual success.

4.2.4 Five Tips for Building Organizational Capacity

1. *Create a capacity-building task force.*

One person cannot undertake strengthening and growing an organization. Creating a special team to help define goals and carry out a capacity-building action plan will improve chances of success. Be creative about building this team. Consider recruiting representatives from the communities you serve, volunteers, staff members from different offices (if available), and some members of the Board of Directors.

2. *Set achievable goals and do the simple stuff first.*

With capacity building, it is important to separate the work you can do from that which you must do. Set goals that focus on what must be done, and make sure these goals are achievable. If getting started becomes a challenge, take on a few simple tasks first. The momentum from a small amount of progress can help energize the organization to take on bigger challenges.

3. *Set aside capacity-building time.*

Smaller organizations often barely have the staff or funding necessary to meet existing service-delivery demands. When is there time for capacity-building activities? Set aside designated time to focus on organizational growth. This may mean a few hours a week or a day once a month. The investment in time spent now will pay off later.

4. *Involve the whole organization.*

Changes in an organization may cause anxiety. Staff may wonder, “Will the new accounting system mean I lose my job?” or “Will these new efforts take our focus away from what I believe is important?” One way to address these concerns is to involve the whole organization in the effort to strengthen and grow the organization. Communication at staff meetings, special team exercises, and establishing clear avenues for staff involvement are essential.

5. *Tap into free resources and opportunities for funding.*

Numerous efforts are underway to build the capacity of organizations so they can better deliver quality services in the places where they are needed. There are free online resources, NGO networks, and even opportunities to get grants to help expand an organization’s capacity. The experience of researching tools, building your network, and applying for funding is, in itself, capacity building and can set in motion efforts to achieve the organization’s capacity-building goals.

4.3 Conducting Your Organizational Assessment

Organizational assessments and capacity building are generally inspired by a desire to grow as an organization or to improve effectiveness and efficiency. That desire may come from the Board of Directors, management team, staff, beneficiaries, donors, or a combination of these. Regardless of who provides the initial push, the first step in the process is to take a thorough look at the organization’s systems, assets, and activities. It is important that everyone in the organization takes ownership of the assessment process, the results and the action steps it yields. The organization’s leadership must be willing to approve staff time and resources to make the effort successful, and staff must have the time and commitment to follow through.

The underlying philosophy of organizational assessment is that organizations are organic and need to change over time as they mature. For NPI partners, the objectives of the organizational assessment process and follow-up are to ensure that by the end of a project, they have:

1. improved the quality of their management and program implementation;
2. developed tools, which can be reapplied periodically, to assess their progress and promote continuous planned improvement;
3. implemented tools to use with their subpartners to improve managerial and technical systems; and
4. maintained changes in their capacity over time that can be confirmed by analyzing scores against agreed-upon standards.

4.3.1 Organizational Capacity Assessment Tools

While there are many tools for assessing different types of capacity, NPI partners are involved in a multi-stage organizational capacity assessment process that spans the life of the agreement. It includes:

1. an initial Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) conducted at the beginning of the project;
2. an OCA and Technical Organizational Capacity Assessment (TOCA), generally conducted at the mid-point of the project; and
3. a Close-Out Organizational Capacity Assessment (CLOCA) conducted at the end of project.

4.3.1.1 *The Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)*

The OCA was designed to help NPI grantees measure their capacity against established standards. By taking stock of the policies, systems, and processes that enable an organization to fulfill its mission, the OCA helps grantees answer the question, “Where are we now?” Then, based on its analysis, the organization develops an action plan to plot the way forward and identify technical assistance needs. (See Annex Ia.)

The OCA tool provides a standardized framework to conduct a self-assessment of an organization’s policies, systems, and activities. The tool allows the user to rate the organization’s capacity—using a 1 to 4 point scale—in the following eight areas:

1. Governance
2. Administration
3. Human Resources Management
4. Financial Management
5. Organizational Management
6. Program Management
7. Project Performance Management
8. Leadership and Team Dynamics

The Process

Experts outside the organization facilitate the OCA. In the case of NPI, these include organizational development, financial, and technical specialists from the TA providers, who may be joined by a U.S. government representative.

The OCA process also involves a core team from within the organization at different levels, including representatives of the management, administration, finance, and technical departments and, when possible, Board members. By engaging such a cross-section of people, the process encourages learning, sharing, and commitment to actions and results. This motivates leadership and staff to provide the time and resources to complete the action plan.

Step 1

The core team of organizational representatives, along with the OCA facilitators, reviews the standards of practice in the seven management areas. The organization's team ranks the organization along a continuum of capacity based on how well the organization compares to standards in each area. This approach allows the participants to discuss and justify their reasons for the selected scores and brainstorm follow-up actions needed. The information is documented for later review. This step can be conducted in small groups or plenary sessions.

Step 2

Participants from the organization review and discuss the documented scores and rationale (without the OCA facilitators), come to a consensus, propose changes or clarifications, and identify priorities. This step seeks to build cross-departmental understanding of the issues and suggested strategies.

Step 3

Working with the team of OCA facilitators, the organization uses the findings of steps 1 and 2 to develop an action plan detailing actions, responsibilities, and a timeline as well as areas in which the organization may want assistance. A representative from the organization is assigned to monitor the progress of the action plan.

The Outcome

The OCA process results in a concrete action plan or road map for the organization to improve performance in those areas deemed priorities. Examples include: revising the organization's mission or vision statements, strengthening personnel policies, enhancing procurement procedures, or refining monitoring and evaluation plans. TA providers also analyze the scores to note trends and develop targeted assistance, such as tools or training workshops.

The OCA should be conducted annually to monitor the effectiveness of previous actions, evaluate progress, and identify persistent problems, new gaps, and strategies to continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

The checklist in Figure 17 is based on the OCA tool and can help you take a first look at your organization's effectiveness and health. The results of this exercise should offer a fairly clear picture of the systems and structures currently in place as well as hints about where there may be gaps.

Figure 17—Organizational Capacity Assessment Checklist

1. Governance

- ✓ Do you have a mission statement or vision? Strategic objectives and/or goals? Have you written them down and shared them with the entire staff?
- ✓ Do you have a Board of Directors or Board of trustees? Do Board members meet regularly, and what is their purpose? Do they have some sort of terms of reference written down? Do you have an organizational chart with reporting lines?
- ✓ Do you have legal status to operate within the country where you are working?
- ✓ Is your organization registered with the appropriate ministry or department of your government?
- ✓ Do you have a succession plan?

2. Administration

- ✓ Do you have documented operational policies procedures and systems?
- ✓ Do you have travel policies and procedures?
- ✓ What are your documented procurement procedures, and are they compliant with USG standards?
- ✓ Do you have fixed asset control systems?
- ✓ Is there a branding and marking plan?

3. Human Resources

- ✓ Do you have written job descriptions for each staff member?
- ✓ Do you have recruitment and retention policies?
- ✓ Are there qualifications for each staffing position?
- ✓ Is there a personnel policy manual?
- ✓ Are there staff time and performance management policies?
- ✓ Is there a staff professional and salary history documentation?
- ✓ Is there a staff salary and benefits policy?
- ✓ What is the role of volunteers and interns?
- ✓ Do you have an employee handbook that has been shared with all staff?

4. Financial Management

- ✓ Do you have an accounting system in place?
- ✓ Do you have accounting policies?
- ✓ Do you have a procurement policy and system?
- ✓ Are you regularly creating financial status reports?

- ✓ Do you have a fundraising strategy or plan?
- ✓ Do you have a plan for generating cost share as part of your project?
- ✓ Do you undertake regular audits?

5. Organizational Management

- ✓ Do you have a strategic plan?
- ✓ Do you have strategies for workplan development?
- ✓ How do you address management changes?
- ✓ How do you manage knowledge?
- ✓ How do you involve stakeholders?
- ✓ How do you address new opportunity developments?

6. Program/Project Management

- ✓ Do you comply with A-122 cost principles?
- ✓ Although you have subgrantees, what systems are in place to manage these organizations?
- ✓ What documentation is undertaken for technical reporting?
- ✓ What linkages do clients have to services of other organizations (referrals)?
- ✓ How is the community involved in the project?
- ✓ What consideration is given to culture and gender?

7. Project Performance Management

- ✓ What is the current project implementation status?
- ✓ What procedures are in place for field oversight?
- ✓ What are the service quality standards to which the organization adheres?
- ✓ What are the supervision guidelines to ensure program quality is achieved?
- ✓ Do you have a monitoring and evaluation plan?
- ✓ How do you determine quality assurance of the services being delivered?
- ✓ Who is involved in official communication within the organization?
- ✓ Are staff part of the decisionmaking process?

8. Leadership and Team Dynamic

- ✓ What type of management does the organization possess, and how does this influence the operation of the organization? the organization?

In addition to the OCA tool with its emphasis on finance, administration, and organizational development, there are assessment instruments that stress other aspects of your work, including program performance, technical programmatic areas and monitoring. Most tools can be customized to fit your particular organization's needs. The best tools are used in a participatory manner and the assessments are a team exercise. The key is to get a wide range of involvement and opinions and to guide those ideas toward an action plan that everyone can support.

4.3.1.2 *The Technical Organization Capacity Assessment (TOCA)*

The TOCA, typically conducted at the midway point of the NPI project, 1) revisits and examines organizational capacity gains since the initial OCA, and 2) assesses capacity in relevant technical program areas, such as OVC, prevention, care and support, etc. The TOCA process uses the OCA tool plus the relevant area technical tools designed to assess technical capacity in those areas. The TOCA process and steps are the same as in the OCA. (See [Annex Ib.](#))

The TOCA begins with a reassessment using the OCA tool. If a two-year action plan was developed during the initial OCA, the TOCA could start with a review of an action plan developed during the initial OCA, followed by an assessment of your technical capacity to address the component(s) of the epidemic on which you focus (OVC, palliative care, HCT, prevention, etc). As with the OCA, outside experts should facilitate the TOCA. Technical experts who know your organization well, but are not part of it, can be good resources to bring out issues that may not otherwise surface.

Step 1

The core team of organizational representatives, which may vary from technical area to technical area depending on the staffing configuration of the organization, along with the TOCA facilitators, reviews the standards of practice in the different domains. Similar to the OCA, the organization's team ranks the organization along a continuum of capacity based on how well the organization compares to standards in each area. Some of the areas in the technical tool are repeated in each tool, e.g. the "Management Information System" domain.

Step 2

After completing all technical area reviews, participants from the organization review and discuss the documented scores and rationale (without the facilitators), come to a consensus, propose changes or clarifications, and identify priorities. This step seeks to build cross-departmental understanding of the issues and suggested strategies.

Step 3

Working with the team of facilitators, the organization uses the findings of steps 1 and 2 to develop an plan detailing actions, responsibilities, timeline, and areas in which the organization may want assistance. A representative from the organization is assigned to monitor the progress of the action plan. The process results in a concrete action plan or road map for the organization to improve performance in those areas deemed priorities. This is an opportunity for an organization to understand its technical depth and breadth and to make decisions about the areas it wants to develop. As with the OCA, the technical assessment should be repeated periodically.

4.3.1.3 *The Close-Out Organizational Capacity Assessment (CLOCA)*

As an organization prepares to close out its program, a final assessment allows the organization to take stock of the capacity it has gained over the life of the NPI program. Nearly identical to the OCA assessment tool (4.3.1.1), it also includes an additional wrap-up section that allows for reflective discussion as well as a chance to summarize the organizations, prime challenges and successes. (See [Annex Ic.](#))

Objective and Overview

The CLOCA tool measures your organization quantitatively (scoring 1 to 4) and qualitatively (discussion within each section and overall wrap-up section). The scores your organization receives are not final grades, but rather points from which an organization may grow beyond its NPI funding. Discussion should be open and honest as feedback from the CLOCA will help inform your organization of areas where additional capacity building may be desirable to manage future donor funding. Final reports from the CLOCA tool are to be shared with the organization and are ultimately for the organization.

Standard Guidance for the CLOCA Process

- **Preparation:** Gather all materials the organization used and/or created that may be referenced directly during discussion. Examples of these are listed within each section under “Resources.” Also take the time to think about where the organization has grown and where challenges remain. Discussions with staff and subpartners are especially helpful during this reflection and preparation.
- **Participation:** Recommended participants may vary from section to section (e.g., some field staff may join for the Program Management section, but may not need to attend the entire CLOCA). Key staff may include board chair, executive director, finance director or chief financial officer, monitoring & evaluation officer, and human resources director. For discussion to be fruitful, it is best to keep the number of participants to fewer than 15.
- **Location:** The program site is best as that is where staff members and program materials may be accessed. If the CLOCA cannot be held on site, please remember to alert staff members needed for particular sections and bring all program materials for review.
- **Timing:** Set aside two full days for the CLOCA. Circulate an agenda before the CLOCA so that staff may plan to participate during the relevant sections (allow approximately 1.5 hours for each section).

4.3.2 *Considering Organizational Assets*

The purpose of inventorying an organization’s assets is to take a fresh look at the organization’s resources, i.e., the pillars supporting the organization’s ability to deliver on its mission. It is important to remember that assets are made up of more than money; they include people, skills, knowledge, relationships, and the ability to connect with the people in the communities you serve.

4.3.2.1 *The Board of Directors and Good Governance as Assets*

One of an organization's key assets is its Board of Directors. The Board, needed in most countries to enable a non-governmental organization (NGO) to register and operate legally, mainly provides oversight, but its members may also be advocates and fundraisers for the organization.

In NGOs, the Board of Directors is typically made up of volunteers and should be separate from the organization's management and staff. It may comprise community leaders, representatives of beneficiary groups, the organization's founders, and private donors. The Board should not include members of the organization's management team or other paid staff of the organization. The Board generally meets regularly with the organization's executive director and management team to review progress and provide oversight. Its primary interest is in overseeing the organization, making sure it fulfills its mission, lives up to its values, and remains viable for the future.

Governance is the process of providing overall vision, direction, purpose, and oversight to an organization through a structure—a Board of Directors—separate from the day-to-day management of the organization.

Management, on the other hand, involves the day-to-day operation of the organization.

Organizations are governed in different ways. Some Boards meet frequently, especially when organizations are young or are going through a lot of changes. Other Boards are more distant, meeting quarterly or annually to review financial and performance reports and to set goals for the coming year.

Although not an exhaustive list, essentially, the Board is responsible for:

- Defining expectations for the organization by:
 - setting and maintaining vision, mission, and values;
 - defining or helping to define direction (for example, helping develop/approve long-term strategic plan, approving annual workplans); and
 - creating and/or approving the organization's policies.
- Granting power by:
 - selecting, managing, and supporting the organization's chief executive officer (CEO).
- Verifying performance by:
 - ensuring compliance with governing document (for example, charter);
 - ensuring accountability and compliance with laws and regulations; and
 - maintaining proper fiscal oversight.

Board members may serve as public faces of the NGO, advocating on the organization's behalf. They may also take on fundraising for the organization by donating directly or soliciting support from other sources. (For more information on fundraising, see [Chapter 7](#), "Seeking Future Funding.")

The organization's management team receives its authority from the Board of Directors. This helps to ensure that the management team is accountable to the donors, community leaders, and beneficiaries. Management also receives general direction from the Board through the development of annual goals and long-term strategic plans.

Management is responsible for day-to-day implementation of policies, procedures, and activities to accomplish the goals of the organization. These include:

- communicating expectations—mission, strategy, policies—to the entire staff;
- managing day-to-day operations and program implementation to fulfill the expectations; and
- reporting results to the Board.

It is important to find a balance and distinction between the responsibilities of the Board and those of management. When roles are clearly defined, an organization will be better able to function and to meet the needs of clients, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders; deliver quality programs; and comply with rules and regulations.

If an organization is struggling to find the right balance, it should review its charter or other governing document, the Board's terms of reference, and the job descriptions of senior management staff to see what parameters are defined. If these sources do not provide clarity, the Board should define responsibilities and procedures more precisely. In the end, it is part of governance—and therefore part of the Board's responsibilities—to ensure that organizational roles and structures are clearly defined.

The [organizational capacity assessment](#) process discussed in this chapter is a process the management team should undertake with the approval of and oversight by the Board of Directors. Where it is possible, the Board may want to be directly involved in the process.

4.3.2.2 *Inventory Organizational Assets*

For this exercise, tour your office, project sites, and other sites where your organization works. Starting with the categories listed below, talk with staff, volunteers, and others, and note the resources you see that make your programs and organization run. If several people in your organization are participating in this exercise, have each person create a list separately, then come together and compare your results.

Consider these asset categories of your organization:

- **People**—Both staff and volunteers, including the Board of Directors. Who are they? What are their roles? How long have they been a part of the organization?
- **Equipment**—Computers, office furniture, vehicles, and other important items. Where or how were they obtained? Was anything donated?
- **Space**—Any real estate or property you use—buildings, office space, meeting space, a clinic, a community garden. Does it belong to the organization or the community, is it rented or donated?
- **Skills**—What training did the employees have in school or a workshop? Accounting? Health care? What skills do people have—even skills they do not use for their current job? Is someone a good gardener or mechanic or skilled at working with computers?
- **Money, Funding, and Income**—Money, or lack thereof, is often the biggest roadblock between what an organization can do and what it wants to do. What are the organization's sources of funding or income? Does it have any money in the bank? What options does the organization have for securing additional funds? Can the organization fund any of the capacity-building efforts out of its own funds, or must it wait to secure additional funds before moving forward?

- **Relationships and Reputation**—What relationships does the organization have with local and regional leaders? What relationships does the organization have with other NGOs in the community or the region, with private companies and businesses? Does it have any existing relationships with donors? Most important, what is its relationship with the communities you serve? What is your organization’s reputation? Your relationships and your organization’s reputation are not always formal agreements or easily quantified, but you should not undervalue this network of relationships and your organization’s reputation.
- **Knowledge and Experience**—Think about the special knowledge and experience people in your organization, including your Board, may have. This is slightly different from what have been listed under “skills.” Your organization’s experience may have taught you important things about your community, the people, the culture, the traditions, etc.
- **Mission**—Sometimes, what binds people together in a community is a belief in a common mission. For some, that belief is religious faith; for others, it may be community ties, national pride, or patriotism. A strong belief in a mission is a great motivator and can often be more powerful than money in getting things done.

4.3.3 Inventory Activities

Once you have assessed the organization’s systems, policies, procedures, and assets, you may want to develop an organizational strategic plan. While the organizational assessment and action plan provide a blueprint for improving the current operations of an organization, a strategic plan guides the overall programmatic direction an organization will take. When developing a strategic plan, an organization looks at what it is doing now and asks what it would like to do in the future.

An organization may start with a simple inventory; for example, for each activity, you may note who is involved, how often the activity takes place, how much time you spend on it, any related costs, and how you measure the outcome. Your list can be estimates and does not have to contain every last detail. The goal is to get a general overview of what your organization currently does. An example appears in Figure 18.

Figure 18—Sample List of Organizational Activities

Activity	Who	How Often	How Much Time	Costs	Outcome Measure
Fundraising	Executive Director	Monthly	2–3 day/month	No direct costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of RFPs responded to • amount of US\$ raised
Palliative Care Home Visits	Volunteers	Daily	30 minutes per visit	Home-based care kits, transportation	Number of households visited per month
Training Volunteers	Training Manager	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days of training • 10 days of planning, prep time, and post-training assessment 	Training materials, meeting room facility, refreshments for volunteers	Number of volunteers trained

4.3.3.1 Activity Wish List

Organizations often do not have the time to do everything they want to do, nor do they always know what needs to be done. Once you complete the list of current activities, begin a similar list of activities you need or want to do, but for which you do not currently have the time or resources.

Start with these questions:

- What services do our beneficiaries need in addition to those we already provide?
- What activities have we seen other organizations do that we could incorporate into our programs?
- What activities have we wanted to do for a long time but have had to postpone because of other pressing issues?
- What are some administrative management issues that we have not dealt with properly?

As you list each activity, think about when you would ideally like to begin each activity, assuming you had the resources and time. Is a particular activity urgently needed? Is it needed in the next few months, or is it something that would be nice to do?

Finally, for each activity, list what you would need (for example, funding, training, personnel) to make each one happen. If you note several things that are preventing you from moving forward, try to determine whether any one particular roadblock is in the way. Keep in mind how the lack of certain assets may be affecting your ability to move forward. Down the line, making this link will help you prioritize your next step. (For more information on securing funding to attain essential assets, see [Chapter 7](#).)

Figure 19—Sample List of Activities and Needed Materials

Activity	When is it needed?	What would it take?
Upgrade accounting system	Urgent	New software and training
VCT program	Next 3–6 months	Funding for training and test kits, volunteers, and at least one professional staff
TB/HIV training for volunteers	6–12 months	Technical assistance, TB/HIV home-based care kits

This is not a full strategic plan, but it is a process to begin the development. If you are interested in developing a strategic plan for your organization, your TA provider can assist you with resources and other organizations that have gone through such a process can be good resources as well.

4.4 Guide to Systems and Structures Needed to Succeed

Earlier, you listed [current \(4.3.3\)](#) and potential [future activities \(4.3.3.1\)](#) as well as the resources your organization has on hand. In this section, you compare that picture with a generic picture of the basic systems and structures an organization needs to succeed. This will help your organization think about the gaps it may need to address to succeed. Much of the rest of this *Guide* will help you to address these gaps by providing detailed explanations of the policies and systems necessary to manage USG-funded HIV/AIDS programs.

4.4.1 Defining Your Capacity-Building Objectives and Creating an Action Plan

The final step in assessing your organization is to bring all of your previous work together by comparing your existing organizational capacity, assets, and activities with your goals for the future to help identify gaps and prioritize next steps. The result should be the development of a Capacity-Building Action Plan for the organization.

The most difficult task in developing this plan is setting priorities. The best way to help resolve differences of opinion is to have your team refocus on the overall objectives of the organization. A well-developed vision or mission statement can help everyone in the organization to understand the overall priorities and explain why resources are allocated to advance those priorities.

Set Organizational Capacity-Building Goals

With your Capacity-Building Task Force, review the lists you created during your [organizational assessment \(4.3\)](#). Then discuss the following questions:

1. Given the work you are currently doing, what are you not doing well? What is inhibiting you from doing these activities better? Is it lack of funding, training, personnel, or something else?
2. Looking at your [asset inventory \(4.3.2.2\)](#), how do your current resources align with the needs you identified? Can you take on these priorities with existing resources, or do you need to fill in resource gaps first?

The analysis should identify a number of different things to work on. If there were more than five, they may have to be prioritized. If the capacity-building plan is much bigger than that, it might be hard to get started. Start small and save the rest of the list. As first goals are achieved, begin work on successive items.

Take each priority item and formulate a specific goal statement. A good goal statement states what is to be done and sets a deadline. For example, “We want to recruit 10 new volunteers from the community in the next 3 months.”

Next, identify a point person for each goal, but do not expect this person to do all the work. In fact, many people may contribute to the effort, but that one person should be responsible for facilitating and tracking progress and reporting back to the rest of the team.

Breakdown of Goals into Specific Tasks

What steps are necessary to reach each goal? For each step or task, think about what resources are needed to complete that task. Do you need money or people to complete that task?

Finally, estimate the time it will take to complete each task. Do not worry about getting this exactly right. If you are not sure, make your best estimate. You can always adjust your estimates later.

If time needed to complete each task under a goal is totaled, can you still reach that goal within originally estimated time? If not, you might want to adjust your goal or figure out ways to complete the tasks more quickly.

Document Your Action Plan

Build a document, spreadsheet, or project plan that includes the following example:

Goal #1: Recruit 10 new volunteers from the community in 3 months.

Leader: Mary

Tasks:

1. Define volunteer roles:
 - resources—volunteer coordinator
 - time—two days
2. Design and print fliers:
 - resources—paper
 - time—one day
3. Host volunteer promotion at local market:
 - resources—all staff members
 - time—one day (must coincide with market day)
4. Hold meeting with prospective volunteers:
 - resources—volunteer coordinator
 - time—one day (one week after market day)
5. Conduct volunteer training:
 - resources—training coordinator, training materials
 - time—one day a week, for three weeks in a row (starting one week after prospective volunteer meeting)
6. Take volunteers out on supervised visits to beneficiaries:
 - resources—experienced volunteers
 - time—one day (one week after training)
7. Volunteer graduation ceremony:
 - resources—staff and volunteers, refreshments
 - time—one day (one week after completing supervised visits)

Next Steps

The Capacity-Building Task Force should continue to meet regularly to assess progress. Be flexible and adjust plans as needed. Also, be sure to communicate regularly with the other members of your organization and create opportunities to involve them.

4.5 Summary

Managing USG-funded HIV/AIDS programs (or any public health or development service-delivery program) requires a solid organizational foundation to manage the various technical, administrative, reporting, and other demands. It does not, however, mean that an organization must be perfect before it can take on these programs. But it does mean that, to be effective, one must understand where the organizational strengths and weaknesses exist and put programs in place to address any critical gaps.

This chapter sought to help you identify your organization’s strengths and figure out which gaps are most important to address in the short term. While it is easy to focus on the gaps, it is also important to build on your organization’s unique abilities and assets as an HIV/AIDS service provider. By building on these strengths, your path toward eligibility for USG and other funding will be much shorter, and your capacity to deliver on your mission more effective. This is especially robust when your team, group, or organization can unite behind a common mission and plan of action going forward.

The rest of this *Guide* will help you further your capacity-building goals by providing an easy reference to specific details of the systems and structures your organization needs to be a successful “new” partner with the USG in delivering HIV/AIDS services under PEPFAR.

Resources

The list in Figure 20 is not definitive. You should consult your AOTA or TA provider to determine the best resources should you choose to do a particular assessment.

Figure 20—Online Organizational and Capacity-Building Resources

Tools and Resources	Description
Organizational Capacity Resources (http://www.ngoconnect.net)	A wide variety of resources on everything from budgeting to organizational governance compiled by AED on the NGO Connect Web site
Institutional Development Framework (IDF) http://www.ngoconnect.net/cap-idf	The IDF is an online series of modules to help NGOs use this powerful tool to assess their organizational capacity
CBO Capacity Analysis Toolkit (pdf) (http://www.aidsalliance.org/graphics/secretariat/publications/CBO_capacity_analysis_web.pdf)	A toolkit for assessing and building capacities for high-quality responses to HIV from the International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Developing Strategic Plans (pdf) (http://www.coreinitiative.org/Resources/Publications/AllianceStrategicPlanningTool.pdf)	A tool for Community- and Faith-Based Organizations from the Core Initiative and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance