APPENDIX A.2

Detailed Checklist for Needs Assessment Management Activities

This detailed checklist provides more specific guidance on the main elements to consider when planning, implementing, and managing a needs assessment. Adapt the checklist to the nature of your needs assessment (that is, according to the assessment scale, purpose, time line, and so on). This particular checklist is developed for teams who are involved with *large-scale* needs assessment projects, programs, or policies.

The checklist should be used as a tool for determining and documenting plans from the preassessment to postassessment stages. Think of it as a living document during the assessment process, and plan to amend it throughout the undertaking so it regularly reflects the current situation.

Focus or title of the needs assessment:	
Name of office or organization managing the needs assessment process:	
Name(s) of checklist preparer(s):	
Date the needs assessment will begin:	
Date of the needs assessment's planned completion:	

For each item that follows, you'll want to indicate who is responsible for each step, plus any deadlines for completion. This is a very long list, and not every step is expected to occur in a given needs assessment. Yet we hope it will provide you with a rather comprehensive list of issues to consider for larger-scale or complex needs assessments.

Overall Purpose of the Needs Assessment

- ☐ **Issue to be addressed.** Describe the nature of the issue (for example, problem, question, and so on) to be addressed through the needs assessment.
- ☐ **Purpose or goal.** What is expected to be learned from the needs assessment? Why is the needs assessment to be undertaken?
- ☐ **Use.** How will the needs assessment findings be used? Who will use them?

Planning and Management

- ☐ **Requesters.** Who requested that the needs assessment be done? Who will determine if it is successful?
- ☐ **Sponsor(s).** Who is sponsoring the needs assessment?
- ☐ **Expected sponsor contributions.** What types of sponsor contributions (for example, money, employee involvement, providing data, and so on) do you expect?
- ☐ **Authorizations to carry out the needs assessment.** Are there any authorizations required—such as by a government body or an institutional review board—for conducting the needs assessment?
- ☐ **Budget.** What costs are expected or required for consultants, travel, supplies, rentals, and other items? (Provide details of each cost item for large-scale needs assessments.)
- ☐ **Time.** How many days or weeks of employee time are expected for involvement with the needs assessment? Include time for all people involved at the different stages (from preassessment to postassessment) and the range of roles (from oversight roles to data collectors).
- ☐ **Other resources.** Explain other types and amounts of resources required.
- ☐ **Period for conducting the needs assessment.** Over what period do you expect the needs assessment to occur? When is the final needs assessment report to be submitted?
- ☐ **Plans for the scope of work or terms of reference.** What is the nature of work to be done? Typically, these features are included in a larger-scope needs assessment:

- Needs assessment purpose and major questions to be addressed
- Overall management plan, time line, and scope of work (including the hiring of any consultants, and so on)
- Data requirements and data sources determination
- Stakeholder or informant determination
- Data collection method and instrument development
- Data collection implementation (for example, focus groups, interviews, and so on)
- Data entry, sorting, and assembly (for example, data entry, data organizing, and so on)
- Data analysis—qualitative and quantitative (for example, content analysis of qualitative data, statistical analysis of quantitative survey data, assembling themes and patterns)
- Ways to assemble the findings (for example, constructing a story about the themes and patterns found, considering missing data and remediation approaches for handling missing information, clarifying the gaps, and so on)
- Written report preparation of the data (for example, writing a report of the analysis, preparing tables with findings, developing graphical displays of information, and so on)
- Reviews and editing of reports (for example, internally, by peer or expert reviewers, and so on)
- Oral reporting of the findings (for example, presentations on findings to internal and external audiences, community, and so on)
- Information dissemination and communication (for example, within team only, to external groups, community announcements in newspapers, and so on)
- Follow-up action planning after completion of the needs assessment

☐ **Responsible individual or team to carry out the needs assessment.** Which individuals or groups will carry out the different steps of the needs assessment? Be sure to differentiate between those who will manage and those who will implement (for example, carry out data collection) the work. Also determine how the work will be divided.

☐ **Internal, external, other.** Will the needs assessment be done by an internal resource (for example, employees of the same agency for whom the needs assessment is being conducted), by an external resource (for example, independent consultants), or through another arrangement (for example, graduate student interns, some internal and some external resources)?

- ☐ **Skills of the assessors.** Are the skills of the assessors adequate and verified? Is additional training or support required for them? What is the previous experience? Is sample work available?
- ☐ **Quality assurance.** What are the criteria on which the quality will be judged? How will we ensure that the needs assessment is conducted in a quality manner?
- ☐ **Conflicts of interest.** What are any potential conflicts of interest related to the planning, implementation, and management?
- ☐ **Products.** What are the products (for example, a report, a presentation, technical advice, and so on) expected from the needs assessment process? What do the sponsors expect to see at the end of the process? When are the respective products to be delivered?
- ☐ **Review process.** What are the plans for the needs assessment to be reviewed against different criteria: quality, appropriateness of information, and so on? Who will be the reviewers, and what is the justification for their selection?
- ☐ **Process monitoring.** What are the key benchmarks or deliverables to be monitored for progress in completing the needs assessment?
- ☐ **Internal communications.** How will internal communications occur so that all members of the needs assessment team are aware of the important aspects of needs assessment implementation?
- ☐ **Risks or constraints.** What are known (or possible) risks or constraints to the successful implementation of the needs assessment?
- ☐ **Credibility of the needs assessment.** How do we ensure that the needs assessment is viewed internally and externally as being valid, free from bias, and so on?
- ☐ **Costs and benefits of the approach taken in the needs assessment.** What are the provisions to weigh costs and benefits in choosing among different approaches to carry out the needs assessment? How can costs, efficiencies, and benefits be adequately addressed?

Data Requirements and Sources

- ☐ **Existing logic model review.** Does a logic model (results chain) exist? What are the plans for review and verification that the logic model is properly reflective of the current situation? If it does not exist, could a logic model be constructed, and who will be responsible for doing this?
- ☐ **Existing data.** What data exist about the issue of inquiry? What do we know about any gaps between current results and possible desired results to be achieved?

- ☐ **Data quality, credibility, and verification.** What do we know about how data were collected? Are the data sufficiently precise, reliable, relevant, valid, and so on? How will we verify the quality?
- ☐ **Data sources and access.** What are the data sources (for example, data systems, informants, reports, and so on)? Do we have access to them?
- ☐ **Useful missing data.** What information would be useful to know but is not available? How might we obtain it?
- ☐ **Data costs.** What might it cost us to obtain the data?
- ☐ **Data security.** What are the provisions for securing data and ensuring the protection of the data and the confidentiality (or anonymity) of sources?
- ☐ **Sufficiency of data and sources.** How will we know if our data are sufficient—appropriate, targeted, comprehensive, and so on? How will we know when we have enough data to guide decisions?
- ☐ **Sampling.** Will sampling be used? If so, how? Will a sampling expert be engaged?

Stakeholders and Informants

- ☐ **Stakeholders and informants.** Who (individuals, groups, community, and so on) are possible stakeholders and informants for the needs assessment?
- ☐ **Primary informants.** Who are primary informants? What information can they provide?
- ☐ **Secondary informants.** Who are secondary informants? What information can they provide?
- ☐ **Other informants.** Who are other informants? What information can they provide?
- ☐ **Outreach and contact information for stakeholders or informants.** How do we reach out to stakeholders or informants? Do we have contact information?
- ☐ **Communications and protocols for contacting stakeholders or informants.** What are the protocols (for example, obtaining approvals for their participation, sending letters of invitation in advance, and so on) that we must observe in engaging with stakeholders or informants?
- ☐ **Informed consent and disclosure.** Will letters of informed consent be prepared for informants prior to data collection occurring? Will notifications be prepared and shared with informants about how their information will be safeguarded or disclosed? Will ethics committees be involved in the process of preparing and collecting consent records?

- ☐ **Coding of informants.** How will codes be assigned to individual informants to track their responses and at the same time protect the confidentiality of the information provided by them?
- ☐ **Conflicts or biases of stakeholders or informants.** What are any potential conflicts that the different types of stakeholders or informants might have? What are any known biases?
- ☐ **Updating stakeholders.** Who else should be kept informed on the progress of the needs assessment (for example, groups potentially indirectly affected by the results of the needs assessment)?

Data Collection Method and Instrument Development

- ☐ **Question development.** What are the main questions and subquestions to be asked? What type of information do we expect to receive from the questions? What are probing questions that data collectors should be prepared to ask following lead questions?
- ☐ **Data collection methods.** What data collection methods are planned? What are the criteria for selecting the methods (for example, the method is likely to generate a high number of respondents, the method can be implemented within the budget and time constraints, informants usually provide multilayered levels of information with this method, and so on)?
- ☐ **Data collection phasing and triangulation.** How will the data collection methods be phased? How will the data be triangulated?
- ☐ **Instrument protocol development.** What topics should the instruments cover? How should the instruments be structured and formatted? Are sample instruments available? Who is to develop the instruments?
- ☐ **Instrument testing and revisions.** How will the instruments be tested? Who will be responsible for revisions and secondary testing?
- ☐ **Language requirements.** Are translation or interpretation services required? What will be the review process for translations?
- ☐ **Incentives and compensation.** Will any incentives or compensation be provided to informants (that is, for their time and effort)? What other arrangements will be made for the convenience of informants (for example, child care for focus group attendees, refreshments, and so on)?
- ☐ **Administration of data collection.** When will the data collection efforts occur? How will the efforts be divided and coordinated?
- ☐ **Selection and preparation of data collectors.** Do data collectors have the requisite technical skills? Do data collectors have the appropriate language and cultural or other backgrounds? How will data collectors be trained?

- ☐ **Approval of data collection plans.** Who or which office (for example, institutional review board) will approve the data collection instruments and plans?

Data Analysis Plans

- ☐ **Data system management.** What is the system for managing data (for example, a database)?
- ☐ **Data entry.** How will data be transcribed? How will data be entered into a database?
- ☐ **Data entry instructions and coding.** Are instructions being prepared for how to enter data? Is a "data dictionary" or explanation about how data are to be coded being prepared?
- ☐ **Data entry training.** Who is responsible for training data enterers? How and when will training occur?
- ☐ **Data entry timing.** What are the plans for monitoring the timing of data transcription and entry so as not to lose, in particular, the nuances of qualitative narrative data?
- ☐ **Data verification.** How will entered data be checked for errors?
- ☐ **Quantitative data analysis.** How will quantitative data be analyzed (for example, Excel, SPSS, and so on)? What would sample data reports look like?
- ☐ **Quantitative data analysis reviews.** What is the process for reviewing the correct interpretation and reporting of raw numerical data, statistical analyses, charts, and so on?
- ☐ **Qualitative data analysis.** (Note multiple items that follow.)
  - *Interpreting qualitative data.* Who is in charge of overseeing the interpretation of qualitative data, providing guidance, and so on?
  - *Content analysis of qualitative data.* How will content be analyzed?
  - *Categorization of qualitative data.* How will categorization of themes occur? Who is responsible?
  - *Coding of qualitative data.* What is the process for coding? Who is responsible?
  - *Data dictionary preparation for qualitative data coding.* What is the process for developing and documenting the data dictionary?
  - *Intercoder reliability for qualitative data analysis.* What are the provisions for multiple raters and for cross-checking of coding or ratings?
- ☐ **Data transfer.** If consultants or independent groups are conducting the needs assessment, how and in what form will collected data be

transferred to the needs assessment manager or team? How will respondent data remain confidential (where appropriate), and at the same time how will certain data be made available to the needs assessment manager or sponsor?

Findings or Results of the Assessment (completed after the assessment is done)

- ☐ **Current results.** What are the current results being achieved?
- ☐ **Desired results.** What are the desired results to be achieved? Indicate if there are stages of results (for example, one year out, five years out, and so on) and different levels of results (if any).
- ☐ **Gaps.** Did the research determine one or more gaps in results? What is it that should be achieved that is currently not being achieved?
- ☐ **Existing strengths.** What are the identified existing results that are positive or can be considered strengths? What is working well and can possibly be grown or further supported?
- ☐ **Alignment.** Is there an alignment between gaps identified at the strategic, tactical, and operational levels?
- ☐ **Prioritization of gaps.** Were the gaps in results prioritized? Based on what criteria?
- ☐ **Causal analysis.** Were gaps analyzed for primary “causes”?
- ☐ **Proposed solutions.** Were activities (that is, solutions) identified to address the “causes” of the gaps? How were the solutions prioritized?
- ☐ **Logic model or results chain development.** Was a logic model developed (or revised) to illustrate the findings? Were indicators and measurements (and any targets and baselines) elaborated in the logic model?
- ☐ **Capacity building.** How can capacity be built within the organization to achieve desired results?
- ☐ **Final recommendations.** What were the recommended actions of the needs assessment?

Written Reporting of the Data

- ☐ **Expected content.** What are the expected contents and sections of the report? In what order will the sections be presented? Are existing reporting templates or tables of contents available?
- ☐ **Format.** What are the formats indicating how the reports (for example, executive brief, full report, public information brief, and so on) should look?
- ☐ **Graphics and charts.** What is expected in terms of graphic and chart design? Will specialists in graphics and design be available for this work?

- ☐ **Report timing.** What are the time lines for drafts, revisions, and final versions of the reports?
- ☐ **Audience.** Who are the different audiences for the different reports? Should different audiences get different reports?
- ☐ **Report availability and dissemination.** How will reports be made available—hard copies, posted on websites, copies in public information or community centers?
- ☐ **Language.** In what language(s) will the report(s) be made available? Will report(s) be made available in the language of majority and minority stakeholders? What provisions will be made for those with low literacy skills?
- ☐ **Feedback.** What is the process for giving the supervising authority, stakeholders, consultants, and others an opportunity to provide feedback? Will stakeholders be able to provide feedback prior to the release of the report?

Reviews or Editing of Reports

- ☐ **Reviewers.** Who are the reviewers: internal, external, academic or expert, beneficiaries, and so on?
- ☐ **Reviewer guidelines.** What guidelines are given to reviewers?
- ☐ **Review schedule.** When will reviews occur? What is the expected turnaround time for reviewers?
- ☐ **Reviewer compensation.** Will reviewers be compensated in some way? If so, which reviewers?

Oral Reporting

- ☐ **Expected content.** What will be presented orally?
- ☐ **Format.** What are the formats of oral reporting: community briefings, podcasts, radio, and so on?
- ☐ **Visual tools.** What visual tools (for example, posters, PowerPoint presentations, and so on) will complement oral presentations?
- ☐ **Report timing.** What are the time lines for the oral reporting?
- ☐ **Audience.** Who are the different audiences for the different oral reports?
- ☐ **Communications.** How will stakeholders know what the oral presentation schedule is, who is presenting, and how to participate?
- ☐ **Language.** In what language(s) will the presentation(s) be made available? Will provisions be made available in the language of majority and minority stakeholders?
- ☐ **Feedback.** What is the process for giving stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback?

Follow-Up Action Planning after Completion of the Needs Assessment

- ☐ **Decisions.** What will the process be for decision making? Who are the decision makers?
- ☐ **Communication about decisions.** How will decisions be communicated?
- ☐ **Documenting decisions.** What is the process for documenting the decision-making process and final decisions?
- ☐ **Criticisms.** What is the process for documenting or acting on criticisms of stakeholders or doing both?
- ☐ **Formative evaluation of needs assessment**. What is the process for evaluating and making recommendations for how to improve the needs assessment process?