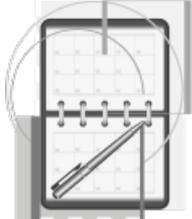


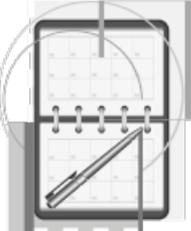
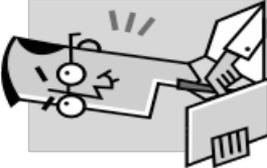
APPENDIX A.1

Implementation Plan for a Needs Assessment

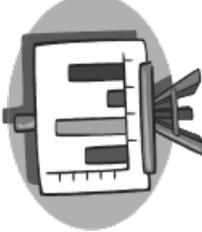
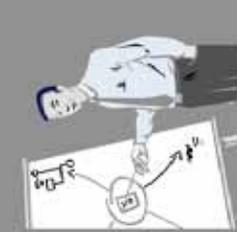
This sample planning table provides a general set of tasks for carrying out your needs assessment. Because each needs assessment is unique, this sample can be adjusted to the particular requirements of your specific needs assessment. For instance, a smaller-scale needs assessment may compress several of the activities into a few days of effort, whereas larger-scale assessments may require additional tasks, time, and involvement of partners to be able to appropriately adjust to the complexities of the organization. Nevertheless, the sample planning table can be a guide for you to determine what has to be done, who should be involved, and how long you estimate that it may take to complete a needs assessment.

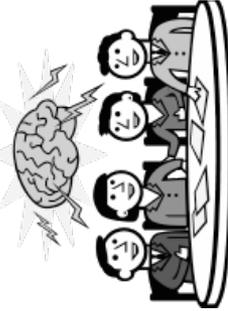
Completing a needs assessment typically requires a number of people with different roles and levels of expertise. Low-skill tasks, such as scheduling a meeting, can be completed by staff members with minimum qualifications. Medium-skill tasks, such as verifying the links between proposed activities and needs, can be completed by staff members with some specialized training. Finally, high-skill tasks, such as data analysis and interpretation, require professionals with task-specific experience and expertise. Depending on your organization, people may have titles that are very different from the ones we have used here.

Recommended Primary Tasks		Sample Activities Within Tasks
<p>Preassessment</p> <p>1. Establish the overall scope of the needs assessment.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who should be the main collaborators in designing the needs assessment. • Schedule a meeting and invite collaborators. • Create an agenda. • Facilitate the meeting. • Sketch out the main goals, tasks, and design of the assessment; decide if external experts should be engaged. • Confirm agreements from the meeting. • Decide how decisions will be made about the implementation of the assessment; for larger needs assessments, create a steering committee (SC) to guide the process.
<p>2. Identify the primary performance issues.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and create a list of performance problems and opportunities. During the assessment, more or different items could emerge. • Prioritize items from this list that the needs assessment should cover.
<p>3. Define the data requirements.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the type of data required and sources of that information. • Establish what data are <i>not</i> readily available, what you might want to collect, and what sources you plan to use. • Gather preliminary data.
<p>4. Create a management plan.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define objectives for the assessment. • Prepare a time line and deadlines for tasks. • Identify the assessment team members, roles, and responsibilities. • For more details, see the detailed checklist for needs assessment management activities (see appendix A.2 and www.needsassessment.org/).

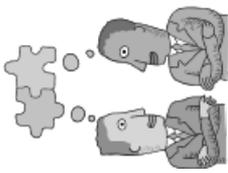
<p>5. Validate your management plan.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborators and SC members should review and critique the management plan. • Gather feedback from others who will have a stake in the success of the assessment: colleagues, peers, clients, partners, sponsors, community members, and so on. • Revise the plan, as required.
<p>Assessment</p>		
<p>1. Plan the data collection effort.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect existing data (for example, documents) to be reviewed. • Decide on data collection methods to be used. • Create data collection instruments: surveys, interview protocols, and so on. • Train data collectors (for example, facilitators of focus groups) • Schedule interviews, focus groups, performance observations, or other techniques to be used.
<p>2. Verify that data collection instruments will identify information about gaps.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and cross-check all of the instruments. • Ensure that information will be collected on both the current and desired results so you can identify gaps. • Review the data collection techniques with team members so that everyone is aware of the critical information required. • Obtain clearances from individuals or committees (for example, institutional review board) for data collection instruments and plans.
<p>3. Collect data.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the collection of data to ensure that all critical perspectives are represented. • Check that the instruments, techniques, and sources represent varying perspectives about the primary performance issues. • Determine when the assessment has enough information to move to the next task. • Enter the collected data into a secure database or central location.

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Recommended Primary Tasks		Sample Activities Within Tasks
4. Determine gaps (needs) by analyzing current and desired results.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the information collected to identify gaps between current and desired results. Verify that information collected from qualitative techniques (for example, interviews) is included in the analysis. Ensure that comparisons between current and desired results use equivalent information (for example, comparing apples to apples).
5. Prioritize gaps (needs).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use information collected to prioritize the identified gaps. Prioritize gaps according to size, scope, distinguishing characteristics, relative importance, or other criteria. Review the prioritized list with the assessment team members and SC. Collect additional information, if required, to refine the prioritization.
6. Determine causes of gaps.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the highest-priority needs, create a plan for collecting information on the causal factors that are likely leading to the performance gaps. Plan for a needs analysis and root cause analysis for each of the highest-priority needs. Prepare to collect additional information using multiple techniques and tools, if necessary.
7. Collect information about the causal factors (or root causes).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all significant factors causing the performance gaps. Use tools (for example, fishbone or fault tree diagrams) to assess the relationships among causal factors.

<p>8. Analyze and synthesize the information you have collected about both gaps and causes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link together information collected on gaps and causal factors. • Be aware that there are typically multiple relationships among gaps and causal factors (for instance, one causal factor may be related to multiple gaps). • Review the results of the analysis with SC members. • Prioritize needs and related causal factors using one or more decision-making techniques in this book (see Part 3B. Decision-Making Tools and Techniques).
<p>9. Identify possible solutions (activities) to address priority gaps and associated causal factors.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two or more potential solutions (activities) that can be used to improve the results identified with each priority gap. • Verify that potential activities address one or more causal factors related to priority needs.
<p>10. Evaluate the potential solutions (activities) using agreed-upon criteria so you determine which are most likely to lead to improvements.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish criteria to be used for judging the potential value of each possible solution. • Have the assessment team review the assessment criteria. • Judge each potential activity (that is, intervention, project) using the agreed-upon criteria.

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Recommended Primary Tasks	Sample Activities Within Tasks
<p>11. Recommend the solutions that will best achieve the desired results.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all of the information collected and the results of the analyses. • Summarize the findings related to priority needs and the causal factors. • Recommend solutions that are likely to achieve success.
Postassessment	
<p>1. Summarize your recommendations in a report or presentation.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the assessment of potential activities for each priority gap and causal factor. • Take into account the social, political, technological, cultural, legal, and ethical factors that influence recommendations or decisions. • Review and revise the summary on the basis of feedback from the assessment SC.
<p>2. Communicate your draft findings to your stakeholders.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before releasing your needs assessment report, share the findings with stakeholders for review and comment. • If you relied significantly on data from a few individuals, ask them to review the draft report as well.
<p>3. Integrate needs assessment results into activity monitoring and evaluation plans.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the findings of the needs assessment to develop a plan for the monitoring and evaluation of solutions (activities) that occur. • Align assessment, monitoring, and evaluation activities through systematic planning and follow-up.

<p>4. Evaluate your needs assessment process.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the activities of the needs assessment, and note potential steps that could be taken to improve assessments in the future. • For future needs assessments, report on recommendations for improvements to the processes.
<p>5. Document needs assessment efforts.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a summary or full report to communicate the needs assessment steps, decisions, and recommendations (see section 2 under the question "What Should Go in a Needs Assessment Report and Presentation?"). • Create a presentation to communicate the needs assessment recommendations or decisions (see section 2 for further discussion). • Send copies to all stakeholders as well as others who provided assistance during the needs assessment.