Adapting an Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool to Meet the Needs of Both the Donor and Civil Society Organisations in Papua New Guinea

Jessica Kenway

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Assessment and Evaluation (with coursework component)

December 2011

Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE)

University of Melbourne
Abstract

In global efforts to address poverty, civil society organisations such as community groups, local associations, and non-government organisations are important players alongside government and the private sector. There is a general consensus within both the international donor community and the civil society sector that strengthening the organisational capacity of these groups will assist them to possess greater legitimacy and influence. What is contested is how donors can support civil society organisations to monitor and evaluate their capacity in a way that is useful for both the organisation and the donor. Influencing this discourse is debate over the merit of strengths-based approaches for organisational development (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; Gray 2009), and increasing recognition of: the impact of the power differential between the assessor and the assessed (Reeler 2007); the complexity of capacity development (Brinkerhoff and Morgan 2010); and the limitations of baselines (Kelly, David et al. 2008).

This thesis explores these issues through a particular case involving an organisational assessment tool used with community groups in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Using an interactive form of evaluation, action research (Owen 2006), a team of Papua New Guineans and expatriates revised the 'Joint Organisational Assessment' (JOA) tool which had been first developed by an Australian Government-funded program (the Program) in 2005. The purpose of the research was to answer the question:

*How can an existing organisational assessment tool be improved to meet the needs of civil society organisations and the donor in the international development context?*

Through two action research cycles, over an eleven-month period spanning 2008 and 2009, the original Baseline JOA was progressively modified and trialled with nine diverse community groups in urban and rural PNG. A Repeat JOA was also developed that could be used to monitor changes in the organisations' capacity over time, and to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Program's support provided to these groups.

Data was collected from the participating groups through interviews, surveys, informal conversations, and systematic observation. Technical specialists were also interviewed, and documents and literature were reviewed progressively throughout the research. At the conclusion of the study, the results were shared with donors and community groups within PNG.
Internationally, there is no shortage of organisational assessment tools already developed. However, this research adds value by providing an assessment tool that has been tested in the PNG context, and that explicitly seeks to:

- Accommodate both accountability and learning purposes
- Incorporate elements of a strengths-based approach in order to build on organisations' existing capabilities, and generate motivation for change
- Provide the flexibility to accommodate organisations in very different stages of development through using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions, and interactive activities
- Interpret the significance of donor-supported capacity development efforts, in the context of broader changes that the organisation is experiencing.

A set of principles that can guide the development, review or selection of organisational assessment processes in other contexts was also identified through the study.

Future research could investigate how a process such as the JOA could incorporate: a review of individual, organisational and cultural values and the effect these have on an organisation's performance; broader systems thinking on organisational capability; and opportunities for feedback from an organisation's beneficiaries.
Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that:

i. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the Masters except where indicated

ii. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used

iii. The thesis is 20 027 words in length, inclusive of footnotes, but exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signature:

Date: 19 December, 2011.
Acknowledgements

A number of people helped to guide my thinking on the research described in this thesis. In particular, I would like to thank Martin Syder, Sabi Pati and Julianne Rumbi from the Australian Government-funded Democratic Governance Transition Program in Papua New Guinea for their participation in the evaluation team. I would also like to acknowledge other staff from the Program who participated at various times during the study, and to the representatives from the civil society organisations involved in the research trials.

The support of AusAID’s Democratic Governance Unit is also gratefully acknowledged. In particular, I owe them thanks for allowing me eleven months to refine the organisational assessment process and therefore produce a more participative process and an improved final product.

The revised assessment process drew on ideas from AusAID’s civil society program in Indonesia, the Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme (ACCESS). Valuable insights, particularly on strengths-based approaches were also generously provided by independent consultants Linda Kelly, Christopher Dureau and Deborah Rhodes.

In addition, the foresight and contributions of Keith Tuckwell, Dr Naihuwo Ahai, Jenny Clement, Regina Piam, Francis Kup, and Ric Caven from the Community Development Scheme in developing the earlier version of the organisational assessment process, were also invaluable.

The ongoing patience, and attention to detail of my supervisor Associate Professor Rosalind Hurworth is gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to my family and friends who encouraged me to pick up the pieces and complete this thesis, after being seriously injured in late 2009.
Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... 2
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY ........................................................................................................ 4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................................................... 5
LIST OF ACRONYMS .............................................................................................................................. 8
GLOSSARY OF TERMS ............................................................................................................................ 9

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 10
  RATIONALE FOR MY INTEREST IN THIS TOPIC ................................................................................ 10
  BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE CONTEXT ........................................................................ 11
    What is civil society? .......................................................................................................................... 11
    Does capacity and governance matter? ............................................................................................ 11
    Australia’s involvement as a donor to civil society in Papua New Guinea ........................................ 12
    The Community Development Scheme in PNG .............................................................................. 13
    The dimensions and strength of civil society organisations in PNG ................................................. 14
    The Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA) - up to the time of this evaluation ............................... 15
  HOW THE EVALUATION WAS SITUATED WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ..................... 17
    Capacity building .............................................................................................................................. 17
    Strengths-based approaches ............................................................................................................. 17
    Power differential .............................................................................................................................. 18
  THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS ............................................................................................................... 18
  OUTLINE OF THE THESIS .................................................................................................................... 19

CHAPTER 2: OVERALL DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION ............................................................................ 21
  OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 2 .................................................................................................................... 21
  EVALUATION DESIGN ........................................................................................................................... 21
    What is action research? .................................................................................................................... 22
    Why was action research chosen? .................................................................................................... 23
    Challenges with action research ...................................................................................................... 24
  TIMING ................................................................................................................................................ 24
  THE EVALUATION TEAM ...................................................................................................................... 25
  SAMPLING .......................................................................................................................................... 25
  METHODS USED TO OBSERVE, MONITOR, AND REFLECT DURING THE RESEARCH CYCLES ................. 27
  MAINTAINING RIGOUR ......................................................................................................................... 30
  ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ............................................................................................................... 31

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ............................................................................................... 33
  OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 3 .................................................................................................................... 33
    Initial questions guiding the modifications to the JOA ................................................................. 33
    Subsequent questions that emerged through the research process ............................................... 33
  THE FIRST ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE ............................................................................................. 34
    Preparation ........................................................................................................................................ 34
    Reflection ......................................................................................................................................... 35
    Planning .......................................................................................................................................... 37
    Acting .............................................................................................................................................. 38
    Observing and reflecting ................................................................................................................ 38
  THE SECOND ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE ......................................................................................... 40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>Community Development Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERD</td>
<td>Centre for Environment Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVICUS</td>
<td>World Alliance for Citizen Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGTP</td>
<td>Democratic Governance Transition Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRAF</td>
<td>Individual and Child Rights Advocacy Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRAC</td>
<td>International NGO (Non-government Organisation) Training and Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOA</td>
<td>Joint Organisational Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBCDFA</td>
<td>Milne Bay Churches Development Fund Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBCSA</td>
<td>Milne Bay Counselling Services Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACAP</td>
<td>Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PiCD</td>
<td>Partners in Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definitions within this thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline study</td>
<td>A baseline describes the situation before a development intervention begins against which progress can be assessed. Baselines can be collected at the start of an initiative, or after an initiative has begun (e.g. by looking retrospectively at records).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>A measure of how economical resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>An assessment of a planned, ongoing or completed intervention to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The intent is to inform decision-making, and to support accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Indicators can be quantitative (numeric) or qualitative (non-numeric). They provide a measure (or indication) of progress. Indicators need to be relevant and practical and reviewed annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>The regular collection and analysis of information to provide an indication of progress towards objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational assessment</td>
<td>An organizational assessment is a systematic process for obtaining information about the performance of an organization and the factors that affect performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative data</td>
<td>Data that is non-numeric collected through qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, observations and story methods. Generally qualitative data is expressed in a narrative or images, and provide understanding of people’s values, perceptions, motivations and reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative data</td>
<td>Numeric data that can be analysed using statistical methods, and can be reported using tables, charts and graphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>A set of criteria or standards that define expectations of quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adapting an Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool to Meet the Needs of both the Donor and the Civil Society Organisations in Papua New Guinea

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the research question; 'How can an existing organisational assessment tool be improved to meet the needs of civil society organisations and the donor in an international development context?’ Using an interactive form of evaluation, action research (Owen 2006), a team of Papua New Guineans and expatriates modified an organisational assessment tool that had been used with a selection of community groups in Papua New Guinea (PNG) since 2005. The development of the original tool, the Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA) and its revision in 2008 was funded by the Australian Government’s Agency for International Development, AusAID. The JOA focused on an organisation’s internal capacity such as its financial and human resource management, as well as its networks with other organisations.

The original JOA was significantly modified through the course of the research. A Repeat JOA was also developed which could be used to identify changes to the organisation’s capacity and the effectiveness of donor support provided for that organisation. The final intention was to develop a set of principles that can guide others looking to develop or improve an organisational assessment process.

Rationale for my Interest in this Topic

My involvement in this work started in 2008 when I was contracted by the company managing the Program (URS Sustainable Development Pty Ltd) to work with a team of PNG community development workers. We were required to review and make improvements to the JOA process, and to develop a Repeat JOA that could be used to capture changes in organisational capacity and assess the effectiveness of the Program’s support. The team was requested to consider current thinking in the international development literature on how to assess organisational capacity, but ultimately to ensure that the JOA process developed was appropriate and useful in the PNG context.
Background Information on the Context

What is civil society?

While the term 'civil society' is a fluid concept, a working definition has been provided by the International Non-government Organisation, CIVICUS, as 'the arena, outside of the family, the government and the market, where people associate to advance common interests' (CIVICUS 2003). Civil society organisations are generally understood to be formed voluntarily, and are focused on collective public action, and being not for profit (CIVICUS 2003; OECD 2006; World Bank 2010). Examples of civil society organisations include inter alia community groups, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, indigenous groups, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and women's groups (Goudsmidt 2007; World Bank 2010). For ease of reference, the civil society groups that were involved in this study will be described as 'community groups'.

Does capacity and governance matter?

The international non-government organisation community maintains that an organisation's capacity and governance matter. In 2006, 24 International Non-government Organisations (INGOs) acknowledged the need to strengthen the governance practices within the civil society sector when they signed the INGO Accountability Charter. The charter follows the rationale that increased accountability can help non-government organisations (NGOs) to uphold their legitimacy and influence. The charter states:

We recognise that transparency and accountability are essential to good governance, whether by governments, businesses or non-profit organisations. Wherever we operate, we seek to ensure that the high standards which we demand of others are also respected in our own organisations (INGO Accountability Charter 2011).

More recently, in early 2011, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Advisory Committee (OECD DAC) and other partners commissioned a review of capacity development and civil society organizations in preparation for the next international
evaluation on the progress of implementation of the Accra Agenda for Action\(^1\) (Guizzardi 2011). One of the key findings of this review was that:

\begin{quote}
Civil Society Organisations’ (CSOs) ability to reach their full potential in contributing to development has been challenged by capacity constraints. CSO capacity needs include analytical and adaptive capacities, the capacities for effective leadership, strategic planning, management and governance, the capacity to enhance accountability and increase legitimacy as well as the capacity for resource mobilization (Guizzardi 2011:12).
\end{quote}

A major challenge for donors such as AusAID is working out how to support civil society organisations, such as the community groups in PNG, to strengthen their capacity and governance in an optimal way (Simister and Smith 2010; Guizzardi 2011).

**Australia's involvement as a donor to civil society in Papua New Guinea**

PNG is currently the second largest recipient of Australian foreign aid, trumped only by Indonesia. PNG’s priority within the aid budget derives from Australia’s colonial involvement in the Papua and New Guinea colonies prior to the nation’s independence in 1975. Following independence, Australian aid has continued due to PNG’s low rating on various human development indices, and its proximity to Australia (AusAID 2009).

Australian aid to PNG is primarily designed to strengthen the performance of PNG government agencies, such as the Departments of Education and Health. Aid is also provided directly to civil society organisations (Commonwealth of Australia 2010). This assistance is in line with the international ministerial Accra Accord\(^2\), which acknowledges the contribution that civil society makes (in addition to government and the private sector) towards good development (United Nations 2008), particularly in countries such as PNG where government presence is weak (World Bank 2010).

---

\(^1\) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Accra, Ghana in April 2008 adopted a ministerial Accra Declaration and an Accra Accord, which identified challenges and opportunities of globalisation for development (United Nations 2008).

\(^2\) See previous footnote.
**The Community Development Scheme in PNG**

AusAID's primary support to civil society in PNG has been through its flagship program, the Community Development Scheme. The Program was initiated in 2002, and has continued until the present day through several reincarnations. In addition to providing funding for civil society organisations to implement their various activities, the Program also provided financial and technical support to strengthen the internal capacity of these organisations (Bazeley, Kelly et al. 2008). The primary elements of organisational capacity supported by the Program include an organisation's governance (e.g. systems of accountable and transparent decision-making), financial and personnel management, and information management systems. The rationale for this support was that civil society organisations with robust internal management systems would be positioned better both to deliver services, and to advocate for better services from government (Brinkerhoff and Coscon 1999; Fox, Stephens et al. 2005). Organisations with stronger internal capacity would also be able to manage, implement and report on donor-funded programs better. The relationship between the donor AusAID, the intermediary (the Program), and the PNG civil society organisations is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Relationship between the donor, the program and the PNG civil society organisations

---

3 AusAID’s community development program in PNG was titled the Community Development Scheme (CDS) from the period 2002 to 2007. In 2007, the program’s name changed to the Democratic Governance Program – Transition Phase (DGTP), and in 2010, the name changed again to the Democratic Governance Program. For ease of understanding, the Program is simply described as ‘the Program’ in this thesis.
The dimensions and strength of civil society organisations in PNG

An AusAID-funded review team in 2005 mapped the dimensions and strength of civil society in PNG, using a civil society assessment tool developed by the international Non-government Organisation, CIVICUS. The team mapped four dimensions of civil society - strength, values, structure and impact.

The review found that civil society in PNG lacked density and diversity. For instance, there were surprisingly few organisations given the size of the population, and there was little differentiation or specialisation either structurally or functionally (Fox, Stephens et al. 2005). The review team added that the organisations in PNG exhibited low levels of inter-group networking, and that their values and practices were not always democratic (Fox, Stephens et al. 2005). In his book 'Papua New Guinea: The struggle for development', Connell made a similar assertion, stating that other than the churches, civil society organisations in PNG were 'embryonic' (Connell 2005).

Furthermore, the AusAID review in 2005 noted that civil society in PNG is still, on an international scale, relatively young. In his review of AusAID funding mechanisms to civil society organisations in PNG, Tuckwell (2006) outlined the historical development of civil society organisations. The earliest structures of such organisations in PNG included the customary clans and tribes, which primarily focused on the welfare of their members. In the 1800s the arrival of Christian missionaries led to the development of organisations, which, for the first time, represented groups beyond tribal boundaries. The focus of these mainstream church-based groups broadened progressively from spreading Christianity, to delivering services (e.g. primary education), and more recently, but to a much lesser extent, advocating for improved governance by the PNG Government.

Resources to support the operations of civil society organisations in PNG are limited and fluctuate, but in recent years, funding from the Australian Government and other donors has increased, particularly in certain sectors (e.g. peace and conflict resolution, gender equality, and HIV and AIDS) (Kenway and Syder 2009). This has led to a 'mushrooming' in the numbers of organisations, with many disappearing once funding is no longer made available (Goudsmidt 2009). The influx of funding has also contributed to the rapid expansion in the operations and size of these community groups, which has often outpaced the development of their accompanying organisational systems (Kenway, Syder et al. 2009).

A review by staff from the Program in 2009, about the capacity of civil society organisations in PNG, found that they typically had weak governance and management systems and limited intra-
organisational networks. Systems capacity was particularly weak in the areas of financial, personnel, and information management in addition to governance practices generally (Kenway and Syder 2009). The level of networking and partnerships between the organisations, or intra-organisational capacity was varied. While there were strong networks within particular sectors, and between organisations and their community members, there were generally weak links between the groups, and between the groups and other stakeholders such as government and the private sector (Kenway and Syder 2009). What networking existed between the organisations was limited by the lack of a national civil society organisation peak body, constrained resources and the cost of networking in PNG, given the high costs of travel and communications (Tuckwell 2006). An additional challenge was that the organisations struggled to recruit and retain skilled staff, partly as a result of the high volatility associated with their funding.

What is less well documented are the strengths of these civil society organisations, particularly given the endurance of some groups in the context of significant financial, technical and human capacity challenges.

The Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA) - up to the time of this evaluation

In 2005, the Program staff developed a tool intended to help them assess the capacity of civil society organisations in PNG. This process was called the 'Joint Organisational Assessment', or JOA for short. The JOA had three primary purposes:

1. To support civil society organisations to assess their own capacity
2. To identify areas that needed to be improved either endogenously by the organisation, or with external support from the Program
3. To capture a baseline of the organisations' capacity prior to support being provided.

In developing the original JOA in 2005, Program staff reviewed other organisational assessment processes used internationally, particularly the process used by AusAID to assess Australian-based non-government organisations to accredit them to receive AusAID funding (AusAID 2010).

The JOA process that was developed in 2005 involved Program staff facilitating an organisation’s board and staff to review their organisation’s capacity and to identify areas needing development. The word 'joint' was used to describe the process, rather than a self-assessment, because the
facilitator was also required to contribute observations about the organisation. The process typically involved a series of workshops over three days.

The JOA focused on seven areas of an organisation's capacity including its governance, financial management, human resource management, administration and information management, project management, organisational identity, as well as its networks and partnerships with other stakeholders. The process looked at the strategic vision and identity of the organisation, but primarily focused on technical systems and processes rather than the culture practiced, or values held by the organisation's board and management.

Following this, the JOA facilitator was expected to write a report summarising the results of the JOA, and this was intended to guide the organisation's internal strengthening activities. In most cases the organisation went on to write a submission for funding from the Program. This provided a strong incentive for the group to participate in the process.

This organisational assessment process was described as a 'Baseline JOA'. The Program had also intended to develop a 'Repeat JOA' that would help them monitor changes in the organisations' capacity over time (this would be achieved by comparing the results in the repeat assessment with those collected during the baseline). It was hoped that this information would assist the Program to evaluate and account for any organisational development support provided for the organisations.

Between 2005 and 2007, Program staff facilitated Baseline JOAs with approximately twenty community groups across PNG. Initial indications were that the JOA was valued for helping to develop understanding between the staff from the Program and the organisations, and for identifying improvements needed in their systems and processes. However, after several years of facilitating the JOA process, Program staff identified the need for improvements. In particular, they wanted to make the JOA process more empowering for the community groups, reduce the amount of written material produced and identify how to collect information that would enable changes in organisational capacity to be assessed.
How the Evaluation was situated within the International Literature

**Capacity building**

The work with the JOA was situated within a shifting theoretical terrain within the international development community in relation to what constitutes organisational capacity, and how to develop and measure it in the best way. Academics and practitioners were engaged in ongoing debate over how to define capacity (whose capacity?, for what purposes?, in what situations?), whether to view capacity as a means or an end, and how to measure changes in capacity given the complex interplay between an organisation and the changing environment within which it operates (Reeler 2007; Baser and Morgan 2008; Kelly, David et al. 2008).

**Strengths-based approaches**

Another key debate that influenced our work regarded the relative merits of the development philosophy of 'strengths-based approaches', compared with the more traditional problem or needs-based approaches. Strengths-based approaches are built on the philosophy that the best way to achieve change is to focus on the inherent strengths or assets of individuals, organisations or communities (Hammond 1996). Well-known methodologies that fall under this category include Appreciative Inquiry, Assets Based Community Development and the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. While such strengths-based approaches have been used for over a decade in the social work, community development and education sectors, they have only recently gained prominence within the international development community (Rhodes 2009).

While a strengths-based approach aims to build momentum for change through focusing initially on the inherent strengths within an organisation, the problem-based approach starts by focusing on identifying problems or needs that require solving, often with development assistance (Rhodes 2009). Prominent advocates of strengths-based methods (Such as Kretzmann, McKnight et al. 1993; Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; Preskill and Catsambas 2006) argue that this approach helps partly to balance the inevitable power differential between the donor and the 'recipient'. They believe that strengths-based approaches empower the organisation to look within itself to address its own problems rather than depending on external assistance, thus leading to more sustainable solutions.

However, development managers frequently raise concerns that the strengths-based approach allows practitioners to turn a blind eye to difficult or sensitive problems (such as gender-based
violence or corruption), and does not help organisations to identify, in advance, future threats or risks (personal correspondence with development managers over a five year period). Indeed, Gray writes that strengths-based approaches are at risk of ‘...glossing over the structural inequalities that hamper personal and social development’ (2009:1). To this view, Patton (2002) adds that one strengths-based method, Appreciative Inquiry, has been criticised for being unbalanced, uncritical and discouraging constructive criticism.

The debate regarding which is the appropriate philosophy to guide capacity development is significant. Funding for capacity development (whether for civil society organisations or government agencies) constitutes a considerable component of the international foreign aid budget, and fundamental questions are being asked by practitioners and researchers internationally about the effectiveness of this aid, and how this development assistance can be improved (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2008; Brinkerhoff and Morgan 2010).

**Power differential**

Other relevant issues discussed in the international development community have included the need to acknowledge the influence of the power differential between the assessor (donors) and the assessed (civil society organisations), and the influence this has on the efficacy and value of a capacity-assessment process and the rigour of the data collected (Reeler 2007; Kelly, David et al. 2008).

**The Research Questions**

This thesis uses a practical case study of revising an organisational assessment process in PNG, to explore the issues discussed within the international literature. The main question to be addressed in this thesis is:

**How can an existing organisational assessment tool be improved to meet the needs of the civil society organisations and the donor in the international development context?**

As the work progressed, however, other sub-questions emerged. These included:

- What were the ultimate purposes of the JOA? Were these purposes mutually compatible, or were changes required to address how the JOA was being used within the program?
- How did the power differential between the donor-funded program and the community groups affect the groups' perceptions of the JOA process?
- What information should the program record and monitor from the JOA process? What were the needs of the donor, and what types and quantity of information was needed to provide a baseline for later repeat assessments?
- How was organisational capacity understood and interpreted through the JOA? How could a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods allow for a more flexible understanding of capacity?
- What could be learnt from applying a strengths-based approach to improve the JOA's function both as an organisational development and assessment process?

**Outline of the Thesis**

This first chapter has introduced the rationale and research questions for the thesis, and provided a brief overview of the key debates within the international literature that are explored through this study. Background information on the context of the work in PNG has also been described including the political origins of the Australian Government’s involvement in PNG, a brief overview of the nature of civil society organisations in PNG, and a description of the original JOA process prior to its modification through the research.

In Chapter Two, the evaluation design is outlined. This includes the rationale for selecting an action research methodology, and details of the evaluation including the timing, evaluation team, sampling strategies, and a description of the data collection methods utilised. Efforts to maintain rigour, and ethical considerations are also outlined.

The study included two major action research cycles where the JOA was modified and trialled with eight civil society organisations in rural and urban areas of PNG. The detailed methods and discussion of results for each of these research cycles is the focus of Chapter Three. It should be noted that in line with the action research process, the literature was reviewed progressively throughout the study in response to ideas or issues that arose during the trial of the JOA. Correspondingly, the literature is not discussed in a separate section in this thesis, but rather is included together with the results in Chapter Three. Reflection on the bias in the study, and the merits and challenges associated with the action research approach are also outlined in Chapter Three.
A set of guiding principles that may be useful in the review or development of organisational assessment processes in other contexts is outlined in Chapter 4. Ideas for further improvements that could be made to the JOA are also discussed.

The conclusions and implications for the international development sector are the subject of Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2: OVERALL DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION

Overview of Chapter 2

This chapter provides a general overview of the action research design, including methods of data collection, reflection and review. The efforts taken to ensure rigour, and the ethical considerations of the evaluation are also discussed. The particular roles played by me and the other team members in the research process are also clarified. The detailed chronology of the methods used within each of the two action research cycles is described together with the results in Chapter Three.

Evaluation Design

A number of conditions within the terms of reference for my contracted position framed and affected the evaluation design. Primarily, the contract required that I facilitate a process that would lead to a revised organisational assessment tool, but also to an improvement in how the Program staff utilised the tool. The research therefore fell within two of Owen’s forms of evaluation: ‘clarificative’ and ‘interactive’ (2006). Clarificative evaluation typically seeks to identify the underlying rationale and intended outcomes of the object of study - the evaluand - and importantly to identify what needs to be modified in order to maximise the intended outcomes (Owen 2006). In comparison, interactive evaluation focuses more on the delivery of the evaluand, and how this could be changed to make it more effective (Owen 2006). In this study, the evaluand was the Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA), and we were required to review the purpose of the tool, and identify how both its design and implementation could be improved.

The evaluation could also be viewed as a ‘developmental evaluation’ (Patton 2011). Developmental evaluation supports the development and adaptation of innovations (such as projects, products, organisational changes, policies or systems) in emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments (Patton 2011). In developmental evaluation:

The evaluator is often part of a development team whose members collaborate to conceptualise, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, ongoing process of continuous development, adaptation, and experimentation...(Patton 2011:1).
Additional conditions in the contract that guided the design included that:

- I, as the consultant, could not develop the tool in isolation, but needed input from the Papua New Guinean staff to identify the changes required.
- The evaluation team was requested to modify and build on the existing JOA as much as possible, rather than create a completely new tool that would be unfamiliar to program staff.
- There were budget and time constraints, particularly given the high costs of travel and communication within PNG.

After considering these conditions, I selected an action research process for the overarching methodology. Action research falls within the interactive evaluation approach (Owen 2006), and is compatible and mutually reinforcing with developmental evaluation (Patton 2011). The elements and advantages of the action research approach are outlined below.

**What is action research?**

Action research is a form of systematic, participatory and collaborative research and evaluation (Kemmis 1994; Owen 2006). The origins of action research lie in the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin, Paolo Freire's work on consciousness raising, and various liberation ideologies such as Marxism and feminism (Coghlan and Brannick 2005). While its first use was in the field of education, action research has become accepted worldwide in the past twenty years and is now being used effectively across a range of professions such as organisational development, community development, and health services (Kemmis 1994; Coghlan and Brannick 2005; McNiff and Whitehead 2006).

Several broad characteristics have been commonly agreed upon to define action research. Major features are that it involves a:

- **Series of learning cycles.** In action research, participants are involved in a series of learning cycles of planning change, implementing (acting) the change, and systematically observing and reflecting on the results (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988; Kindon, Pain et al. 2007). Analysis of data occurs throughout all aspects of the action research cycle, but is most visible during the reflection stage (Owen 2006). Through reflection, ‘conclusions, explanations and
even theories are generated’ (Owen 2006:223). A diagram of the action research cycle is included in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 Action Research Cycle**

- **Collaborative work.** Action research is a collaborative, participatory process. It democratises research, and allows practitioners to value their own observations, theories and ideas, and to test these through research with others (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988; Weiskopf and Laske 2005; McNiff and Whitehead 2006).

- **Immediate change and improvement as the desired outcome.** The purpose of action research is not just to generate knowledge for its own sake, but also to lead to an immediate improvement in practice. The theory behind action research is that through involving those who need to make a change in the research process, they are more likely to recognise the need for change, and to follow through in making the change (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988; McNiff and Whitehead 2002; Kindon, Pain et al. 2007).

**Why was action research chosen?**

I chose to use action research because of its collaborative nature, and its focus on achieving change and improvement. Action research is also a key activity recommended for Owen’s interactive form of evaluation (2006). I believed that the participation inherent in this approach would contribute to a greater sense of ownership, commitment and interest from my Papua New Guinean colleagues in both the process and the final product (Patton 2008b). Consequently, I hoped that this would result in the development of a JOA process that was more appropriate to the culture and context, and to improvements in how the practitioners implemented the JOA.
A further advantage of action research was that it could provide flexibility and responsiveness so that changes could be made to the research questions and methods along the way. This attribute makes action research particularly attractive in more complex and unpredictable situations where it is difficult to predict all variables, constraints, and possible effects at the start. It also allows the research to move incrementally at the pace of the researchers or learners (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). This was appropriate for the work in hand as the precise problem with the JOA was largely undefined at the start of the research process. Making incremental small changes to the tool and then testing these with community groups was intended to encourage the Papua New Guinean team members to become more confident to make further adjustments themselves. Thus the action research process became a capacity-building exercise for all members of the team, including myself.

**Challenges with action research**

Every research method has both strengths and drawbacks. There were two challenges with action research of which I was particularly conscious when selecting the research design. The first was that action research typically involves a considerable workload for those involved in the central evaluation team. This arises from the time required for group observation, reflection, and planning (MacNaughton, Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2001). Convincing busy practitioners, and their managers to invest this time can require some effort. Two of the seminal authors on action research, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), identify that a second challenge involves the need to create a 'common language', with a shared understanding of terms, and the values that sit behind these terms. Kemmis and McTaggart, argue that this is necessary in order to have a truly collaborative process, and to enable the group to identify the assumptions that underlie a particular way of acting. I was aware that given the cross-cultural membership of the evaluation team, this was a challenge we would need to address.

How these practical and cultural challenges associated with the action research process surfaced, and were addressed are discussed in Chapter Three.

**Timing**

The work that underpins this thesis took place over eleven months from September 2008 until July 2009. During this time I was contracted as a Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant to the Program. The bulk of the work occurred during a series of three-week inputs in PNG (nine weeks in PNG in
The first action research cycle took approximately three months. The second action research cycle took approximately eight months.

**The Evaluation Team**

There was a continuum of involvement by different stakeholders in the evaluation process. The core evaluation team included two Papua New Guinean Program staff (Assistant Development Coordinators), the expatriate Deputy Team Leader of the Program and me (an Australian). The evaluation team was involved in all aspects of the learning cycles (e.g. planning, implementing, observing and reflecting). My role was to act as facilitator, encouraging deliberation and reflection by the team members, and to have overall responsibility for ensuring that the JOA process was revised. Patton describes the evaluator’s role within a developmental evaluation as: ‘infus(ing) team discussions with evaluative questions, thinking, and data, and facilitat(ing) systematic data-based reflection and decision making in the developmental process’ (2011:1).

In addition, other Program staff, and representatives from the community groups were involved in the stages of 'implementing', 'observing' and 'reflecting'. However, due to logistical constraints (e.g. time) they were not involved in the 'planning stages' of the research process. For example, at various stages, up to another ten Papua New Guinean Program staff provided ideas and feedback on the JOA. In addition, the staff and board members from the community groups who participated in the trials were vital members of the action research process. These representatives participated in the implementation of the revised JOA, reflected on the process, and identified areas for improvement. Their involvement was critical to ensure that the revised JOA added value, and catered adequately for the wide diversity in the forms and functions of these organisations. However, only the immediate three team members and I were involved in the planning stages, where we made specific revisions to the JOA.

**Sampling**

A combination of sampling strategies was applied in order to select community groups that were to participate in the JOA trials. The population included approximately thirty community groups which were known to the Program, and which were of a suitable size to be appropriate for the JOA. Of these 30, nine groups participated in the trials of the JOA. The names of the groups, the type of JOA

---

4 This included organisations that employed at least three staff and had been in operation for a minimum of five years, and thus were considered to have sufficient legitimacy in their communities.
in which they were involved, the year the JOA was conducted, and the groups’ locations are included in Table 1 below.

### Table 2 Civil Society Organisations involved in the trials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Society Organisation</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Repeat</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Research Cycle #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Komuniti 1 Community Development Group</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Centre for Environment Research and Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Individual and Child Rights Advocacy Forum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action Research Cycle #2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Partners in Community Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Western Highlands Rural Women’s Empowerment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bata Community Development Foundation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Milne Bay Counselling Services Association</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Milne Bay Churches Development Fund Association</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Live and Learn Environmental Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sampling strategy differed for the Baseline and Repeat JOA. The primary method of sampling for the trial of the Baseline JOA was purposeful maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling. This sampling strategy involves deliberately selecting for cases that show diversity in areas of interest (Patton 2002). In applying this sampling method, we identified the primary variables that differed between the community groups. These included: the size of the organisations (with respect to their operational budget and numbers of employees); areas of specialisation (such as research, advocacy, service delivery); and their place of work (including urban and rural settings, and a cross-section of provinces to cater for the cultural diversity across PNG).

With respect to trialling the Repeat JOA process (the compendium process used to assess changes from the Baseline JOA), we followed criterion sampling (Patton 2002). The primary criteria for selection were that the organisation had participated in a Baseline JOA during the past five years, and that the Program still retained the documents from that original JOA.

A second sampling strategy for both the Baseline and the Repeat JOA was convenience sampling. Part way through the trials, the research budget was reduced. This meant that we were forced to
carry out JOAs in areas that were more affordable to travel to. As the JOA is a voluntary process, which can be very time intensive, we were also limited by the number of community groups willing to participate. It appeared that the organisations most willing to be involved were those who had received funding from the Program in the past, or were interested in seeking funding in the future. The potential implications of this bias are discussed in Chapter Three.

**Methods used to Observe, Monitor, Reflect and Analyse Data during the Research Cycles**

Action research typically uses data collection methods from traditional research (such as interviews and surveys), but in addition, places greater emphasis on the use of qualitative methods such as observation and tools to aid reflection such as keeping a journal (Coghlan and Brannick 2005). In her review of quantitative, qualitative and participatory research methods, Mayoux (2006) writes that the benefits of qualitative methods include their ability to provide a holistic understanding of complex issues, to capture underlying meanings, and unexpected outcomes. The analysis process is inductive and looks for patterns of difference and similarity across cases of interest. On the flip side, some of the cons of qualitative methods include being typically small-scale, making findings difficult to generalise, and increasing exposure to the bias of the researcher.

Thus, in this study, qualitative methods were chosen which allowed the evaluation team to collect diverse perspectives from different stakeholders, and to understand the particular case of each JOA trial in depth. The team worked to address the limitations of the methods used, through careful selection of the organisations to maximise diversity within the sample, challenging the bias of the researchers through bringing in external reviewers and perspectives, and using a mixture of qualitative methods to address the inherent limitations within any one method (for example observation complemented the survey of participants).

Specific methods used included:

1. **Document analysis and literature review**

   Document analysis can be an efficient method to establish the historical context of a program or intervention, uncover information not available through other methods, and for gaining an appreciation of the language and nuance of a program (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Document analysis was an important process in the early stages of the research. Documents reviewed
included Program reports on the history and development of the JOA, and previous JOA reports for each of the organisations assessed. These documents were already familiar to the rest of the team, so I undertook a separate analysis.

An initial review of the literature was carried out during the research process in 2008, and a second literature review was conducted more recently at the time of writing this thesis in 2011. The findings from both phases are woven into the discussion in Chapter Three.

The process for the review of literature involved: database searches; following reference lists from key articles; Google searches; and wider reading. Databases searched included the International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS), ProQuest and the Web of Science. Examples of search terms used included: ‘organisational capacity assessment’, ‘organisational development’, ‘capacity assessment tool’, ‘strengths-based approaches’ ‘appreciative inquiry’ and ‘asset based community development’. Other useful sources of literature came from conferences, and via colleagues who circulated articles of interest.

2. Observation

Observation provides unique and in-depth data, and has been shown to complement other data collection methods (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Patton 2002). The type of observation is categorised using the degree of participation undertaken by the observer in the monitored activity. Patton notes that a continuum exists between “...complete immersion in the setting as full participant, to complete separation from the setting as spectator...” (2002:265).

Two members of the evaluation team facilitated each JOA, with the Papua New Guinean staff always being the primary facilitator. The facilitators collected data through observing the behaviour and responses of the participants (i.e. observer as spectator), but also observed their own reactions in facilitating the process (i.e. observer as participant).

Efforts were made to increase the rigour of the observations by identifying areas to observe during the trial (e.g. participants’ actions, reactions, timing etc). The facilitators shared their observations immediately after the JOA during our team reflection sessions.

3. Interviews

Semi-structured group interviews
Following each trial, JOA participants were asked to reflect on their experiences through a semi-structured group interview. The semi-structured interview was chosen because it allowed us to be structured and systematic within each interview, and between interviews, while still allowing the flexibility to take a more conversational style and to respond to issues or ideas as they arose (Bryman 2004; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). The process was kept informal and dynamic but was structured positively with questions such as 'What did you most enjoy about the process?', 'What would you like changed?' and 'How will you apply the ideas developed through the JOA?'.

**Unstructured individual interviews**

A small purposeful sample of five national and international experts was chosen to review the modified JOA. Participants were selected based on their experience in particular areas. One of the Papua New Guinean team members and I then carried out face-to-face unstructured interviews with these experts to seek their feedback on the JOA. I also conducted telephone interviews with two staff from community development programs in Indonesia and the Philippines to seek their views on processes they used that were similar to those used within the JOA. The method of telephone interviews was selected because they were cost effective (rather than travelling to conduct face-to-face interviews) (Hurworth 2004), and in comparison to a written survey, they gave me the flexibility to ask follow-up questions. Topics discussed included the nature and purpose of their organisational assessment processes, the types of areas they focused upon, and how they managed the data analysis process. Written notes were made during the interviews to record the main points of discussion.

4. **Written survey**

Following several of the trials, a short written survey was given to each of the participants. The respondents were asked to answer questions similar to those in the semi-structured interview (what they liked, what they would like changed etc). The survey also asked the participants to score (on a scale of one to seven) how useful they found the JOA process for their organisation. This provided an opportunity for participants to provide anonymous feedback. While it would have been ideal to have a survey at the end of each JOA, this was not feasible in some cases, given time pressures (with the team having to catch return flights, or JOA participants having to return home during daylight when it was still safe to travel etc).

5. **Informal conversations**
An unstructured, but highly valuable method of data collection also came through informal conversations. These occurred between the Papua New Guinean team members and JOA participants after each trial. Importantly, as trust developed between the Papua New Guinean team members and me, we began to have more open conversations about their views on the JOA, and changes that were required. I learnt to watch their body language more closely, and to listen both to what was said, as well as noting what was left unsaid but implied.

6. Learning journal

Learning journals are a common and recommended method in action research to help facilitate the reflection process (Kemmis 1994; Coghlan and Brannick 2005). Throughout the evaluation, I kept a personal learning journal. Here I recorded my thoughts, observations and ideas on both the content (i.e. the JOA), and the research process with the team. The journal helped to provide a written record that could be used as a memory aid, but primarily it was valuable to help express my thoughts, and to assist with personal reflection.

Data Analysis

As discussed earlier, data analysis is most visible during the reflection stage of the action research cycle (Owen 2006). During the reflection sessions, I facilitated the evaluation team through an inductive process to consider the data collected through the various methods, and to identify themes and patterns of similarities or differences. For example, after each trial we considered the data collected through observation, interviews and informal conversations and used this to identify what had worked well with the JOA process, for whom, and why, and what needed to change in order to improve the next trial. This process generated a 'theory' that we tested during the subsequent trials.

Maintaining Rigour

A range of approaches such as prolonged engagement, triangulation, and creation of an audit trail were followed to maintain rigour throughout the study. These are described below:

- Prolonged engagement. Guba and Lincoln were early advocates of the value of prolonged engagement and persistent observation in order to gain a deeper, more accurate understanding of the 'object' or 'evaluand' of a study (1994). By spending several months in the field, often involving travel to remote areas of PNG, I was able to gain a degree of
rapport, trust and understanding with my research colleagues. This noticeably increased the quantity and quality of feedback provided. Even more importantly, the Papua New Guinean team members were able to build on decades of their own experience of working with civil society organisations in PNG, and existing strong relationships with many of the individuals who participated from the groups. This provided significantly greater rigour to the study than if I had conducted the evaluation alone or with other expatriates.

- Triangulation. Patton describes triangulation as "comparing and cross checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means..." (2002:559). Throughout the research, data was collected from different sources including nine civil society organisations of varied scales and locations, national and international experts, and from the team members and other Program staff. Data was collected using a range of methods such as written surveys, interviews, observation etc. Using a variety of methods helped to compensate for the inherent limitations within any particular method (Patton 2002). For example observation helped us to understand the dynamic between the facilitator and the participants, while the written survey allowed participants to express critical views that they were not comfortable to express verbally.

- Audit trail. Morse and Field (1995) explain that an audit trail allows an independent reader to follow the decisions and steps within a research study and to understand what systems were used to organise data. The audit trail used within this study including keeping a record of all quotes collected from participants involved in the trials of the JOA. For each quote, information has been retained on the position of the person who made the quote, the organisation they came from, and the date the quote was collected. Given the small number of quotes used in this thesis, the source for all quotes are included within the text, and not coded.

**Ethical Considerations**

As all data used in this thesis were collected for the purposes of a work assignment, and prior to the author undertaking this thesis, ethics approval from Melbourne University was not required for this study. However ethical considerations helped to guide the approaches and methods undertaken.
The organisations involved in the trials gave 'informed consent' (Brydon in Desai and Potter 2006). Prior to agreeing to participate in the JOA trials, the organisations were sent a written letter, and a follow up phone call from Program staff. The purpose of this correspondence was to inform the organisations' staff about what was likely to occur during the trials, what the intended outcomes of the trials were for the Program and the donor, AusAID, and what affect this would have on the organisation's ongoing relationship with the Program. In particular, it was made clear that eligibility for future funding was not contingent on their participation in the research. The organisations were then given several weeks to decide if they wished to volunteer for the JOA trials. Verbal consent was also given by the participants for the use of the photographs in various printed materials produced and used by the Program.

Informed consent and recognition of power is essential in any study, but arguably particularly so for work conducted in a developing country context where the donor is a past colonial ruler (Smith 2007). Considering the broader context in which these organisations are placed (Mercer 2006), there is an extreme differential in power relations between the community groups and the Program and its staff. It is thus acknowledged that despite considerable efforts to address this through the work undertaken (e.g. through using the action research process which was intended to empower the Papua New Guinean participants and facilitators etc) this difference in power could have resulted in bias in the organisations' feedback on the JOA process. This issue is discussed further in Chapter Four.

Having described how the action research cycles were prepared for and undertaken, the following section discusses the associated results.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Chapter 3

This chapter discusses in more detail the two action research cycles, which aimed to improve the Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA). To recap, the JOA is a process used by an AusAID-funded program to assess the capacity of community groups in Papua New Guinea (PNG). During the first action research cycle, the Baseline JOA was revised, and a first draft of the Repeat JOA was developed. These versions were then trialled with several community groups. After a period of reflection and analysis, the team made considerable changes to the Baseline and Repeat JOA. The revised versions were then trialled with six community groups through the second action research cycle.

Initial questions guiding the modifications to the JOA

At the start of the first cycle, the evaluation team was focused on streamlining the JOA so that information could be collected more easily, and analysed across organisations over time. Three questions guided the early reflection and planning stages of the first action research cycle. These comprised (in the order of work undertaken):

1. What could be learned from the Program staffs’ existing experience in implementing the JOA?
2. What could be learnt from organisational assessment processes used in similar community development programs in other countries?
3. What changes were needed in order to facilitate the JOA more easily, and to analyse and report the changes in organisational capacity?

Subsequent questions that emerged through the research process

During the first action research cycle, the team identified significant issues, both with the original JOA, and with the initial revisions that the team had made to the JOA process. The team came to realise that we had been focusing on the needs of the Program and donor, and giving little attention to the needs of the participating community groups. This led to a series of deeper questions,
culminating in several micro-scale research cycles where we posed and solved inter-related problems based on our new experiences and insights - a typical feature of the action research process (Kemmis 1994). These deeper series of questions included:

4. What were the ultimate purposes of the JOA? Were these purposes mutually compatible, or were changes required to address how the JOA was being used within the Program?

5. How did the power differential between the donor-funded program and the community groups affect the groups’ perceptions of the JOA process?

6. What information should the Program record and monitor from the JOA process? What were the needs of the donor, and what types and quantity of information was needed to provide a baseline for later repeat assessments?

7. How was organisational capacity understood and interpreted through the JOA? How could a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods allow for a more flexible understanding of capacity?

8. What could be learnt from applying a strengths-based approach to improve the JOA’s function both as an organisational development and assessment process?

The team’s reflections and conclusions in relation to these questions are discussed, together with the consequent changes made to the Baseline and Repeat JOA. How our revised approach fits with the literature is also analysed. Following this, an explanation of how the significantly revised Baseline and Repeat JOA were trialled with six community groups through the second action research cycle is presented.

The chapter concludes with a reflection on the bias in the study, and the merits and challenges associated with the action research approach.

**The First Action Research Cycle**

*Preparation*

As described in the previous chapter, the action research process includes a series of cycles of planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. In addition, Coughlan and Brannick (2005) identify several preparatory steps, which should ideally occur before the action research cycle begins. The first of these involves defining the need for change, and the desired future state, in order to set the boundaries for the research. These steps had broadly been outlined in the terms of reference I was
given for the consultancy. I developed this understanding further through consultations with the senior program managers, and reviewing relevant Program documents.

The next preparatory steps defined by Coughlan and Brannick (2005) are to identify and develop the evaluation team, and to establish collaborative relationships with the team members. The program managers had already selected the evaluation team, but I made efforts to build understanding and trust with the team members through spending time with each of them, and getting to know their interests and background.

While these preparatory steps were useful, ultimately the real understanding of the purpose and possibilities for the JOA process, and the relationships with the team members were only developed through the action research process itself. Thus, the team quickly moved from these preparatory stages into the research cycle.

One final preparatory step remained, however. This was to define the appropriate point of entry into the action research cycle, which can be a difficult decision. Because the other team members had already been implementing the JOA for several years, I felt that we should start with the 'reflection' part of the cycle. The benefit of starting at this point was that it demonstrated immediately that the existing experience and skills of the Papua New Guinean staff was valued. I felt this to be important so that the idea of sharing power became established from the outset.

**Reflection**

After the initial preparatory stages of clarifying the context and purpose for the research, we started the first action research cycle with a period of reflection. I facilitated the evaluation team and a selection of other Program staff to reflect on their experiences with the previous version of the JOA in order to identify what had worked well, and their ideas for improvement.

**What were the strengths and weaknesses of the current JOA?**

The initial reflection identified a number of strengths within the existing JOA. In particular, staff commented that through facilitating the JOA they had been able to build their understanding and rapport with the community group, and the JOA had provided a framework for a thorough review of the groups' operational systems.

However, there were many aspects of the JOA that were not appreciated by the staff. Issues that were raised included:
• The JOA process was too long, often taking three full days with each group.
• Additional weeks were needed to prepare and write the JOA reports.
• Staff were unsure which questions were most important (as the JOA included over ten pages of qualitative questions).

Consequently in-depth answers were written for every question, resulting in JOA reports being up to 25 pages in length. Program staff rarely read these JOA reports, and it was unclear if they were valued or ever used by the organisation (other than to apply for Program funding). Additionally, there were many terms that were unfamiliar to the staff, and so these were interpreted in different ways (e.g. legitimacy and transparency). This made it difficult to compare results across organisations.

The evaluation team concluded that the JOA required significant changes, although there were strengths in the existing process that should be maintained, and promoted to others within the program.

What did the team learn from the review of other similar organisational assessment processes?

In addition to the team’s review of their experience with the JOA, I examined similar organisational assessment tools used in community development programs in Indonesia and the Philippines to identify approaches that could be adopted for the Papua New Guinean setting. After reviewing the tools, I conducted telephone interviews with the Program Directors and Evaluation Advisors from both programs about the efficacy of their assessment processes and potential improvements. I then presented the tools, and my analysis of their strengths and weaknesses to the evaluation team.

For example, the organisational assessment process used in the AusAID-funded Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) involved a one-page scorecard with a series of 20 scaled (quantitative) questions. The questions related to similar aspects of capacity covered within the JOA, such as strategy, leadership, staff, management systems etc. For each question, the organisation was asked to assess the degree to which they had met expectations (i.e. A = consistently failed to meet expectations; E = consistently exceeded expectations).

5 The Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme (ACCESS) is delivered in Indonesia and the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) program is implemented in the Philippines. Both are AusAID funded.
The evaluation team appreciated the brevity of the scorecard, and the ease with which the results could be analysed electronically, and reported graphically. However, there were concerns about using 'expectations' as the only measure of change, given that there were no rubrics or standards of quality defined, and responses could vary significantly depending on who was involved in the assessment.

Meanwhile, the organisational assessment process used in the AusAID-funded program in Indonesia was more qualitative in nature than the Philippines scorecard. Similar elements of organisational capacity were reviewed, but this time, the participants described the previous year's situation, and what had changed in the year being assessed. The organisation then scored the degree of change in that area of organisational capacity on a three point scale: 'no change', 'a little change', and 'considerable change'.

In the end, the evaluation team decided to incorporate elements of the scaled-questions used in the Philippines scorecard, but to use a different unit of measurement (a scale of one to seven).

**Planning**

Drawing on these reflections, the team made considerable modifications to the Baseline JOA and developed a first draft of the Repeat JOA. The revised JOA was mainly quantitative with participants asked to rank their organisation on a numerical sliding scale (1-7) in relation to a series of pre-determined questions (see Figure 3). This provided a relatively quick assessment with data that could be recorded and analysed easily. Similarly, the Repeat JOA included the same questions as the Baseline JOA, with an additional question for the organisation to explain why the changes had occurred.
Figure 3 Excerpt from the First Revision to the Baseline JOA - Scaled-Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Organisation Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How clearly has the organisation defined their goal? (where 1 = not at all, 7 = greatly, NA = not applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How closely do their activities match their goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the organisation have a strategic plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ yes and it is current ☐ yes but it is out of date ☐ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How involved were staff in the development of the strategic plan or document?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acting**

These versions of the Baseline and Repeat JOA were then trialled with three community groups. The Baseline JOA was trialled with the community-based organisation 'Komuniti 1' which is located outside the PNG provincial town of Mount Hagan. Then the Repeat JOA was trialled with the national advocacy group 'Centre for Environmental Research and Development' and the 'Individual and Child Rights Advocacy Forum', which are based in Port Moresby. \(^6\)

**Observing and reflecting**

The first three trials gave me, as a non-Papua New Guinean, a valuable insight into the diversity of organisations the Program was looking to support. For example, the Centre for Environmental Research and Development implemented projects funded by several donors across the country, but had few staff, and limited organisational systems. The organisation 'Komuniti 1' on the other hand was based in a remote part of PNG with no electricity and limited access to any external funding, but operated through the strength of several hundred community volunteers (see Photo 2). So a difficulty was that the Program was aiming to develop a JOA process that would be relevant to such diverse organisations.

\(^6\) Repeat JOAs could be conducted because Baseline JOAs had already been facilitated with these organisations prior to the research process in 2006.
Several methods were used to observe and monitor the first three trials. Feedback was collected from the JOA participants through a semi-structured group interview at the end of each trial, and via informal conversations between the Papua New Guinean facilitators and the participants. Meanwhile, the evaluation team monitored the trials using observation, and I kept journal notes of my thoughts and ideas.

The evaluation team then held reflection sessions after each of the trials, where the team’s observations, and feedback from the participants was considered. After the third trial, the team concluded that we were dissatisfied with the changes we had made to the JOA, and that a different approach was needed.

For instance, it was observed that two of the three groups had struggled to assess their organisations against the scaled-questions. This was particularly the case for the smaller community-based organisations (e.g. Komuniti 1) where many of their members, particularly the women, were illiterate. The team had also noted that the need to select a score had led to the discussion and decision-making being dominated by one or two leaders within each group. Consequently, many participants sat silently watching while their executive members ranked the organisation on their behalf. Concerns were summarised as follows:
- For many participants the quantitative scales were an unfamiliar concept, and the scoring process appeared to be dominated often by the group's senior managers.
- The predefined questions and numerical scales did not provide the flexibility to deal with the diversity of community groups, which could all be at different stages of development.
- While collecting predominantly quantitative information (through the scaled-questions) made it easier for Program staff to analyse the data, it did not provide a useful description from which others could understand the capacity of the organisation.

The team was also concerned that the scores generated through the JOA might be taken out of context by other staff within the Program or beyond, for instance to benchmark organisations against each other.

This reflective process led the team to ask deeper questions about how the JOA was being used within the Program and about what its ultimate purpose was, or should, be. We realised that we needed to define this purpose clearly in order to guide the development of the JOA. This led the team into a period of deeper reflection and synthesis, and the start of the second action research cycle.

**The Second Action Research Cycle**

Drawing on the concerns and ideas raised during the first action research cycle, the second cycle progressively focused on exploring:

- Issues of power, and defining a clear and agreed purpose for the JOA
- What information was important and useful to track over time
- The complexity of capacity and governance, and the value of using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in response
- The merits in using a strengths-based approach.

Based on a review of the literature, and reflection on our experiences in the first research cycle, changes were made to the Baseline and Repeat JOA. These were then trialled with six community groups throughout PNG. This process and the results are explained below.
Consideration of power, and defining a clear and agreed purpose for the JOA

The first major step at the start of the second action research cycle was to clarify the purpose of the JOA. The team had come to realise that the Program staff possessed explicit and implicit purposes for the JOA. The stated purposes were to:

- Facilitate community groups to assess their organisational capacity
- Identify areas that needed improvement and
- Capture a baseline of this capacity prior to Program support being provided.

However, the JOA often occurred before organisations were selected to receive other Program funding. This meant that, although not stated expressly, the Program also used the JOA as an unofficial audit process for assessing the risks of 'investing' in the organisation. For example, if a JOA identified that a community group had weak governance or poor financial arrangements, support was provided to address this issue prior to funds being made available for project delivery.

As a result, the team came to appreciate that using the JOA to assess the risk of investing in the community group, undermined the value of the JOA as an organisational development and capacity assessment tool. Because participants knew that the JOA might affect their chances of securing funding through the program, this could provide a perverse incentive for them to give a filtered account of their organisation's strengths and weaknesses. It is also likely that this potential link to other Program funding increased some organisations' interest in the JOA, thereby creating artificial demand. As one team member commented:

*Any donor presence will always raise expectations, and the groups try to impress by giving all the good stories and their needs first. Negative stories and problems (such as poor governance) that limit their chances of impressing donors for assistance do not come out quickly* (Papua New Guinean Evaluation Team Member).

A review of the literature showed that our concerns were well-founded. A critique of assessment processes for civil society organisations conducted by the international association INTRAC in 2010 flagged the need for agreement on the purpose of any organisational assessment process (Simister and Smith 2010). They added the warning that the use of organisational assessment processes as a tool for making funding decisions, can lead to biased data collection (ibid 2010). Along a similar line, Reeler asks;
How many “partners” on the ground will refuse, or be critical of, inappropriate capacity-building initiatives suggested by donors when it is tied to their funding?...Used inappropriately or by default, capacity-building can become another mechanism of control (Reeler 2007:4).

Based on these reflections, the team worked with senior program managers to revise and reach agreement on the purpose of the JOA. As a result, the managers ‘de-coupled’ the JOA from funding decision-making processes and decided only to offer the assessment process to groups after their project funding applications have been approved. The Program staff also went on to develop a shorter, evidenced-based process to assess the risk of investing in the organisation.

However, it was acknowledged that despite these changes, there remained a perceived and potential link between an organisation participating in a JOA and their likelihood of receiving funding through the Program. Consequently, the evaluation team recommended that the Program consider other options for JOA delivery such as: outsourcing the facilitation to an external third party; supporting peer assessments between the organisations; providing training for staff within organisations to conduct the JOA (i.e. an internal assessment), or using a combination of internal and external assessment. Using a joint team of internal and external staff to facilitate the JOA could provide both increased accountability and objectivity, as well as reducing costs for the Program and drawing on the ‘insiders’ knowledge and ownership to increase the utilisation of results (Conley-Tyler 2005).

The evaluation team suggested that the Program develop a new name for the JOA process to remove the term ‘assessment’. They also recommended that the timing of the JOA (i.e. when it is carried out) be chosen by the participating groups, rather than by the Program. This demand-driven approach would help to ensure that the JOA reinforces and supports the group’s existing systems of reflection and review (e.g. revising their strategic or annual plans) rather than creating a new parallel process.

To some degree, this approach acknowledges the thinking behind Kurt Lewin’s seminal work where he proposed a three stage theory of change commonly referred to as Unfreeze, Change, Freeze (Lewin and Cartwright 1952). During the 'Unfreeze' stage, individuals reach a point where they understand that change is necessary and that it outweighs the ‘cost’ associated with making a change. During the 'Change' stage, individuals and organisations go through processes (i.e. not just
events) of change and transition. During the final 'Freezing' stage, the change is gradually accepted and becomes the new norm. Allowing the organisations to choose the timing of the JOA would help program managers to use the JOA to support their organisation’s internally driven development.

Ultimately, reaching an agreed purpose for the JOA provided clearer guidance and boundaries from which we could determine how the JOA could be improved.

**Deciding what information was important and useful to track over time**

A second major focus was to clarify what information collected during the JOA needed to be reported. The team defined this through several steps:

1. Clarifying what information the donor required
2. Deciding which aspects of the organisations’ capacity would be reassessed during the Repeat JOA
3. Defining the areas of the Baseline JOA that needed to be captured to provide a baseline or original description to inform the Repeat JOA.

These steps are described in more detail below.

**Identifying the donor’s requirements**

The team sought to define the type and depth of information that should be recorded about the community groups and then reported to AusAID and other stakeholders. The initial thinking by the team was that AusAID would want a database of detailed information for each of the organisations. However, through discussions with AusAID staff and their advisors, the team defined the aspects of capacity and governance that were of most interest for the donor. These related to the principles of democratic governance such as equity, transparency, accountability and legitimacy (Scott and Wilde 2006), as democratic governance was a key focus of AusAID at the time.

**Scope of change assessed through the Repeat JOA**

The team deliberated about whether the Repeat JOA should focus on all the aspects of an organisation’s capacity that were covered within the Baseline JOA, or just on the areas that had been supported through the Program (e.g. the Program might have only helped to strengthen financial management systems, and not the governance practices etc). Eventually, it was decided that the
Repeat JOA should review all of the areas that had been assessed through the Baseline JOA. There were two reasons for this decision:

a. The team thought that this would make the process more valuable for the organisation.
b. This approach could generate a richer picture of the changes the organisation had experienced (in the time between the Baseline and Repeat JOA) and give a more useful assessment of where the donor-supported changes sat within that broader context.

This decision was confirmed during the initial trials. For example, the Centre for Environmental Research and Development had received support from the Program to strengthen their financial management system, but at the same time, the organisation lost their senior financial advisor and no longer received financial support from their primary donor. Thus, while the support from the Program had been valued, its impact on the organisation’s overall financial management system had been negligible in the face of the other changes experienced. This was important information for the Program to capture in order to assess the effectiveness of its support.

Value of the baseline assessment
In developing the Repeat JOA, the team also discussed how the information on the organisation’s capacity, collected through the Baseline JOA, could serve as an actual baseline - i.e. as a starting point from which to measure change (Kusek and Rist 2004). Baselines have value in providing information on the situation before an intervention and which cannot be easily collected retrospectively through recall or other methods. Baselines do, however, have limitations. In his book, *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies* (1999), Roche notes that baselines should not be considered as a panacea for solving the challenges of impact assessment. He argues that it can be very difficult to predict all of the information which should be captured prior to an intervention, given likely changes in the context, program delivery, values, understanding of the problem, and unexpected outcomes etc (Roche 1999). There can also be different standards and variables in the measurement of the variable between the baseline and later assessments (Kelly, David et al. 2008).

Nevertheless, the team acknowledged that the Baseline JOA can provide an important historic record of how the staff perceived their organisation’s capacity at that point in time, particularly for aspects which would be hard to recall at a later stage. However, drawing on the recommendations by Roche, the team felt that the baseline should not be viewed as a static assessment, or definitive 'line in the sand'. Through the Repeat JOA, organisations should be facilitated to re-interpret and
make sense of their own baseline, and to note what changes were felt to have been significant. This approach acknowledged that the repeat assessment is affected by changes in the organisation’s understanding of its own capacity, and what capacity needs to be developed in its new context. It also makes allowance for the fact that the level of trust between the participants and the JOA facilitators can affect an organisation’s description of its capacity. Thus if an organisation reports that its capacity is lower during the repeat assessment than at the baseline, this might merely reflect an increase in trust that has encouraged the organisation to be more open about the issues they face.

In summary, the team decided which results needed to be reported to the donor, and which questions needed to be asked to provide information as a baseline to inform the Repeat JOA. In addition, defining the aspects of organisational capacity that needed to be monitored over time allowed the team to separate those questions in the JOA that required an answer to be recorded against them, from other questions that were included to help guide and enrich the group’s discussion (see Figure 4). Making this distinction reduced report-writing time significantly and allowed staff to focus on facilitating rather than note taking. These changes enabled the JOA reports to reduce from over 25 pages to four, with minimal loss of useful information.

Reducing the number of questions that needed data recorded, and therefore the time spent writing reports, was intended to create more time for Program staff to interpret and analyse the information collected. This shift is in line with recommendations presented by the highly regarded evaluator, Michael Quinn Patton. In his 2008 paper, ‘State of the Art in Measuring Development Assistance’, Patton describes the need to balance efforts spent on data collection with those allocated to making sense of data (Patton 2008a). However, whether this saved time is actually used by Program staff to understand the data generated better, is open to debate, and relates to competing Program priorities.

\footnote{In making this change, several ideas were drawn from the assessment tool developed by the Indonesian community development program, ACCESS.}
A. Organisation Identity

Organisation identity includes:
- Having a clear goal
- The ability to identify strategic issues and document these in a plan
- Carrying out activities that help to achieve the organisation’s goal
- Involving staff and community in determining the organisation’s identity.

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

1. What, if any, have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation’s identity?

   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing actions that help to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achieve the goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of staff and community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in shaping the identity and direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For facilitators:

Consider asking individuals to think of a change they have experienced or observed in the organisation. Then discuss in small groups and write important and agreed changes on pieces of paper. Stick on the wall, and group similar changes. Record the changes with examples, and why they were considered important.

Examples of probing questions:

**Clarity of goal**
- How clearly has the organisation defined its goal?

**Strategic Planning**
- Does the organisation have a constitution and a strategic plan?

**Actions that achieve the goal**
- What are the organisation’s main activities and how closely do these match their goal and strategic plan?

**Involvement in strategic planning**
- How involved were staff and stakeholders in developing goals, strategic plan, constitution etc.
- How does the organisation make the constitution and strategic plan available to its stakeholders?
**Appreciating the complexity of capacity and governance, and using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in response**

**Understanding the variety among the community groups**

The first three trials of the JOA, during the first action research cycle, demonstrated that each of the community groups was at a very different stage of development, and operating within radically different contexts. In practice, this meant that priorities for organisational reform varied immensely. While the broad elements of organisational capacity related to all the organisations (e.g. having a clear vision and purpose, good governance, financial systems, ways of managing information, etc), the expectations within each of these areas needed to be tailored to the particular organisation. The team came to realise that what was important to review through the JOA was what types of capacity made the most difference in: an organisation’s geographic, social and economic context; stage of development; and in terms of its goals and visions. The scripted 'one-size-fits-all' quantitative process used in the earlier trials did not generate such understandings.

**Understanding capacity and governance**

The team reviewed a range of literature during this period to gain an improved understanding of governance and capacity development. Baser and Morgan (2008) emphasised the complexity of organisational capacity and the interplay between context, individuals, systems as well as inter- and intra-organisational relationships (Baser and Morgan 2008; Brinkerhoff and Morgan 2010). Meanwhile, Reeler emphasised how capacity development is not a linear process in a stable environment, but rather that it is about helping organisations ‘...adjust to complex, non-linear dynamics in uncertain environments’ (2007:4). In addition, guidance produced for AusAID on the evaluation of civil society programs (Kelly, David et al. 2008) also emphasised the value of moving from predetermined indicators towards evaluation approaches that are dynamic, participative, and reflective.

Throughout the evaluation process, I became increasingly aware that the JOA was strongly influenced by Western concepts of organisational structure, and a methodology of collective, self-assessment. The Program staff who had developed the original JOA in 2005 had drawn many of their ideas from a process used by AusAID in Australia to assess if Australian NGOs are compliant with government standards, and thus eligible to receive funding. Although the tool had been adapted somewhat for the PNG context by modifying the questions, and reducing the formality of the process, it was still based on the assumption that community groups in PNG would perform
better if they functioned more like professional organisations in Western countries, such as Australia.

This desire to 'professionalise' PNG community groups against a series of standard measures oversimplifies capacity, and assumes universality in the factors that influence an organisation's performance. So, is there sufficient evidence to ascertain whether the core characteristics that make an organisation effective in Australia, are the same as those required for a Melanesian culture such as is present in PNG?

Interestingly, the validity of standard measures of governance has also been questioned within developed countries. While internationally, many commercial companies use checklists and formulaic methods to rank a company's governance (e.g. the Corporate Governance Quotient) empirical evidence has demonstrated that there is not such a strong correlation between these measures and an organisation's performance as previously thought (Arcot and Brunoy 2007). For example, Larcker, Tuna et al, highlight the difficulties in using typical measures of governance to predict an organisation's performance (2004). After an examination of over 2000 firms against 38 measures of corporate governance, they found that the commonly used indicators of governance had very limited ability to explain either managerial behaviour or organisational performance (2004). Similarly, Arcot and Brunoy found that because of the different circumstances each company is situated in, ‘...mechanical adherence to best practice does not always lead to superior performance’ (2007:1). While these authors maintain that corporate governance is essential for good performance, they argue against the use of typical indicators and scorecards, particular when used to benchmark or compare across organisations.

**Consequent changes made to the JOA**

In response to the team's observations, and a deeper understanding of capacity and governance gained from the literature, the team changed the approach in the JOA. The highly quantitative version used in the early trials was modified to include a more even mixture of qualitative discussion-based questions and quantitative scoring questions. The open-ended qualitative questions were designed to prompt interaction, reflection, and creative thinking. For example, participants were asked to ‘map’ their networks, graph changes in staff morale, and to draw diagrams of their achievements (see Photos 2 and 3).
This change broke up the question-and-answer interview style that had characterised the earlier version of the JOA and encouraged discussion between members of the organisation, rather than just between the organisation and the JOA facilitator. As well as providing a more participatory learning environment, and a more complete picture of the various perceptions of an organisation’s capacity, the team observed that the process also became more enjoyable for participants and facilitators alike. Through this discursive approach, it was felt that the JOA had shifted away from a
tool by which to judge the organisations against, to one that supported both organisational
development and the capacity assessment process better.

However, the quantitative scaled-questions were also valuable for providing insight into where
participants felt their organisation ‘sat’ in relation to their ideal (the ideal being a score of 7/7). The
scaled-questions also prompted discussion on the magnitude of changes (positive or negative) from
the Baseline to the Repeat JOA. Using a mixed methods approach (i.e. a mix of qualitative and
quantitative approaches to data collection) allowed us to draw on the strengths of each, and to use a
combination to overcome the inherent weaknesses within each method. As Patton writes 'Multiple
methods and a variety of data types can contribute to methodological rigour' (2002:68).

**Incorporating a Strengths-based Approach**

During the first three trials of the JOA, the team had noted that the participants’ energy was often
negative and focused on problems, and that solutions proposed by the participants tended to rely on
donor support. Thus, the team wanted to revise the JOA so that it was more empowering, and
captured a more complete ‘picture’ of the organisations' capacities (not just the deficits). Drawing
on ideas from the theoretical field of Appreciative Inquiry (Hammond 1996; Cooperrider and
Whitney 2005; Preskill and Catsambas 2006) and Asset Based Community Development (Dewar
1997; Russell 2009), which focus on the positive, the team incorporated a stronger focus on
strengths and existing capacity within the JOA.

Elements of a strengths-based approach were incorporated into the JOA by including specific
questions that drew out the achievements and ‘assets’ of the organisation, and by adjusting the
language used throughout the process. Importantly, the evaluation team also worked to build the
skills and understanding of Program staff in strengths-based approaches through providing training,
mentoring and developing a set of guiding principles for them to follow when facilitating a JOA.

The first section in the Baseline JOA now includes the following questions, which were drawn from
the Appreciative Inquiry method (Hammond 1996):

**Introductory questions in the JOA**

1. What are two or three of the organisation’s major achievements over the past few years?
2. Think about a high point in your involvement with this organisation – a time when you felt the
organisation was most active and effective.
• Briefly describe the situation and how it made you feel.
• What was it about your organisation that made this situation possible (e.g. what were the existing strengths, abilities, relationships, conditions etc)?

3. What are your three concrete wishes for the future of this organisation?

The strengths and capacity identified through this discussion is then built on, and referred to, throughout the rest of the JOA. Importantly this approach also builds the energy and motivation of the participants for change, and demonstrates immediately that the JOA is about facilitating staff and board members to review the organisation, rather than for external stakeholders to audit or assess them.

Some changes were also made in the language and terms used in the JOA. For example where the previous version had requested the organisation to list areas for improvement, the new JOA asks for ‘priority actions’, and emphasises that these may involve addressing gaps or weaknesses, or building on existing strengths. A set of principles was also developed by the team to help guide the facilitation of the JOA in a manner in line with the strengths-based approach:

**Principles to follow when facilitating a JOA**
1. Be ready - ensure there is good planning and preparation by you and the organisation.
2. Empower the organisation. Our role is to facilitate the organisation to review and reflect on its capacity and performance. It is not our role to judge or assess the organisation. Help the JOA participants focus on what they can do, and what is within their influence.
3. Build participation and ownership through the process. The JOA is like a conversation, not an interview. Encourage discussion *between* participants, rather than between you and the organisation.
4. Ensure there is respect for all participants (e.g. women, men, young, old etc).
5. Follow up – both with the organisation, as well as sharing information from the JOA. Furthermore, ensure follow-up is timely.

This revised approach was trialled with six organisations during the second action research cycle. Observation and feedback from the participants indicated that the strengths-based approach had helped to build the energy and motivation of participants to engage in the JOA process. It also helped to demonstrate immediately, the intention that the JOA was to be a facilitated, internal review, rather than an external audit.
Personnel from the community groups provided positive feedback, through formal and informal methods, that the inclusion of a strengths-based approach in the JOA had helped build their confidence in their organisation. For example one participant explained that:

*The process helped us to identify our strengths and weaknesses in the form of priority actions....Most times such assessment is done to look into weaknesses but this process has put a smile on our faces and we feel confident in ourselves (that we are) heading in the right direction* (Executive Member, Partners in Community Development, Madang).

Feedback from participants and the facilitators also indicated that the strengths-based approach: was in line with how they preferred to work with community groups; had greater resonance with Melanesian cultures; and helped organisations to identify actions that were within their control, rather than looking immediately to donor support. This was perhaps best described by one JOA participant who reported that:

*It has helped us put on a new pair of glasses, to stand back, think more deeply and evaluate ourselves and our performance. It helped us to look at our strengths, and what we can do that is within our capacity* (Executive Officer, Milne Bay Churches, Milne Bay).

The team also found that including a primary focus on an organisation’s strengths did not ignore or deny capacity deficiencies or problems. Participants were well aware of the problems their organisation faced (e.g. weak systems of management and governance, limited resources etc). However, ensuring a full exploration of their strengths meant that these resources and qualities were considered when identifying solutions. It also meant that the organisation considered the things that were going well, and how these could be expanded upon and developed further. For example, one of the community groups identified that while they struggled with financial management, another organisation in their network had a strong financial management system in place. The process of mapping their networks and looking at this as an asset, helped the group to identity that they could approach this organisation for assistance.

Whether a strengths-based approach then resulted in more behavioural change than a problem-based approach would need testing through further research. However, the team hypothesised that the increased enthusiasm and energy that the strengths-based approach had helped to generate

---

8 Words in brackets are author’s insertion.
was a positive indication in this direction. At a minimum, it appeared that the participants found the revised JOA to be a more enjoyable process.

**Trialling the revised JOA**

During the second action research cycle, the revised versions of the JOA were trialled progressively with six community groups (including three Baseline JOAs and three Repeat JOAs).

Similarly to the first cycle, feedback regarding the revised process was collected from participants using; a semi-structured group interview at the end of each JOA, informal conversations between the facilitators and participants, and via observation by the facilitators. In addition, a short written survey was conducted with the JOA participants. The evaluation team held reflection sessions after each of these trials where our observations, and the written and oral feedback from participants were considered.

The team noted that the feedback from the organisations was considerably more positive during the second cycle than the first. This was in line with our own observations that the revised JOA process enabled greater participation from all involved, and that their energy and involvement was livelier. The JOA facilitators in the evaluation team also noted that using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions (not only quantitative questions) provided them with the flexibility to tailor the process to the level of development of each organisation.

It was also observed that another factor that influenced whether an organisation was willing to participate in the JOA, and their degree of engagement during the process, related to the skills of the facilitator, and whether the facilitator had an existing relationship with the organisation. During the trials, the JOAs were facilitated by the two Papua New Guinean team members. Both had long-term relationships with staff from many of the participating organisations, and a deep understanding of the broader context for community groups operating in the PNG context. The team observed, that the facilitator’s skills and relationship with the organisations helped to increase the participants trust in, and receptiveness to, the process. Ultimately, the team concluded that this relationship and understanding by the facilitator was at least as important as the JOA methodology itself.
Additional processes of reflection and review to test the revised JOA

In addition to the trials of the JOA with the community groups, the team sought feedback on the JOA through several other processes. The first of these was through holding unstructured individual interviews with technical specialists. These included AusAID’s gender advisor, the HIV/AIDS advisor and two evaluation specialists with experience in both organisational development and the PNG context. Their feedback on the JOA was considered by the team, and led to minor modifications, which were consequently trialled and reviewed (e.g. including a discussion on the risk of HIV/AIDS for the organisation’s staff).

Half way through the action research process, the revised JOA and a selection of the data collected were presented to staff from AusAID. This provided a further opportunity for reflection and review. However, as AusAID were satisfied with the tools and the information that the process had generated, no further changes were made.

Additionally, after the JOA trials had been completed, I facilitated a participatory analysis with the team and five other Program staff. The group compared the data collected through the Baseline JOAs carried out by Program staff in 2005, with the data collected through the recent Repeat JOAs. This analysis identified changes in the capacity of the organisations over time, and where Program support had assisted the organisations to strengthen their capacity. This analysis also provided a further opportunity to review the JOA. The team assessed whether the revised JOA had provided the Program with the information it needed in order to manage and assess its support for community groups. The team concluded that appropriate information was being provided through the JOA, so there was no need to revise the JOA further at that time.

Summary of the Action Research Process and Changes made to the JOA

In line with an action research process, the methods, results and analysis have been discussed in an integrated way for each of the two action research cycles. During the first cycle, the team trialled a revised version of the Baseline JOA, and a first draft of the Repeat JOA with three community groups. These versions of the JOA predominantly produced data in a quantitative form. However, the team identified significant concerns with this approach. This led to a period of discussion and synthesis as the team considered issues of power, purpose, capacity and approach.
A significantly revised Baseline and Repeat JOA were then trialled and tested through the second cycle with a further six organisations. Feedback from the participants and the observations of the team confirmed that this version of the organisational assessment tool (with its greater mix of qualitative and quantitative questions and the strengths-based approach) had improved in value for both the Program and the community groups. As only minor changes were made during the last few trials of the JOA, we were able to focus on building the skills of the facilitators to implement the new JOA process.

The overall changes between the original JOA (used by the Program in 2005), and the revised JOA (developed in 2009) are listed in Table 2. The final version of the Baseline and Repeat JOA are also included in Appendices 1 and 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Comparison between the original (2005) and the revised JOA (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous JOA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The JOA identified both strengths and weaknesses, but primarily focused on weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The JOA included many questions. It was not clear which questions were most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation was categorised at the end of each section as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Needing urgent strengthening  
- Requiring external strengthening  
- Requiring internal strengthening  
- Undertaking ‘Good Practice’

This ranking was confusing and often completed in different ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Purpose of this ranking is to facilitate discussion, not to benchmark organisations against each other.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process primarily question and answer style.</td>
<td>Increased use of group exercises to generate discussion and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Repeat JOA developed.</td>
<td>Repeat JOA now developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communicating the Results to Increase Influence**

While not a formal part of the action research cycle, an important process at the completion of the second action research cycle involved communicating the results of the study to other Program staff, the donor AusAID, a selection of community groups, and to other donors operating in PNG. Workshops were held with sixteen representatives from different stakeholder groups to present the revised JOA process. Care was taken not to reveal the identity of particular groups when discussing the findings on organisational capacity. These communication activities helped to increase the influence and use of the action research findings. For example, the JOA has since been adopted by the European Union-funded Non-State Actor Support Program, and the Australian Government-funded HIV and AIDS Program in PNG (K. Tuckwell, 2011, pers. comm., 10.12.2011, URS Sustainable Development).

**Reflections on Bias, and the Action Research Approach**

**Bias**

The team was conscious that the power differential between the donor-funded program, and the resource-strapped community groups introduced significant bias into the study. For instance, it appeared that organisations which were most willing to participate in the JOA were those which had drawn on the Program in the past as one of their primary sources of funding (i.e. small or medium-sized CSOs), or those which were interested to seek funding from the Program in the future. We
were conscious that this could influence participants' willingness to share critical feedback during the trials of the JOA.

Weiskopf and Laske (2005) describe that even within emancipatory action research processes, there is commonly an asymmetrical power relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'. They describe their own emancipatory action research process with a cooperative of workers:

...there was—as in every consultation process in which the client depends on outside help—an asymmetrical relationship, which also constituted a specific relationship of authority...because of the definitions of the roles of the researchers and participants as 'helpers' and 'those in need of help', there was a definite power relationship established (2005:105).

I believe that we were able to address some aspects of this power dynamic in our research through having the JOA facilitated by Papua New Guineans who had a strong relationship with the organisations, rather than by the expatriate members of the evaluation team. The team felt that this existing relationship would help the participants feel more comfortable providing critical feedback. To help address bias, participants were also given the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback through a written survey at the end of the JOA process. However, given the small number of participants in most groups (typically between five to ten), I still expected to experience some bias within these responses.

**Reflection on the methods used within the action research process**

Involving representatives from several community groups within the evaluation team might have strengthened the action research process. While the participants did provide feedback at the end of each trial, ideally they would have also been involved through all stages of the research to complement the views of the Program staff. However, there may have been challenges in finding representatives who could afford the time from their small organisations. Another option would have been for us to contract a representative from one of the community groups to be involved as an observer during the JOA trials.
Challenges with the action research approach

Every type of methodology has both its strengths and its drawbacks. The action research approach used in this study generated several practical and cultural challenges. A common difficulty with this methodology is allowing time for group observation, reflection, and planning (MacNaughton, Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2001). This was particularly a challenge for my Papua New Guinean colleagues who were participating in the research while maintaining other work duties. We addressed this through negotiating for their other work roles to be reduced, and by identifying which tasks needed to be carried out by the whole evaluation team, and which steps I could carry out personally and then bring to the group for their consideration. For example, I undertook the literature review and gave summaries of the key messages to the evaluation team to discuss.

In Kemmis and McTaggart’s early work, they write that true collaborative participation within an action research approach requires ‘symmetrical communication’ on equal terms, with a shared language and understanding of terms and the values that lie behind them within the evaluation team (1988). This would be a challenge in any setting, but particularly so with a cross-cultural evaluation team (our team consisted of two Papua New Guineans, a New Zealander, and me as an Australian). This challenge was ongoing, but improved over time as we worked and travelled together and began to have a more open exchange of ideas. As understanding and trust developed between team members, I observed that everyone appeared to feel more comfortable providing honest feedback on their thoughts and vision for the tool.

A revelation for me during the research process was that, as I gained a clearer sense of the value of a strengths-based approach through reading the literature, I came to realise that this way of operating was similar to the way that one of my Papua New Guinean team members had already been facilitating the JOA. While the language and approach in the earlier JOA did not follow a strengths-based approach, my colleague had been modifying the language in how he presented and facilitated the JOA. This was an important reminder for me to keep listening to what was said, as well as observing what was not said.

Merits of the action research approach

Although there were challenges with the action research approach, overall, the benefits far outweighed the difficulties. For example, in line with the conclusions of authors such as McNiff (2002) and Coghlan and Brannick (2005), I felt that the action research approach built the confidence
and skills of the evaluation team members. Following the evaluation, the team members went on to co-author a conference paper with me for the Australasian Evaluation Conference, and one team member has now successfully been awarded the position of senior evaluation officer for the Program. The research skills he gained through the action research process helped him to have the confidence to apply for this position (personal communication).

The action research process was also valued for providing the flexibility to modify our focus questions and methods as our understanding developed along the way. While the process required considerable time by all team members (e.g. to participate in reflection sessions), this 'cost' was outweighed by the consequent increase in ownership and influence of the Papua New Guinean team members.

In addition, our participatory and utilisation-focused approach, as advocated most prominently by Patton (2008b), is believed to have contributed to the situation where the Program senior managers adopted nearly all of the recommendations from the study.
CHAPTER 4: VALUE OF THIS CASE FOR THE BROADER INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Overview of Chapter 4

This chapter outlines a set of principles that could provide a guide for others seeking to develop or improve an organisational assessment tool. This is followed by a summary of ideas for further improvements to the JOA.

Guiding Principles Regarding an Organisational Assessment Tool in International Development

Informed by the evaluation, a set of principles were developed that could help guide other practitioners looking to develop, revise, or select an organisational assessment process. The principles are particularly relevant for those working in an international development context where there is the need to manage the trade-offs between accountability and learning, and to balance the needs of the donor and the organisation. The principles are also aimed at those who are not only seeking to monitor how an organisation’s capacity is changing over time, but who wish to do this in a manner that also helps to strengthen the organisation’s capacity. However, the principles are less well suited to situations where there is a need to benchmark organisations against each other. In that case, using a tool with more clearly defined indicators and rubrics (standards of quality), would be more appropriate (e.g. the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid). The principles, and the link to the research on the JOA are discussed below.

The principles include:

1. **Have clear and compatible purposes for the assessment process. In particular, be wary of hidden intentions to audit the organisation for funding purposes** (Simister and Smith 2010).

   *This evaluation found that using the JOA to audit an organisation with regard to eligibility for funding undermined its value as an organisational development, and capacity assessment tool.*
2. Recognise and make efforts to reduce the power differential between the donor-funded "assessor" and the participating group to increase the organisation's engagement in the process, and the quality of the information collected.

This evaluation recommended that the donor explore options to reduce this imbalance such as:

- Contracting a third party to facilitate the assessment
- Using a combination of internal and external reviewers (e.g. joint facilitation by members of the community group and an independent party)
- Enabling the community group to determine the time when the process is conducted so that it supports the organisation's existing processes of reflection and review.

3. Recognise and build on the organisation's existing strengths and achievements. This helps to build the participants' motivation for change, but also provides a more comprehensive picture of the organisation's capacity (Kretzmann, McKnight et al. 1993; Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; and Preskill and Catsambas 2006).

The study found that incorporating a strengths-based approach into the JOA generated increased enthusiasm and energy for change, and captured a more complete picture of the organisation's capacity. Despite criticism that the approach glosses over inequalities and risks (as articulated by Patton 2002 and Gray 2009) the team found that starting from a perspective of the organisation's strengths did not deny the challenges and problems they faced. Rather, it appeared to help generate renewed resolve, and a greater awareness of existing resources, which the organisation could use to address some of their issues.

4. Be selective in using pre-determined indicators of capacity and governance and applying these in different contexts (Larcker 2004).

While our early trials in the first research cycle aimed to use a 'blueprint' approach to assess capacity, the revised JOA, in the second research cycle, provided more flexibility for an organisation to define what was important in their context.
5. Incorporate a mixture of qualitative (discussion-based) and quantitative (scaled) questions to capture different types of data, encourage discussion and learning and to increase rigour (Patton 2002).

The final JOA included primarily qualitative questions, with a small number of quantitative questions. The quantitative-scaled questions provided an indication of scale, and a measure of how participants believed their organisation was positioned in relation to their ideal capacity. However, the qualitative questions provided a more in-depth insight into how the participants' perceived their organisation. The open-ended qualitative questions also encouraged discussion and debate, and gave the facilitators more flexibility to accommodate the complexity and diversity of civil society organisations.

6. Define which questions are solely for the purpose of prompting reflection and learning by the organisation, and which questions are being asked in order to collect information (e.g. as a baseline for later comparison, or to meet the accountability requirements of the donor).

Defining the information that needed to be collected through the JOA drastically reduced report-writing time, and provided the opportunity for Program staff to spend more time interpreting the information collected.

7. Collect a baseline as an historic record of how staff perceived their organisation's capacity at a particular point in time, but recognise the limitations of baselines given the likely changes in understanding and context (Roche 1999).

Through the repeat assessment (the Repeat JOA) developed through this study, participants were asked to consider, but also to re-interpret their original assessment. The baseline was not considered as a 'line in the sand', but rather a starting point for further discussion.

8. During repeat assessments, look beyond the areas of capacity supported by a program. This should help to interpret the significance of any program-supported changes in the broader context of other positive or negative changes the organisation is facing.
During the Repeat JOA, the team found that, in some cases, although the Program’s support had been valued, the organisation’s capacity in this area had weakened because of other external factors. This information helped the Program to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of its support, and led to improvements in the design of future support for the organisation.

9. The skills, approach, and existing relationships of the facilitators with the participating organisations can be as important as the tool itself.

Our team observed that participants were much more responsive to the JOA where they had an existing relationship with the facilitators.

Reflections on how the JOA could be Improved in the Future

There are several areas where the JOA could be improved further (i.e. through a third action research cycle). These suggestions might have relevance for other similar organisational assessment processes, and evaluators working in the field.

1. Incorporating a review of individual, organisational and cultural values

Future work on the JOA could identify how to include a focus on the individual, organisational or cultural values present within an organisation, and an assessment of how these affect the organisation’s capacity and performance. For example, participants could be encouraged to reflect on the role that culture plays in shaping perceptions of leadership, ethics, the management of power and information, and in creating opportunities or barriers to change. This is in line with work by Brinkerhoff and Morgan who emphasised the importance of considering the intangible influences on capacity such as values, vision, leadership and culture (2010). While Larcker’s suggestion of assessing managers psychologically as a more useful predictor of organisational governance than typical benchmark indicators (2004) is too extreme an approach, it also points to the importance of considering how individuals’ values and ethics affect an organisation’s performance.

While there are assessment tools that include a focus on organisational values and culture already in existence (e.g. the Universalia Institutional and Organizational Assessment Model, or the Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change), it would be important to modify and adopt these
to the PNG setting. Reviewing other “home grown” organisational development tools used in the Pacific could provide ideas on alternative ways of facilitating discussion about issues of values and governance.

2. **Consider alternative structures or frameworks for the JOA**

Work by Baser and Morgan (2008) on organisational capacity provides an alternative structure that could be considered for the JOA. They describe organisational capacity as the interplay between five core capabilities. These include:

\[ ...the\ capabilities\ to\ commit\ and\ engage,\ to\ carry\ out\ functions\ or\ tasks,\ to\ relate\ and\ attract\ resources\ and\ support,\ to\ adapt\ and\ self-renew,\ and\ finally,\ to\ balance\ coherence\ and\ diversity\ (2008:26). \]

That is, rather than dividing the sections of the tool into categories based on organisational systems (financial management, project management etc), Baser and Morgan's organisational capabilities could provide the overarching framework for a capacity assessment process. Simister and Smith suggest that organisations could be facilitated to; ‘define individual statements (within these capabilities) relative to their size, status, degree of maturity and the environment in which they work’ (2010:14). While this may well provide a more encompassing framework by which to understand capacity, a challenging step would be to translate these concepts into practical terms that could be understood by the facilitators and participants. This is particularly the case in PNG where there are still very low levels of literacy (e.g. the 2005 PNG census showed that over 60% of Papua New Guineans over the age of ten are illiterate in the national language, English).

3. **Involving beneficiaries**

It would be of interest to identify practical ways to involve beneficiaries in the JOA process, i.e. for an organisation's beneficiaries or members to provide feedback on how they perceive the organisation's capacity. A challenge in doing this would be to identify cost-effective ways to collect this feedback from groups that are often scattered throughout remote areas of PNG.

---

\(^9\) Words in brackets are the author’s insertion.
Ultimately, any further revisions of the JOA should be guided by the purpose of the JOA, what will provide value for the participating organisation, and what will be feasible for the Program staff to implement.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Civil society organisations such as community groups, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations and professional associations play an important role alongside government and the private sector, in addressing poverty and supporting development. There is, however, a common perception in the industry that their effectiveness and credibility are often constrained by their organisational capacity, and lack of good governance (Guizzardi 2011; INGO Accountability Charter 2011). An ongoing challenge for donors is identifying how to support civil society organisations optimally, particularly in developing countries, to strengthen their capacity at a pace and in a manner appropriate for their context (Simister and Smith 2010; Guizzardi 2011). A further challenge for donors is identifying how to monitor changes in the organisations' capacity over time, and to evaluate the effectiveness of their support to these groups.

This thesis has described the results of an action research process that aimed to improve an organisational capacity assessment tool, the Joint Organisational Assessment (JOA). The original JOA was developed by an Australian Government-funded Community Development Program in 2005 (the Program), and was used to assess the organisational capacity of community groups in Papua New Guinea (PNG). In 2008 and 2009, the author led a Papua New Guinean and expatriate evaluation team over an 11-month period to revise the original 'Baseline JOA' significantly. A 'Repeat JOA' process was also developed which could be used to monitor changes within the community groups' capacity, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program's support to these groups.

This case study has found that an organisational assessment process, particularly in an international development context, has more value if it is used as a "can-opener" for mutual exploration, and reflection, rather than a "microscope" to quantify and assess the organisation against pre-selected indicators. As such, it adds weight to arguments for the need to recognise: the complexity of capacity development (Brinkerhoff and Morgan 2010); the impact of the power differential between the assessor and the assessed (Reeler 2007); and the value of using strengths-based approaches (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005; Preskill and Catsambas 2006; Rhodes 2009).

The study demonstrates that evaluation tools like the JOA can be used to not only meet the accountability needs of a donor but also to build an organisation's capacity. The assessment process
can effectively guide the organisation to identify how its existing strengths and assets can be used to address organisational issues, and help to increase the motivation of staff to do so.

Informed by the research, and in particular by the sub-questions that emerged during the study, a set of principles was identified which might be useful in guiding the development, review or selection of organisational assessment processes in other aid recipient contexts. These include:

- define a clear purpose for the assessment process;
- reduce the power differential between the assessor and the assessed;
- build on the organisation's existing capabilities using a strengths-based approach;
- exercise caution in applying pre-determined indicators in different contexts;
- incorporate questions that collect a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data;
- differentiate between information required for accountability purposes and that used to prompt learning;
- collect a baseline, but recognise its limitations;
- look beyond the areas supported by a donor in order to interpret the broader significance of any changes;
- and lastly, value the skills and relationships of the facilitators as much as the process itself.

Future research could be conducted on how the JOA could incorporate: a review of values and ethics, and the effect these have on an organisation's performance; systems thinking on organisational capability; and opportunities for beneficiaries to provide feedback on an organisation's performance. In addition, while this study contributes the experience of our case, further empirical evidence could be collected on the effectiveness of using a strengths-based approach to accelerate improvements in organisational performance.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

1. The Baseline JOA (as developed in 2008-2009)
2. The Repeat JOA (as developed in 2008-2009)
Appendix 1: Joint Organisational Assessment (Baseline)

The main purpose of the JOA is to support organisational development. The JOA helps organisations to review their capacity and performance and to identify their existing strengths and how they can build on these strengths to help achieve their own objectives and goals.

Another benefit of the JOA is that it documents some elements of the capacity of the organisation so that it is easier to know how these might be changing over time.

If the organisation has received support from CDS or DGTP in the past they will also be asked how (if at all) this support has affected their capacity and the work they do.

The JOA does not guarantee funding from any AusAID program.

Who should be involved? Ideally, all members of an organisation should participate. This includes members of the board, management, project, financial and administrative staff. Women and men need to be fully involved. If the organisation wishes, other stakeholders such as community representatives can be involved.

What is covered? The JOA covers:
1. Organisation identity
2. Governance (rot bilong mekim gutpela decision, na wusait i mekim dispel ol decision)
3. Project management
4. Networks and partnerships (ol arasait lain we ol wok bung wantaim yupela)
5. Financial management
6. Personnel management
7. Administration and information management

How long does it take? The JOA usually takes two full days. The facilitators will aim to go through three sections on the first day, and four on the second day. However in some cases the organisation might wish the JOA to be carried out in small sections over several days so that they can fit the JOA around other commitments, and have time to prepare for each section.

What process is used? The most important aspect of the JOA is the facilitated discussion with the members of the organisation. The facilitator assists the organisation to reflect on its capacity. The more open the organisation is, the more they will benefit from the JOA process. The organisation will also be asked to give itself a score out of seven. These scores are useful for prompting discussion. They will not be used to benchmark organisations against each other.

Throughout the JOA, the organisation identifies its existing strengths, and priority actions for the future. The facilitator will provide a short report on the main discussion points to the organisation within three weeks after the JOA. As part of the JOA, a financial assessment by an accountant contracted by DGTP might be carried out. This would be negotiated between the organisation and DGTP.
Preparation
- By the DGTP facilitator:
  o Send the organisation this JOA form and the background information form.
  o Prepare a summary table of any support the organisation has received from CDS or DGTP.
- By the organisation:
  o Complete the background information form and return to DGTP prior to the JOA.
  o If the organisation has a strategic plan, constitution or other important manuals please provide a copy to DGTP.
Getting to know the organisation’s history and its strengths

Quickly review the Agency Profile. This should be completed at a time prior to the JOA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of this JOA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOA facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation members JOA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How did the organisation start? Who was involved?

2. What are two or three of the organisation’s major achievements over the past few years?

3. Think about a high point in your involvement with this organisation – a time when you felt the organisation was most active and effective.
   - Briefly describe the situation and how it made you feel.
   - What was it about your organisation that made this situation possible (e.g. what were the existing strengths, abilities, relationships, conditions etc)?

4. What are your three concrete wishes for the future of this organisation?

As we go through the rest of the JOA keep these ideas on the existing strengths in your organisation, and your wishes for the future in mind.

---

10 The main purpose of this section is to identify the organisation’s internal strengths.
A. Organisation Identity

Organisation identity includes:
- Having a clear purpose or goal
- The ability to identify strategic issues and document these in a plan
- Carrying out activities that help to achieve the organisation’s goal
- Involving staff and community in determining the organisation’s identity.

Clarity of goal
1. Has the organisation clearly defined its goal?
   - yes
   - no
   - NA

Strategic planning
2. Does the organisation have a strategic plan?
   - yes and it is current
   - yes but it is out of date
   - no but they are developing one now
   - no, and they are not developing one now

Activities that match the goal
3. What are the organisation’s main activities and do these closely match the goal and strategic plan?
   - yes (all)
   - yes (some)
   - no
   - NA

Involvement of staff and stakeholders in shaping the identity and direction
4. How involved are staff in determining the strategic direction of the organisation? *Chose a number from 1-7. Examples of what 1, 3, 5 and 7 mean are included below.*

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff are not involved at all. They are only informed of the strategic direction.</td>
<td>Some staff are consulted sometimes on the strategic direction of the organisation.</td>
<td>The majority of staff are usually consulted on the strategic direction, but most final decisions are made by Management or the Board.</td>
<td>All staff have input into the strategic direction. Their views are sought and respected by Management and the Board. They are involved in</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copy provided?
- yes
- no
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number chosen</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How involved are external **stakeholders** in determining the strategic direction of the organisation (*ol lain usait yupela wok bung wantaim*) (e.g. government, community, other CSOs, private sector etc)?

| External stakeholders are not involved. They are only **informed** of the strategic direction. | Some external stakeholders are **consulted** sometimes on the strategic direction of the organisation. | A **wide range** of stakeholders are **consulted**. | A wide range of stakeholders (government, community, CSOs, private sector) are **facilitated to determine the direction** of the organisation and to have regular ongoing input. | Not applicable |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number chosen</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

11 Encourage each staff member to choose a number on their own. Ask for their numbers, and a short explanation. Record all of the numbers, and the average in the report.

12 Ask the organisation what priority actions need to occur to strengthen the organisation, and how it can build on its existing strengths to do this.
7. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s identity on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable)\textsuperscript{13}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & NA \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Number chosen: \underline{_____________}

Explanation: \underline{__________________________________________________________}

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

8. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s identity.

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

\textsuperscript{13} For each of these scales, ask the organisation to define what 1 would mean in their context, and what seven would mean. Then ask each individual to choose a score and explain their choice.
# B. Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance (rot bilong mekim gutpela decision, na wusait l mekim dispel ol decision) includes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Roles and responsibilities within the organisation for making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who has access to information (accountability and transparency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Roles and responsibilities of the Board and Management

1. What is the governance structure of the organisation?
2. What is the role of the Board?
3. Does the organisation have a constitution?
   - □ yes  □ no  □ NA

4. Are Board meetings held in line with the constitution?
   - □ yes  □ no  □ NA

5. Does the Board have clearly defined delegation and authority?
   - □ yes  □ no  □ NA

6. Does Management have clearly defined and documented delegation and authority?
   - □ yes  □ no  □ NA

7. How involved is Management in reviewing budgets and financial reports?
8. How involved is Management in reviewing and planning project finances (and activities) with the implementing staff?
9. Is the relationship between Management and the Board strong and supportive?

## Accountability and transparency (rot bilong mekim wok streit)

10. How are members appointed to the Board?
11. Is there a clearly defined, open and documented process for appointing members to the Board?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ NA

12. Has the Board had to report any conflicts of interest to Management? How was this/would this be managed?

13. Has the Management had to report any conflicts of interest within the organisation to the Board? How was this/would this be managed?

14. Overall, how well are conflicts of interest managed within the Board, Management and the organisation?

---

Equality

15. What percentage of the Board are women?

______________%

16. What percentage of Management are women?

______________%

17. How actively do women participate in decision-making and project activities on the Board?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

---

18. How actively do women participate in decision-making and project activities on the Management, and throughout the organisation? Ask the women to score first, before the men talk.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

---

19. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?
20. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s governance on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Number chosen: ____________

Explanation: ________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

21. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s governance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
C. Project Management

Project management includes needs assessment and planning, implementation, assessing performance and communication.

Needs assessment and planning

1. How does the organisation usually develop and plan its projects (or activities)?

2. To what extent does the organisation involve the community (including women and men) in needs assessment and planning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The community are not involved in developing projects. The community is only informed about the project.</td>
<td>Some leaders in the community are asked for their opinion and support for the project. Women are not consulted separately from men. They typically have little input.</td>
<td>The community is facilitated to determine their own needs and priorities. Women are consulted separately from men, and are equally involved in prioritising solutions.</td>
<td>A wide range of stakeholders are facilitated to determine their own needs and priorities. Women are consulted separately and are equal participants. The rich and the poor, leaders and non leaders, the well and the disabled and the sick are all involved. Government and the private sector are involved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number chosen: _____________

Explanation: ___________________________________________________________

Implementation

3. To what extent does the organisation involve the community (including women and men) in project implementation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The community is not involved in implementing the project.</td>
<td>Some community members are involved in implementing the project. This is typically only the male leaders.</td>
<td>Much of the community is involved in implementing the project.</td>
<td>A wide range of stakeholders are involved in implementing the project (women, men, disabled, sick, rich and poor, government and private sector).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number chosen: _____________

Explanation: ___________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

82
Performance assessment

4. How well does the organisation measure its performance or impact? (i.e. whether they are achieving their goal)?
   - Does the organisation assesses its activities, what resulted from those activities, and who benefited?
   - Is the community or beneficiaries asked about the impact? Are the opinions of women and men sought separately?
   - Do staff and management make time to review their observations about progress, and to consider feedback from others (e.g. beneficiaries)?

5. What is the quality of reports written by the organisation (e.g. for funders)?

Communication of findings

6. How well does the organisation share information on its activities, successes and lessons learnt with stakeholders?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s project management on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable).

   Number chosen: ____________

   Explanation: ____________________________
9. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s project management.
D. Networks & Partnerships

(ol arasait lain we ol wok bung wantaim yupela)

1. Who does the organisation have a useful relationship with, and why is this relationship useful?\(^{15}\)

2. What opportunities are there to develop these relationships to help you achieve your goal?

3. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Overall, how well does the organisation use networks and partnerships to achieve its goal on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high). NA = not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Number chosen:_____________

Explanation: ______________________________________________________

\(^{15}\) Facilitate the organisation to place its name in the centre of a piece of butchers paper. Identify the types of organisations (or important individuals that the organisation has a useful relationship with (e.g. groups it is trying to influence and support, groups that the organisation is working with to achieve its goal, groups that support the organisation (e.g. donors). Ask them to write the names of organisations they have a useful relationship with on individual pieces of paper. Ask them to place the pieces of paper on the butchers paper, with organisations which are most useful placed closest to their name. Indicate which organisations they are trying to influence to achieve their goal. How close is the current relationship to these groups? If relevant, ask how they are building their beneficiaries’ relationships with other groups.

Take a photo of the diagram to add to the report.
5. Other significant comments about the organisation’s networks and partnerships.
E. Financial Management

Financial management includes:
- Organising finances through a financial management system
- Budgeting
- Protecting (e.g. reconciling, procurement procedures) and monitoring (e.g. expenditure against budgets)
- Fund raising

As part of the JOA, a financial assessment by an accountant contracted by DGTP might be carried out. This would be negotiated between the organisation and DGTP.

Financial Management System (FMS)
1. Who is responsible for financial management in the organisation?

2. How well do the skills of the staff responsible for the financial management match their responsibilities?

3. How does the organisation manage its finances?

Budgeting
4. What does the organisation develop budgets for?
   - For all overhead and administration costs?
   - For the Board?

5. Approximately how much of the budget is spent on overhead and administration costs? %

6. Is this an appropriate amount?
Protecting and monitoring

7. Does the organisation follow an agreed and open process when making procurements?
   □ yes □ no □ NA

8. Does management review expenditure against an agreed budget?
   □ yes □ no □ NA

Fund-raising

9. How well has the organisation planned to meet its future funding requirements? (e.g. have funding strategies been identified for the next 12 months and beyond?)

10. Do fundraising strategies appear realistic and sufficient?

11. Do they have appropriate approved funding to keep operating?
    □ yes □ no □ NA

12. If so, for how long? ________________________________

13. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Overall, how would you rate how well the organisation manages its finances on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable).

|   1   |   2   |   3   |   4   |   5   |   6   |   7   |   NA  |

Number chosen: ____________

Explanation: __________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

15. Any other significant comments about the organisation's financial management.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
F. Personnel Management

Personnel management includes:
- Human resource management
- Performance management
- Staff development
- Transparency
- Equality

1. What has been the pattern over the last few years with staff morale?  
2. Why has this been the case? (e.g. what has built morale, what has lowered it?). Has this differed for men and women, or for different sections or levels in the organisation?

---

Equality

3. How does the organisation support women to have an equal role in the workplace? (e.g. providing child care, security when travelling, addressing sexual harassment).
4. What are the barriers to women’s involvement in the workplace?
5. What is the level of equality in the opportunities for women in the organisation (answered by women)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

---

6. What is the level of equality in the opportunities for women in the organisation (answered by men)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

---

Human resource management, performance management, transparency etc

16 The questions in this section are guided by the Human Resource Management Guide and Financial Management Guide for Civil Society Organisations in Papua New Guinea developed in February 2007 with extensive input by CSO organisations in PNG.
17 Consider asking groups to draw a time line on butcher’s paper which shows how morale has changed over time. Place time along the horizontal axis, and on the y axis, have high at the top, and low at the bottom. Ask them to write the contributing factors on the paper.
The Human Resource Management Guide for Civil Society Organisations in PNG provides useful guidance. Some of the practices it recommends are included in the box below.

7. Review this list in groups and identify which of these practices the organisation does well, and which could be improved and how. Not all of these may be relevant for your organisation. Write on butchers paper and then discuss with the full group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human resource management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All permanent managers, staff, fixed term consultants and project workers have written job descriptions, contracts and rates of pay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organisation has a policy to manage volunteers which describes what costs they will cover for volunteers, insurance to cover volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organisation considers or addresses HIV&amp;AIDS (e.g. raising staff awareness of the issue, providing a supportive environment, sick leave etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workers compensation, travel insurance, maternity leave etc is available for staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• New staff are inducted into their roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are supervised and supported by Management and the Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organisation has an agreed process to accept and resolve grievances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The organisation identifies what skills are needed by staff now and to meet succession planning requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are provided with opportunities to develop their skills (this could be in-house or external opportunities such as mentoring, resources, training etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organisation has a fair process to distribute development opportunities among staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are selected based on an open and fair process based on each applicant’s knowledge, experience and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are disciplined or fired for poor performance or inappropriate behaviour using an agreed process (e.g. a series of written warnings, specific areas for improvement communicated to staff, and staff aware of ultimate consequences).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are made aware of the organisations procedures and policies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Overall, how would you rate how well the organisation manages personnel on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable).

Number chosen: ____________

Explanation: ____________________________________________________________

10. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s personnel management.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
### G. Administration and Information Management

Administration and information management includes:
- Administrative procedures clear and agreed.
- Storage and management of information.

1. Do administration manuals or documented procedures exist (e.g. travel, HR (leave, allowances, benefits), assets etc)?

2. How does the organisation manage its information (e.g. is there a consistent filing system, backup copies stored off site, a secure place for confidential information)?

3. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Overall, how would you rate how well the organisation manages its administration and information on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high). (NA = not applicable).

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | NA

Number chosen:_____________

Explanation: ___________________________________________________________

5. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s administration and information management.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
**Next steps and Review**

This section is very important. Leave at least an hour and a half for this section.

1. Review the action/s identified by the organisation in each section of the JOA. Are there any others to add?

2. What are the next steps for the organisation?
   a. Facilitate the organisation to prioritise which actions will make the most difference to help them to achieve their goals.
   b. What can the organisation do internally to address these? Who within the organisation will be responsible?
   c. How can the organisation integrate these priorities into its existing plans and activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Who is responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What are the next steps for DGTP (e.g. will the financial assessment occur, and when)?

4. Feedback on the JOA process – what did you like, what could be changed to improve the process for other organisations?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Thank you*
Appendix 2: Joint Organisational Assessment (Repeat)

The main purpose of the Repeat JOA is to support organisational development.

The Repeat JOA helps organisations to:

- Review their capacity and performance, and to consider how this might have changed since the last JOA.
- Review what support has been provided, and to identify if this has helped the organisation and the work they do.
- Identify their existing strengths, and how they can build on these to help achieve their objectives and goals.

The JOA does not guarantee funding from any AusAID program.

Who should be involved? Ideally, all members of an organisation should participate. This includes members of the board, management, project, financial and administrative staff. Women and men need to be fully involved. If the organisation wishes, other stakeholders such as community representatives can be involved.

What is covered? The JOA is based around the following areas:

1. Organisation identity
2. Governance (rot bilong mekim gutpela decision, na wusait i mekim dispel ol decision)
3. Project management
4. Networks and partnerships (ol arasait lain we ol wok bung wantaim yupela)
5. Financial management
6. Personnel management
7. Administration and information management

How long does it take? The JOA usually takes up to two full days with additional time for an independent financial assessment. The facilitators will aim to go through the first three sections on the first day, and the last four on the second day. However in some cases the organisation might wish the JOA to be carried out in small sections over several days so that they can fit the JOA around other commitments, and have time to prepare for each section.

What process is used? The most important aspect of the JOA is the facilitated discussion around these areas of organisational capacity. The facilitator asks probing questions and assists the organisation to reflect on their capacity, and to identify their strengths and priority actions for the future. The more open the organisation is, the more they will benefit from the JOA process. The organisation will also be asked to give itself a score out of seven. These scores are useful for prompting discussion. They will not be used to benchmark organisations against each other.

The facilitator will provide a short report on the main discussion points in the JOA to the organisation within three weeks after the JOA.

Preparation
- DGTP facilitators: Review and summarise the previous JOA and send to the organisation. Summarise the support provided through CDS or DGTP.
- Organisation – Review the previous JOA report. Inform DGTP of support provided by others since the last JOA.
Name of organisation

Date of previous JOA

Date of this JOA

JOA facilitators

Organisation members  JOA

Setting the scene - overview since the last JOA

1. What have been the important internal changes for the organisation since the last JOA?

2. What have been the important external changes?

3. Review the support provided through CDS or DGTP for institutional strengthening (including the initial JOA, project activities, or other support or opportunities).
   Review the support provided by others.

   What types of support have been most useful and why?
A. Organisation Identity

Organisation identity includes:
- Having a clear goal
- The ability to identify strategic issues and document these in a plan
- Carrying out activities that help to achieve the organisation’s goal
- Involving staff and community in determining the organisation’s identity.

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

2. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation’s identity?

What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing actions that help to achieve the goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of staff and community in shaping the identity and direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For facilitators:
Consider asking individuals to think of a change they have experienced or observed in the organisation. Then discuss in small groups and write important and agreed changes on pieces of paper. Stick on the wall, and group similar changes. Record the changes with examples, and why they were considered important.

Examples of probing questions:

Clarity of goal
- How clearly has the organisation defined its goal?

Strategic Planning
- Does the organisation have a constitution and a strategic plan?

Actions that achieve the goal
- What are the organisation’s main activities and how closely do these match their goal and strategic plan?

Involvement in strategic planning
- How involved were staff in developing goals, strategic plan, constitution etc.
- How involved were stakeholders in developing goals, strategic plan etc.
- How does the organisation make the constitution and strategic plan available to its stakeholders?
- How else are community and staff involved in determining the strategic direction of the organisation?
3. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s identity (this could be positive or negative)?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

4. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Based on the discussion, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation18?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s identity on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). Circle the numbers19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Explanation of scores: ________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

8. Any other significant comments about the organisation’s identity?

---

**B. Governance**

---

18 Ask the organisation what priority actions need to occur to strengthen the organisation, and how it can build on its existing strengths to do this.

19 If the organisation did not score its capacity at the last JOA ask them to choose a score that they think they would have given themselves at that time.
Governance includes:
- Roles and responsibilities within the organisation for making decisions
- Who has access to information (accountability and transparency)

**Review the findings from the previous JOA.**

1. What if any have been the **important** positive or negative changes for the organisation's governance?

   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roles and responsibilities of Board and Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and transparency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of probing questions:

**Roles and responsibilities of Board and Management**
- What is the role of the Board? (e.g. in relation to budgets and expenditures, significant policies and procedures, reviewing progress reports, compliance of management with policies and procedures?)
- Does the organisation have a constitution?
- Are Board meetings held in line with the constitution?
- How clearly is the delegation and authority of the Board defined?
- How clearly is the delegation and authority of the Management defined?
- How involved is Management in reviewing budgets and financial reports?
- How involved is Management in reviewing and planning project finances (and activities) with staff?
- How productive is the relationship between Management and the Board? Is it strong and supportive?

**Accountability and transparency**
- How are members appointed to the Board?
- Is there a clearly defined, open and documented process for appointing members to the Board?
- How well are conflicts of interest within the Board, Management and organisation identified and managed?

**Equality**
- What percentage of the Board are women?
- What percentage of Management are women?
- How actively do women participate in decision-making and program activities on the Board?
- How actively do women participate in decision-making and program activities on the Management?
2. How has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s governance? (this could be positive or negative)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Based on the discussion, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s governance on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). *Circle the numbers.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Explanation of scores: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. Any other significant comments?

________________________________________________________________________
C. Project Management

Project management includes needs assessment and planning, implementation, assessing performance (monitoring and evaluation) and communication.

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

1. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation’s project (or activity) management?
   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment and planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance assessment (monitoring and evaluation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of probing questions:

Needs assessment and planning
13. How does the organisation usually develop and plan its projects?
14. To what extent does the organisation involve the community in needs assessment and planning? (e.g. were A wide range of stakeholders facilitated to determine their own needs and priorities; women consulted separately and as equal participants; the rich and the poor, leaders and non leaders, the well and the disabled and the sick were involved. Government and the private sector were involved).

Implementation
15. To what extent does the organisation involve the community (including women and men) in project implementation and assessment? (e.g. were a wide range of stakeholders involved in implementing the project (women, men, disabled, rich and poor, government and private sector).

Performance Assessment (monitoring and evaluation)
16. How well does the organisation measure its performance or impact (i.e. whether they are achieving their goal)? (e.g. does it record information on expenditure, activities, outputs and outcomes?).
17. How involved is the community in assessing the organisation’s work? Are a wide range of stakeholders involved in assessing the project and its benefits? Are women’s views sought separately from men’s?).
18. Does the organisation allow time for staff to reflect together on the progress of the organisation?

Communication of findings
- What is the quality of reports for external funding written by the organisation?
- How well does the organisation share information on its activities, successes and lessons learnt with stakeholders?
2. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s project management? (this could be positive or negative)

3. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?

4. Based on the discussion, what are the main strengths of the organisation, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s project management on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). Circle the numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Explanation of scores: ________________________________________________________________

7. Any other significant comments?
D. Networks & Partnerships

1. Review the findings and relationship drawing from the previous JOA. Redraw the organisations relationships\textsuperscript{20}.

2. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation's relationships?
   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who the organisation has a useful relationship with and the nature of these relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to develop these relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s relationships? (this could be positive or negative)

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

4. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

\textsuperscript{20} Facilitate the organisation to place its name in the centre of a piece of butchers paper, and to write the names of organisations they have a useful relationship with on individual pieces of paper. Ask them to place the pieces of paper on the butchers paper, with organisations which are most useful placed closest to their name. Indicate which organisations they are trying to influence to achieve their goal? How close is the current relationship to these groups? Take a photo of the diagram to add to the report.
5. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the way the organisation’s works with others to achieve its goal, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Overall, how would you rate how well the organisation works with others to achieve its goal on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). *Circle the numbers.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Explanation of scores: _____________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

8. Any other significant comments?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
E. Financial Management

Financial management includes:
- Organising finances through a financial management system
- Budgeting
- Protecting (e.g. reconciling, procurement procedures) and monitoring (e.g. expenditure against budgets)
- Fund raising

As part of the JOA, a financial assessment by an accountant contracted by DGTP might be carried out. This would be negotiated between the organisation and DGTP.

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

1. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation’s financial management?
   
   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial management system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting &amp; monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of probing questions:

**Financial Management System**
- Who is responsible for financial management in the organisation?
- Do the staff responsible for the FMS have appropriate skills to match their responsibilities? (are there any qualified book keepers or accountants in the organisation?)
- How does the organisation manage its finances?

**Budgeting**
- What does the organisation develop budgets for? (all overhead and administration costs, and the Board?)
- How much of the budget is spent on overhead and administration costs? Is this an appropriate amount?

**Protecting and monitoring**
- Does the organisation follow an agreed and open process when making procurements?
- Does management review expenditure against an agreed budget?

**Fund raising**
- How well has the organisation planned to meet its future funding requirements?
- Have funding strategies been identified for the next 12 months and beyond?
- Do fundraising strategies appear realistic and sufficient?
2. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s financial management? (this could be positive or negative)

3. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?

4. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation’s financial management, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Overall, how would you rate how the organisation manages its finances on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). Circle the numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Explanation of scores: ____________________________________________________

7. Any other significant comments?
F. Personnel Management

Personnel management includes:
- Human resource management
- Equality
- Staffing practices
- Remuneration and conditions
- Performance management
- Staff development
- Transparency

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

1. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation’s personnel management?
   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human resource management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration and conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of probing questions:

**Human resource management**
- What has been the pattern over the last few years with staff morale?
- Why has this been the case? (e.g. what has built morale, what has lowered it?)
- How well does the organisation manage volunteers (is there a policy on what costs they will cover for volunteers, and do they have insurance to cover volunteers)?
- How sufficiently do staff numbers meet existing commitments and needs?
- How does the organisation consider or address HIV&AIDS? (e.g. raising staff awareness of the issue, providing a supportive environment, sick leave etc).
- Is workers compensation, travel insurance, maternity leave etc available for staff?
Equality

- What are the barriers to women’s involvement in the workplace?
- How does the organisation support women to have an equal role in the workplace? (e.g. providing childcare, security when travelling, addressing sexual harassment etc).
- What is the level of equality in the opportunities for women in the organisation

Performance management

12. Are new staff inducted into their roles?
13. How well are staff supervised and supported?
14. Does the organisation have an agreed process to accept and resolve grievances?

Staff development

15. How well do staff competencies meet existing commitments and needs?
16. How does the organisation identify what skills are needed by staff?
17. What opportunities are provided to staff to develop their skills? (consider in-house as well as external opportunities such as mentoring, resources, training etc)
18. How does the organisation determine how development opportunities are distributed among staff?

Transparency

19. Are staff selected based on an open and fair process based on each applicant’s knowledge, experience and skills?
20. How are staff made aware of the organisation’s procedures and policies?
21. Are staff disciplined or fired for poor performance or inappropriate behaviour using an agreed process (e.g. a series of written warnings, specific areas for improvement communicated to staff, and staff aware of ultimate consequences)?

2. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation’s personnel management, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s personnel management? (this could be positive or negative)

4. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?
5. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s personnel management on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). *Circle the numbers.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous JOA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Explanation of scores: __________________________________________________________

7. Any other significant comments?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
G. Administration and Information Management

Administration and information management includes:
- Administrative procedures clear and agreed.
- Storage and management of information.

Review the findings from the previous JOA.

1. What if any have been the important positive or negative changes for the organisation's administration and information management?
   What helped the changes to occur (consider internal and external influences)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Important changes (positive or negative)</th>
<th>What helped the changes to occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of probing questions:

22. Do administration manuals or documented procedures exist? (e.g. travel, HR (leave, allowances, benefits), assets etc).
23. How does the organisation manage its information (e.g. is there a consistent filing system, backup copies stored off site, a secure place for confidential information)?

2. How, if at all, has any support from, or interaction with CDS or DGTP affected the organisation’s administration and information management? (this could be positive or negative)

3. If there have been changes, what impact has this had on the work the organisation does, or the communities, groups or partners the organisation works with?
4. To summarise, what are the main strengths of the organisation’s administration and information management, and what priority actions need to be carried out to further strengthen the organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing strengths</th>
<th>Priority action/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Overall, how would you rate the organisation’s administration and information management on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low, and 7 is very high) (NA = not applicable). Circle the numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous JOA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Explanation of scores: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. Any other significant comments?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Wrap up and Overview

This section is very important. Leave at least an hour and a half for this section.

5. What are the next steps for the organisation?
   a. Facilitate the organisation to prioritise which actions will make the most difference to help them to achieve their goals.
   b. What can the organisation do internally to address these? Who within the organisation will be responsible?
   c. How can the organisation integrate these priorities into its existing plans and activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Activity</th>
<th>Who is responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What are the next steps for DGTP (e.g. will the financial assessment occur, and when)?

7. Feedback on the JOA process – what did you like, what could be changed to improve the process for other organisations?

Thank you
Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
KENWAY, JESSICA

Title:
Adapting an organisational capacity assessment tool to meet the needs of both the donor and civil society organisations in Papua New Guinea

Date:
2011

Citation:

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/37579

File Description:
Adapting an organisational capacity assessment tool to meet the needs of both the donor and civil society organisations in Papua New Guinea

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.