



2. Self-assessment

Tools for success:
doing the right things and doing them right



Centre for Charity Effectiveness

Intellectual leadership: developing talent, enhancing performance



About this guide

Seven areas of organisational capacity have been identified as fundamental to your success and key to long-term sustainability. It is vital that you have the capacity to operate at maximum capability. We have therefore set out some big questions for you to ask yourself, to determine your areas of strength and to prioritise the areas where you need to invest more time.

The self-assessment questions (see page 4 overleaf) will help you to choose the right guide for you.

You will need to use your answers from the self-assessment to complete the ‘action planning’ task (see page 3) which will help you build some realistic next steps.

A free online version of the self-assessment tool is available on KnowHow NonProfit – the online knowledge resource for the nonprofit sector – www.knowhownonprofit.org/ and click on Tools for Success. On completion, you can print a report listing all your findings and giving advice on areas to be strengthened.

Action planning

It's important to celebrate what you do well, as well as plan to strengthen all aspects of your organisational capacity. To record what you need to do, draw up a two-column plan, with the following headings:

Things to celebrate and strengthen	Things to invest more time in developing

Things to celebrate and strengthen

- List the areas that the self assessment has revealed as your strengths
- For each, start collecting evidence of performance and try to build on them – to do things even better (see the relevant guide for help with each of these tasks).

Things to invest more time in developing

- List the areas where you need to do more work
- Take a quick look at the relevant guide, to get some ideas
- Make a short list of bullet points for each area you need to work on; state your ideas about next steps for each and who should help you
- Share it with colleagues at work to see what they think
- Decide the priority order for the activities: number each, starting with the most important
- Be realistic and ruthless
- List all the resources and expertise you have at your disposal
- Seek out Cass Centre for Charity Effectiveness coach if you need support or an extra sounding boardFinally, with your shortlist of priority tasks to hand, go back to the relevant guide and start the detailed investment work.

Extra support

Details of further support available from Cass CCE, including our Expert Support Service, consultancy and workshops can be found at www.cass.city.ac.uk/cce and click on Tools for Success.

Self-assessment

Are we legal?

- Do we know the laws with which we must comply?
- Are we complying in full?
- Do we know what we are legally constituted to do?
- And are we working within our constitution?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Compliance guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **3. Compliance**

Can we demonstrate accountability?

- Are decisions made by the right people with appropriate beneficiary involvement?
- Does the Board have the necessary skills and representation?
- Does the Board review progress and challenge financial variances effectively?
- Are potential risks to the organisation flagged up and dealt with in a timely manner?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Governance guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **4. Governance**

Do we know where we are going?

- Do we have a clear purpose that focuses on beneficiary needs?
- Do we have clear priorities that are informed by the needs of our key stakeholders and the changing external environment?
- Do we have a clear and realistic plan for our work?
- Do all those who need to, understand our plan?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Direction guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **5. Direction**

Have we got the financial resources to meet our obligations?

- Do we have the basic financial procedures and policies in place?
- Do we review the budget-strategy link quarterly?
- Do we have access to good fundraising expertise and a range of activities to ensure sustainability?
- Do we have sufficiently diverse sources of income?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Finance guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **6. Finance**

Have we got the right people and skills?

- Do we have the essential HR policies and procedures in place?
- Do we carry out performance management and is it effective?
- Do internal communications work effectively for all involved?
- Are there opportunities and resources to ensure staff development and learning?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **People guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **7. People**

Are we efficient and effective in meeting our objectives?

- Have we mapped out the important activities and linked these to agreed objectives and outcomes?
- Are new developments sought out and implemented effectively?
- Is the quality of delivery monitored and evaluated effectively, with learning built into the future?
- Is there a process for learning from our achievements and mistakes?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Operations guide**

Action plan
(see overleaf: page 3 of this guide)

→ **8. Operations**

Do we work well with others?

- Do we know who the key players are in our world?
- Do we understand their needs and our position in relation to those needs?
- Do we carry out activities to ensure that our profile in the community as we want it to be?
- Do we actively seek out relevant partnerships?

Yes

If you answer ‘yes’ to all, record your areas of strength and move on to the next set of questions

Some

If you answer ‘yes’ to some, record your areas to invest more time in, then move on to the next set of questions

No

If your response to all of the questions is ‘no’, go to the **Connect guide**

Quality awards
go to the CES website:
www.ces.vol.org.uk to find out more about PQASSO

→ **9. Connect**

Centre for Charity Effectiveness**Cass Business School**

106 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8TZ

E: casscce@city.ac.uk

T: +44 (0)20 7040 8667

www.cass.city.ac.uk/cce**Tools for success: doing the right things and doing them right**

1. Introduction

2. Self-assessment

3. Compliance

4. Governance

5. Direction

6. Finance

7. People

8. Operations

9. Connect

**Cass Business School**

In 2002, City University's Business School was renamed Sir John Cass Business School following a generous donation towards the development of its new building in Bunhill Row. The School's name is usually abbreviated to Cass Business School.

Sir John Cass's Foundation

Sir John Cass's Foundation has supported education in London since the 18th century and takes its name from its founder, Sir John Cass, who established a school in Aldgate in 1710. Born in the City of London in 1661, Sir John served as an MP for the City and was knighted in 1713.

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