

ORGANIZATIONAL CASH READINESS TOOL (OCRT)

PROCESS GUIDE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



ORGANIZATIONAL CASH READINESS TOOL (OCRT)

PROCESS GUIDE

November 2017

This study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

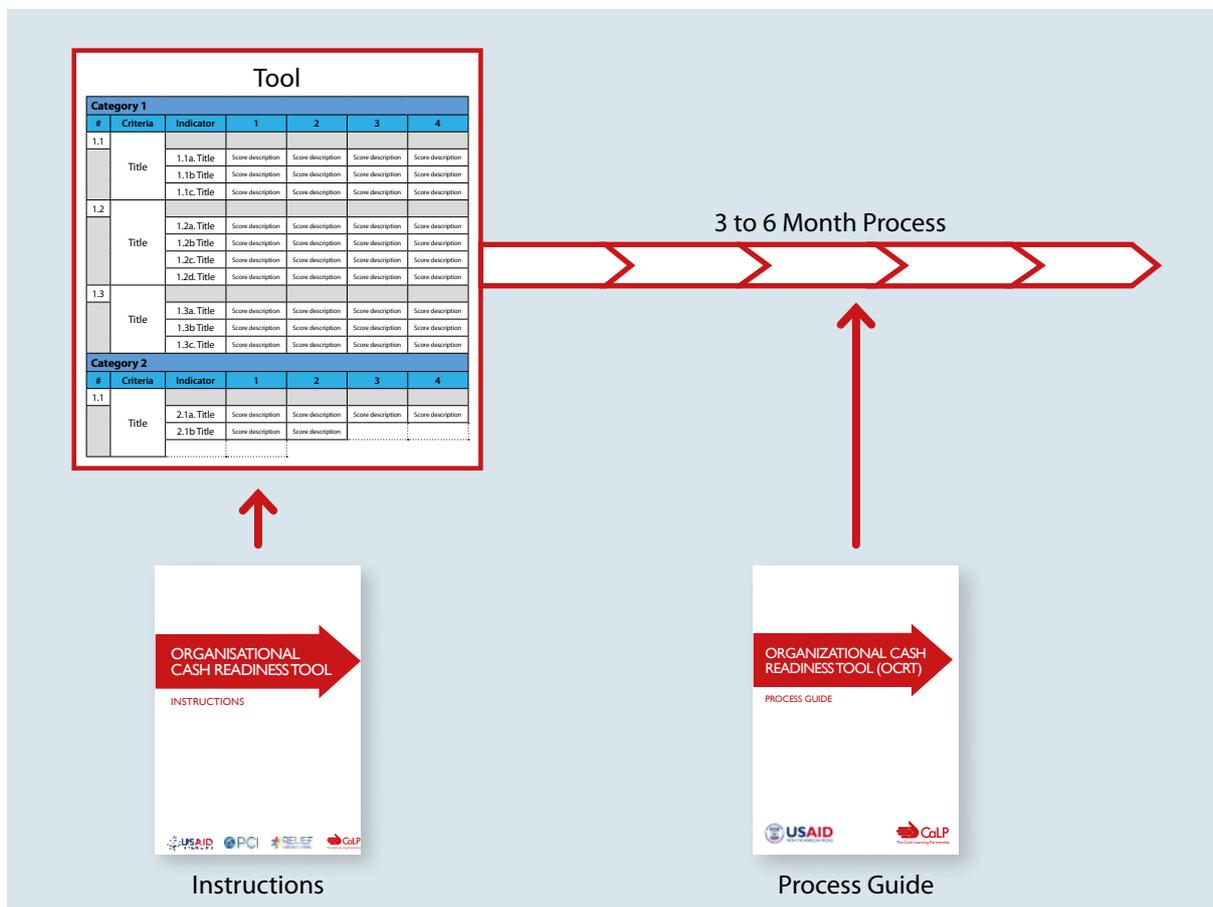
Introduction	5
Process type	6
Process approach	7
The OCR process overview	9
Step 1: Orientation	10
Step 2: Evidence gathering	13
Step 3: Scoring	14
Step 4: Recommendations	15
Step 5: Action planning	16
Additional resources for facilitators	21

INTRODUCTION

The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) developed the **Organizational Cash Readiness Tool (OCRT)** to assist organizations in developing readiness and capacity for delivering cash or voucher programming, also known as Cash Transfer Programming (CTP). An organization can use the OCRT to take a snapshot of its current CTP readiness, and then use that assessment to develop plans to address shortcomings. This typically means going through a facilitated three-to-six-month process of getting familiar with the tool, gathering evidence for scoring each indicator, deciding on the final scores, forming recommendations, and developing action plans to increase organizational readiness for CTP.

In addition to the OCRT, CaLP developed the **OCRT Instructions** and this Organizational Cash Readiness (OCR) Process Guide. The OCRT Instructions give detailed guidance on the use of the tool. All participants in an OCR process should consult the OCRT Instructions. This guide may also be of interest to participants, but is specifically designed to assist facilitators of the OCR process.

The figure below depicts the relationship between the three CaLP products.



The OCR process is designed to take three to six months. Each organization will have to decide whether such a structured, facilitated and comprehensive process is needed and is feasible. The process can be shortened, but the outcome typically reflects the level of effort put into it. Leadership should decide on an anticipated and appropriate level of effort and communicate that clearly, at an early stage, to the process participants. This will help to set the right expectations and avoid surprises later on.

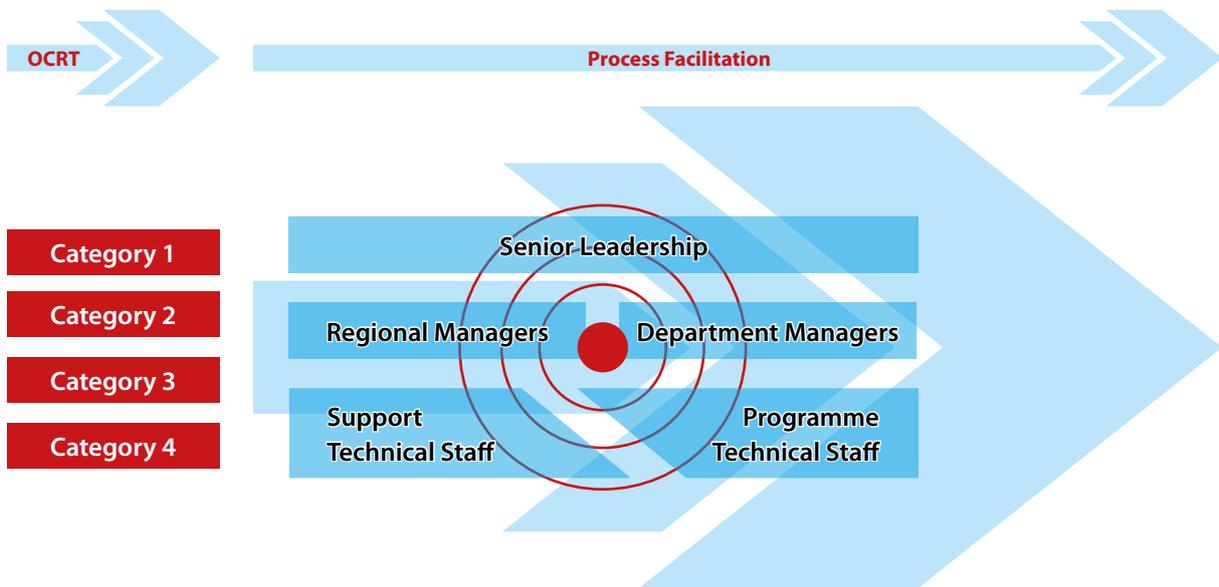
Before getting into the details of the OCR process, the next two sections introduce two important foundational underpinnings: 1) process type and 2) process approach.

PROCESS TYPE

The OCR process is an organizational development process that focuses on readiness for CTP. It is not just about enhancing CTP technical capacity in a few programme departments, but about developing a whole organization to effectively and efficiently operate cash transfer programmes. The OCR process requires a holistic approach with involvement from all parts of the organization, from senior leadership to support staff.

The expanding arrows in the figure below represent a developing organization. The OCRT is an organizational development tool which is used to assess an organization’s capacities in relation to CTP. It looks at four categories (namely leadership and resourcing; staff CTP technical competency; organizational systems and policies; and external engagement) that cover all parts of an organization. Use of the tool is applicable to leadership, CTP technical experts, HR specialists, accountants, risk managers, business development personnel, logistics staff, project managers, and others as appropriate.

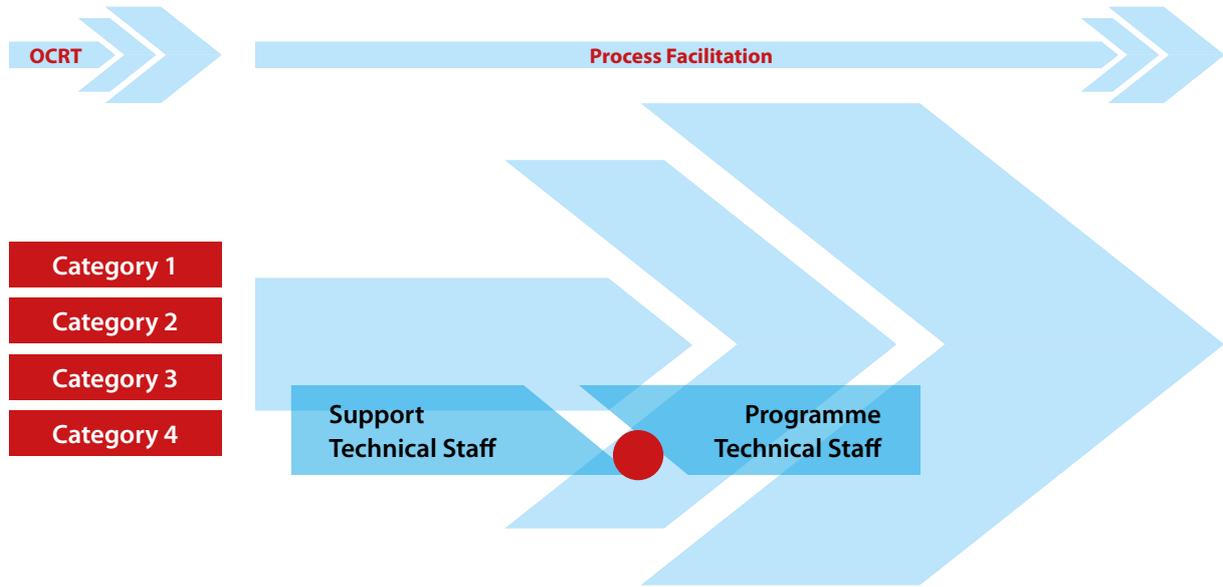
Standard OCR Process



In the standard OCR process, the main facilitator (or facilitation team) is fully supported and empowered by senior leadership. This person (represented by the red dot) has the level of respect and influence, based on this leadership support, that is necessary to draw responses and participation from across the organization. Process facilitation includes the use of basic organizational development and change management principles. Such facilitation can be provided either by an external consultant or by someone from within the organization with strong project and organizational change management skills. Leadership that is engaged in the OCR process will appreciate and expect that type of professional organizational development facilitation. In the above process, the OCRT, and all its four categories are used to their full potential. The resulting action plan, and its implementation, will be robust and comprehensive, resulting in broad and balanced organizational development.

Alternatively, in an extreme case that is not ideal, senior leadership is not committed to the process, and as such does not engage with or promote it, nor does it encourage others across the organization to do so. It has given approval for a CTP technical facilitator to give the process a try, but in general the leadership takes a wait-and-see posture. It does not recognize the organizational development nature of CTP readiness and the OCR process. As a result, the process can become lopsided, focusing more on the technical side of the OCRT while leaving out the intended organization-wide systemic improvements. The action plan that emerges will not be robust, and the resulting 'organizational development' will be narrow and lopsided as well, mostly focusing on CTP technical capacity among staff.

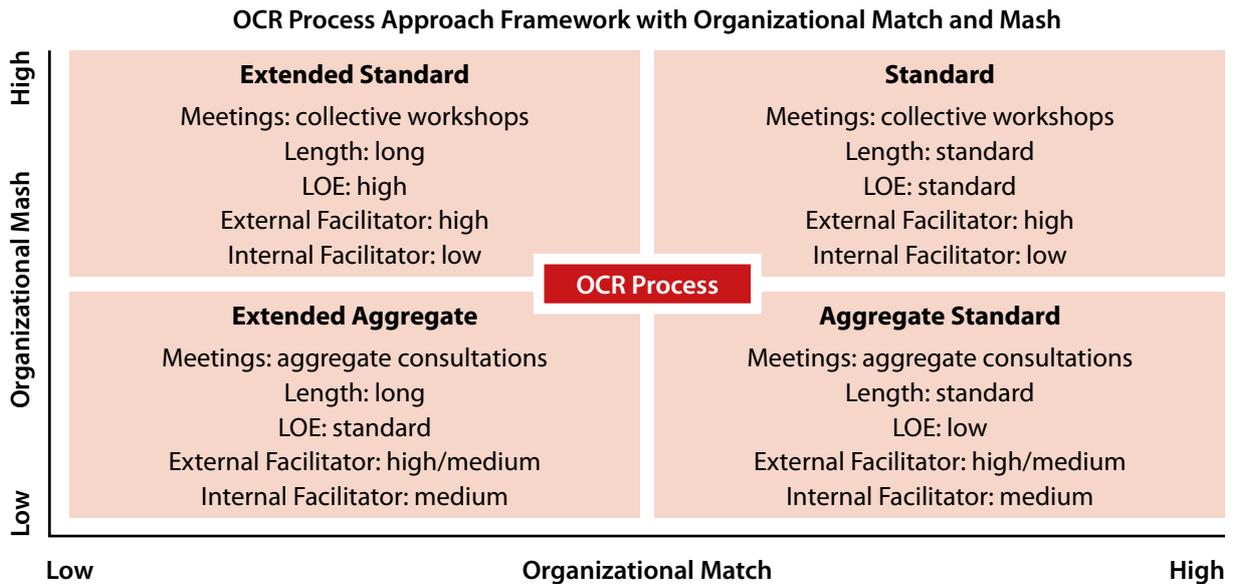
Less Preferred OCR Process



Leadership needs to recognize the organizational development nature of the OCRT and the OCR process. Some organizations may not be ready to use the tool and process in that way or interested in doing so, and a limited-scope, lopsided effort will still have some positive outcomes. However, a full and balanced effort, as intended, promises to produce maximum outcomes.

PROCESS APPROACH

This guide presents the 'standard' approach to the OCR process, but each organization is unique and there may be organizational factors that call for some changes to this standard. *The OCR Process Approach Framework with Organizational Match and Mash* can help organizations make the appropriate adjustments to the process, thereby avoiding frustrations and inefficiencies.



The horizontal axis represents *organizational match*. This refers to the match between CTP and most of the organization's programmes. Traditionally, and currently, humanitarian assistance programmes have a closer match than development assistance programmes to CTP. This may change over time, given that development programmes for poverty reduction, social change, youth employment, etc. could benefit from cash and voucher programming as well. In addition, CTP is already used widely in social protection systems. A high match means that the length of the process is standard, i.e. it does not have to be increased, since most organizational units should be able to see the applicability of CTP to their operation and function. In contrast, when there is a low match, organizers may want to consider making the overall OCR process longer. It takes time for people to see the relevance of CTP and recognize the need for change.

The vertical axis measures *organizational mash*. Some organizations are very uniform while others are more a network of very different nodes, each with their own ethos and organizational culture. In general, organizational mash refers to the level of uniformity and cohesion within an organization. An example of low mash would be decentralized and dispersed organizations with very few corporate practices and standards, and with regional/national units that by and large operate using local practices, standards and governance. High mash organizations have a strong, unified sense of purpose, mission, values and strategy with harmonized processes and operating procedures across different countries and departments. Applying this concept to the OCR process, the level of mash should only be considered for that part of the organization that is within scope of the process. High *mash* accommodates teamwork and a high level of direct, collaborative involvement of leadership. In this context, the OCR meetings can be collective workshops. In a low mash context, it is better to facilitate multiple separate working sessions to derive pre-scores and draft plans for a specific part of the tool and organization. In such situations, leadership typically has more of a consultative rather than a participatory role. The OCR meetings become 'aggregate consultations' at which all pre-scores or draft plans are brought together to be reviewed and processed in consultation with a select group, such as senior management. This approach typically comes with a lower level of effort (LOE) than the standard process, since it is less collaborative.

The degree to which leadership is involved in the OCR process is an important organizational factor that determines the OCR approach. The *Organizational Mash* incorporates this factor, with the assumption that a high mash translates into a high level of direct and active involvement by leadership, and that a low mash leads to leadership delegating the 'working sessions' to lower-level representatives.

Regarding process facilitation, a high mash makes external facilitation very suitable, since internal facilitation is less needed. External facilitation can also be used effectively in low mash contexts, but in such cases it will need to be accompanied by at least a medium-level internal facilitation, given the disparate internal organizational cultures that the process will encounter.

The OCR Process Approach Framework with Organizational Match and Mash is simply a perspective to help facilitators consider the various dynamics and establish the most suitable approach for the organization. This guide describes the standard approach (high match and high mash), but facilitators should make adjustments when their match and/or mash are low.

THE OCR PROCESS OVERVIEW

The OCR process is part of the larger process of strengthening organizational capacity and readiness for CTP. The basic OCR process has five main steps, as depicted in the figure below. Three of these steps involve meetings.

The OCR process



An organization that decides to go through this process should appoint a process facilitator who coordinates with leadership, organizes the meetings, communicates about the process within the organization and provides instructions to participants throughout the process. Some organizations may want to appoint a small OCR process facilitation team rather than one individual, to encourage broad organizational engagement with the process and to bring together the right facilitation skills. The process participants should be informed, empowered representatives from each segment of the organization. The overall process will benefit if senior leaders participate themselves rather than delegating that role to others. The process participants and facilitators together form the OCR process team.

Executive management is involved at the beginning of the OCR process, to initiate it and give it credence and direction, and again at the end of the process, to review the recommendations and action plan, and to decide a way forward. It is also important to seek feedback from stakeholders and management throughout the OCR process, especially at the end of each step.

There are three key meetings that should be attended by all OCR process participants:

1. OCRT Orientation Meeting;
2. OCRT Scoring Meeting;
3. OCRT Action Planning Meeting.

Ideally, participants will attend these meetings in person, but remote participation is also possible.

CaLP can support an OCR process in various ways. At a minimum, CaLP provides the OCRT, the OCRT Instructions and the OCR Process Guide. In addition, organizations can contact CaLP to request CTP technical and/or OCR process support, perhaps from staff of other organizations that have undertaken the OCR process.

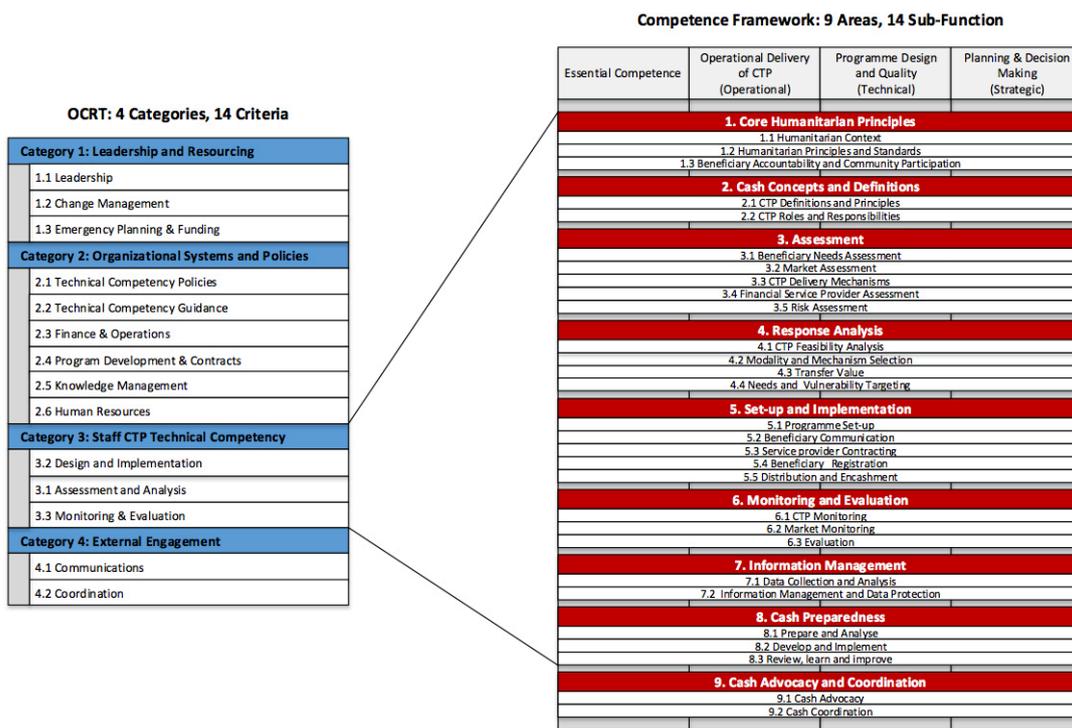
STEP I: ORIENTATION

The first step in the OCR process is orientation to the tool and the process. The facilitator should be very familiar with the OCRT and have read the entire OCRT Instructions and OCR Process Guide to gain insight into all the steps involved in the process. Next, the facilitator should interact with organizational leadership, or representatives of the leadership team, in order to:

- Introduce leadership to the OCR process;
- Decide on the scope of the assessment, i.e. the extent to which all or parts of the organization will participate in the process. For example, will the assessment focus on the CTP capacity of the headquarters functions, or will it also include field offices?
- Compile a list of process participants, with representation from across those parts of the organization that is within the scope of the assessment;
- Agree on a rough timeline for the OCR process;
- Decide on any ORCT contextualization or adaptation needed (see below);
- Clearly define the role of the process facilitator (or facilitation team).

ORCT contextualization, also called adaptation or fitting, refers to customizing the tool for the type of organization and the scope of the assessment. The standard OCRT has 55 indicators to be scored. These are basic functions related to CTP that apply to most organizations. However, an organization may decide to only use some of the indicators, or to add new ones. A more typical tool-customization exercise is to use the standard OCRT but to add a glossary, explaining what certain terms mean in the context of the organization and the scope of the assessment.

As discussed above, it is essential that the organization’s leadership and the OCR process facilitator understand the organizational development nature of the OCR process. The figure below may help them gain this understanding. It compares the OCRT with CaLP’s *Competence Framework*. The latter captures the technical competencies needed by staff involved in a typical CTP project life cycle. This comprehensive list of competencies, however, only reflects one of the four OCRT categories, namely category 3: staff CTP technical competency. The other three OCRT categories address a full set of organizational functions and related organizational ‘competencies’ which are different from and additional to those outlined in the *Competence Framework*.

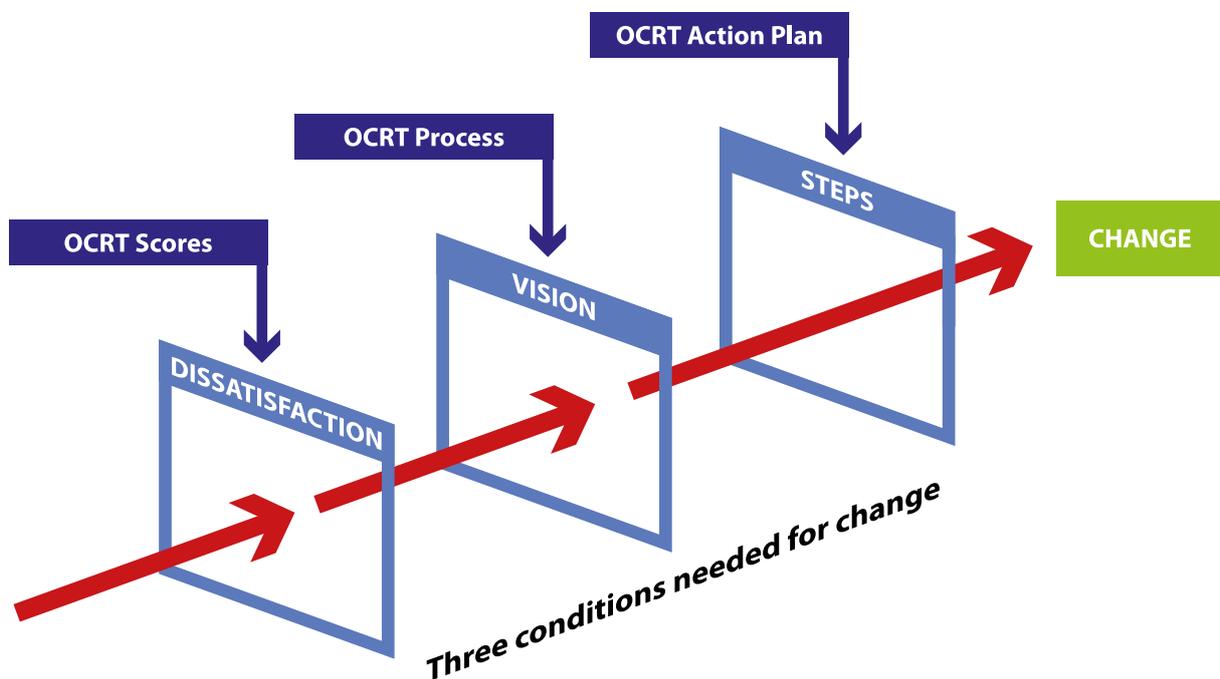


The orientation step typically culminates in a one-day meeting that includes broad participation from all departments at all levels, namely the OCRT Orientation Meeting. This meeting serves to more formally launch the process within the organization.

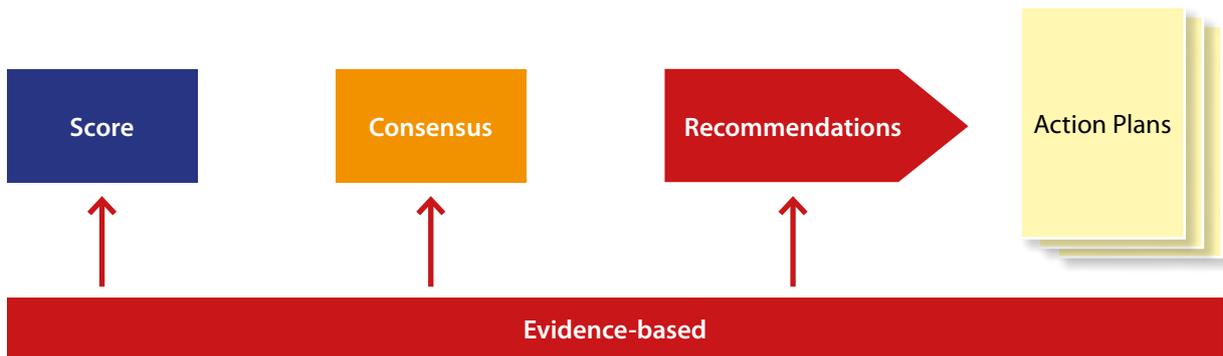
The main activities and agenda items for the OCRT Orientation Meeting are to:

1. Communicate the organization’s vision and objectives for CTP and endorse the OCR process (executive management);
2. Identify organizational change principles;
3. Review elements of the OCRT and outline OCR process;
4. Validate the assessment scope;
5. Contextualize or customize the OCRT, if needed;
6. Develop an evidence-gathering plan;
7. Define the process and protocols for scoring.

Organizational change principles are pertinent throughout the OCR process, but it is good to review them with participants at the outset, during the orientation. Effective organizational change only happens when three conditions are in place: 1) people have a dissatisfaction with the status quo, 2) people embrace a clear vision for a better future, and 3) people understand the immediate next steps towards that vision. The OCR process can cultivate each of these three conditions. Less than perfect assessment scores reveal areas to improve CTP readiness, and as such can represent dissatisfaction with the status quo. The whole OCR process gives leadership the opportunity to communicate its vision for a better future with increased CTP readiness. And finally, the OCR action plan will define the next steps towards the envisioned future. At that point, all three conditions are met – and the gates to change are open.



During the orientation phase, executive management should gain a good understanding of the OCRT and the process, and the departmental management and other staff assigned to the process (i.e. the OCR process participants) should gain a detailed understanding of each aspect of the tool, including the categories and indicators that are assessed.



Evidence gathering related to the range of indicators is the next step and a key component of the OCR process. During the orientation, participants should understand the importance of the assessment and action planning steps being evidence-based, as scores that are later assigned to each indicator must be supported by evidence. Recommendations ultimately flow out of the scores and out of an understanding of the status quo, based on evidence, as well as the level of consensus with each score. All this will lead to action plans being evidence-based as well. By the end of the orientation phase, an evidence-gathering plan needs to be in place. This should define who will gather what type of evidence, from where, and over what period of time.

Although the actual assessment of indicators will not happen until the scoring step, the OCR process team will need to outline the scoring process and protocols during the orientation. Who will be involved in the scoring process, and how? Some organizations may want to use surveys or other instruments to get input from remote staff who would otherwise not be able to participate in the assessment activities and the OCRT Scoring Meeting (in step 3). These surveys, interviews, or other ways of communicating can be part of the evidence-gathering effort. In addition, an organization may decide to use these instruments to give people the opportunity to pre-score indicators. The goal is to collect all relevant information in order to be able to arrive collectively at a well-informed score for each indicator.

In general, the orientation step prepares the organization for the OCR process, with the OCRT Orientation Meeting launching the collective effort and setting the stage for the rest of the process. The involvement of senior leadership involvement is important, and facilitators should be well prepared for the meeting. Leadership and facilitators can use the following 'orientation checklist' to prepare their organization for a successful OCR process:

- Pre-process: Assess organizational readiness for this process. Do not underestimate the level of effort required, though this will vary widely across organizations.
- Purpose: Define the OCR process as an organizational development initiative, not as a CTP technical training needs assessment.
- Tool: Study the OCRT and consider ways of adapting it to the organization, as needed, before the start of the OCR process.
- Process approach: Use the OCR Process Approach Framework with Organizational Match and Mash to plan the most suitable approach to the process for the organization.

Leadership:

- Secure full senior leadership support for the process and the active promotion of and participation in process activities by leaders.

Length and level of effort:

- Set realistic expectations among the leadership and process participants about the level of effort required.
- Explain the rationale for the process length to all participants.
- Outline a process timeline that allows ample time for coordination and feedback activities between the OCRT Orientation, Scoring and Action Planning Meetings, while also acknowledging on-going organizational activities.

- Take all other main organizational obligations into account when scheduling the OCR process activities.
- Plan significant time for the evidence-gathering phase of the process.

Facilitation:

- Appoint and empower an internal OCR process facilitator, or facilitation team, to facilitate internal coordination and represent leadership throughout the process.
- Explicitly define in some detail the roles of internal and external process facilitators, as applicable.

STEP 2: EVIDENCE GATHERING

The gathering of evidence on organizational CTP readiness involves identifying and reviewing existing organizational processes, procedures, plans, policies, standards, etc. Reviewing these documents will help the OCR process participants to assess CTP readiness in relation to each of the 55 OCRT indicators, and to document evidence for their score choices. An organization may not have documented all the relevant procedures or practices. In this case, the OCR process team may gather evidence by direct communications (surveys, interviews) with staff and/or by analysing data, behaviour or reports.

The table below shows a sample set of documents for each of the four OCRT categories that could contribute to the evidence base.

Sample documents as evidence	
Category 1: Leadership and resourcing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational charts • Vision documents or statements • Strategy plans and statements • Organizational change strategy and approach • Emergency preparedness and contingency plans • Cash reserve reports 	Category 3: Staff CTP technical competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CTP project proposals • CTP training programme manuals • CTP project progress reports • CTP project evaluation reports
Category 2: Organizational systems and policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme policies • CTP templates and guidance documents • Proposal templates • Knowledge management documents • Finance and accounting policies and procedures • Procurement manual • Chart of accounts • IT system capacity statements • Budgets and financial reports • Business development projections • List of Knowledge, Skills and Experience (KSE) in use by HR • Staff job descriptions • Personnel performance evaluation procedures and templates • Professional development plan standards • Training programme curriculum • Recruitment methods and reports 	Category 4: External engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate website • Communication strategy • Publicity brochures and messages • Advocacy practices • CTP network activity reports • Collaboration agreements with other CTP actors

The OCR process facilitator could assign the task of collecting evidence to several coordinators for each OCRT category or criterion. To facilitate the evidence-gathering process, the facilitator could establish a set of evidence folders on a shared drive or platform to allow others to submit and post evidence documents in a structured way.

The OCRT has a column entitled Evidence Collected. The fields in this column are meant to capture summary evidence sources for each indicator. There may be overlap between indicators, as the same evidence could support more than one indicator. The evidence-collection coordinators could be asked to write these summary statements. It is important to understand that during the next step (the scoring of indicators) OCR process participants will rely heavily on these statements to decide on a score. The participants will not have time to consult all evidence documents during the scoring sessions. Some organizations may find it helpful to use a standard protocol across all indicators for the summary evidence statements, such as adding a plus sign (+) in front of a 'positive' evidence statement that would support a higher score, and a negative sign (-) in front of a 'negative' statement that would support a lower score. Each indicator may have several positive and negative evidence statements.

The OCR process facilitator should prepare, in advance of the OCRT Scoring Meeting, a version of the OCRT with the Evidence Collected column populated with all the summary evidence statements, and distribute this to all participants of that meeting. Some organizations may find it helpful to split the Evidence Collected column into two: Evidence Sources and Evidence Summary. The first column lists the names of documents and other sources of evidence, and the second column has a summary evidence statements.

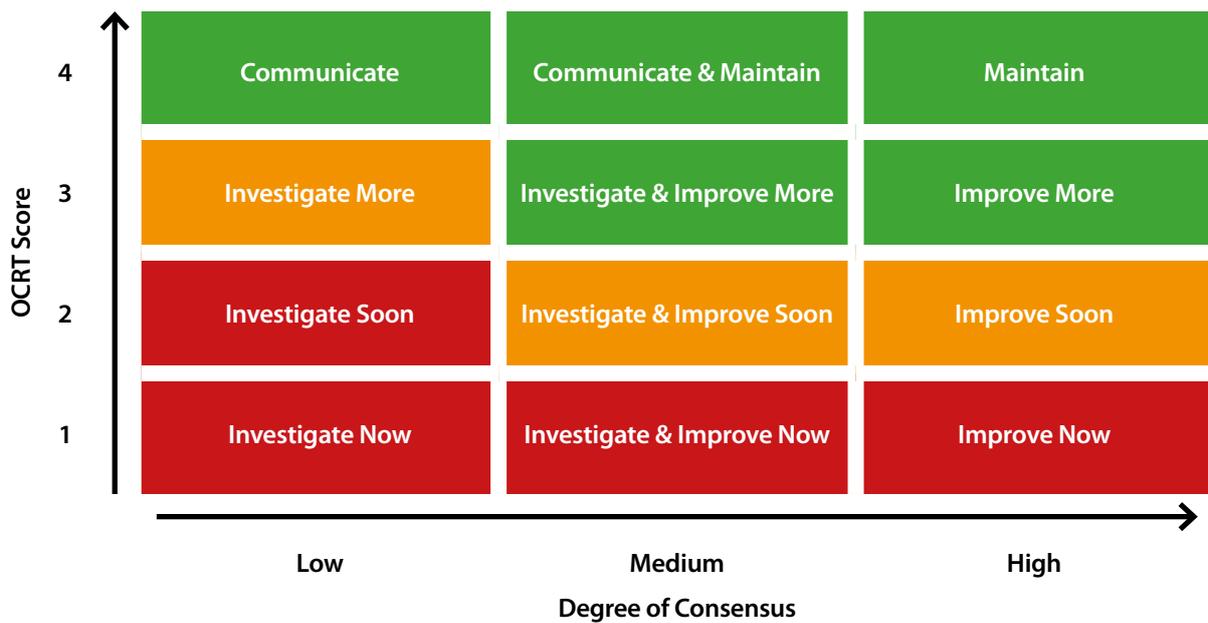
STEP 3: SCORING

After the OCR process team has finished coordinating evidence gathering and summary evidence statements are available for all indicators, the scoring step can begin. Ideally, scoring is a participatory and iterative process that will involve much discussion and communication. Collaborative scoring helps ensure that the scores are based on evidence and reduces bias. However, depending on the protocol established for scoring during the orientation step, remote staff may be asked to pre-score certain indicators, based on available evidence and experience. Pre-scoring means submitting draft or proposed scores prior to the OCRT Scoring Meeting.

The OCRT Scoring Meeting is a face-to-face or virtual two-day working meeting, during which the participants:

1. Discuss each indicator and related score descriptions to make sure that there is a common understanding about what aspect of CTP readiness the indicator is capturing;
2. Review the summary evidence statements in the Evidence Collected column and share any additional relevant evidence for each indicator;
3. Decide on a score for each indicator;
4. Record the level of consensus on each scoring decision.

Typically, participants find the discussions around scoring very informative—albeit challenging—as knowledge is shared about how an organization operates. It is important to capture these discussions in the form of notes. The OCR process facilitator should appoint a meeting notetaker/recorder, who can insert the notes in the OCRT column labelled Reason for Score, which alternatively could be re-labelled *Discussions*.



Documenting the rationale for each score is an important element of the scoring phase because it links and naturally flows into a discussion on recommendations. It also gives others within the organization the information needed to validate the assessment and to update the scores if or when evidence changes.

The OCRT has a Consensus column to document whether there was low, medium, or high consensus among the participants on the final score decision. The OCRT then calculates and displays a basic summary action in the Action column, based on the combination of the score and the level of consensus. In most cases, and ideally, consensus will be high, especially after a clarifying discussion about the evidence on the indicator, and the score descriptions. A typical situation resulting in lower consensus is when remote staff have provided pre-scoring or input via a survey or other instrument that is not aligned with the score conclusion ‘in the room’ during the OCRT Scoring Meeting. A lower consensus leads to different types of summary actions, and detailed action plans that include investigating why there is a difference of opinion and communicating more about actual CTP capacity/readiness where there is a lack of awareness. In general, the Consensus column is part of the OCRT and adds some functionality, but organizations should not spend a disproportional amount of time on this part of the tool.

STEP 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for improving organizational CTP readiness flow out of the scoring step. The OCR process team may develop some initial recommendations during the OCRT Scoring Meeting, but finalizing the list of recommendations will usually take place after that meeting.

Recommendations are basic statements of what should be done. Determining the who, when and how comes later, during the action planning step. The challenge in making recommendations is to find the right balance between a limited number of very high-level statements and a long list of detailed statements. Often, the wording of the reason for each score is especially helpful in formulating recommendations.

Each OCRT indicator should have one or more recommendations, unless there is high consensus that the organization has already achieved a top score (4). Indicators with a low score (1 or 2) will definitely need a response in the form of recommendations. Indicators with a score of 3 show an organizational CTP readiness that is close to the goal (4), so some recommendations for what should be done to get to a level 4 should be noted.

In general, low scores with a high degree of consensus represent significant gaps in readiness, whereas high scores with high consensus are opportunities to try to do even better. Low consensus indicates the need for further investigation and more communication.



Formulating recommendations is an intermediate step towards defining actions. The difference between recommendations and actions can be confusing. It is best to think of recommendations as an outflow of applying the OCRT. Recommendations are recorded in the ORCT spreadsheet, and reflect wording from the applicable criterion, indicator or score descriptions, and in that sense, they are still part of the 'OCRT structure'. Actions, on the other hand, relate more closely to the organization's structure, as shown in the next step of the OCR process.

For example, in Indicator 3.1.a. Needs assessment, the description for a score of 4 is: "All relevant staff have the capacity to conduct a needs assessment in line with good practices". If the evidence summary identifies that perhaps performance is uneven across different staff, a recommendation might be "Develop guidance and templates for conducting needs assessments that are consistent, organizationally agreed and include the consideration of CTP." This recommendation might become one task under a sub-action such as, "Incorporate cash throughout technical guidance, ensuring links with sectors, departments, etc." under an action such as "Define technical CTP guidance".

Recommendations as part of the OCRT structure

Category 1												
#	Criteria	Indicator	1	2	3	4	Score	Consensus	Action	Evidence Collected	Reason for Score	Recommendations
1.1	Title	1.1a. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.1b. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.1c. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
1.2	Title	1.2a. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.2b. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.2c. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.2d. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
1.3	Title	1.3a. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.3b. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		1.3c. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
Category 2												
#	Criteria	Indicator	1	2	3	4						
1.1	Title	2.1a. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						
		2.1b. Title	Score description	Score description	Score description	Score description						

STEP 5: ACTION PLANNING

Action planning is the final step in the OCR process, though clearly not sufficient to ensure that organizational change will happen. Recommendations define what needs to change, and the action plan outlines the who, how and when of that change, and the implementation of those actions is critical.

Action planning has six basic elements:

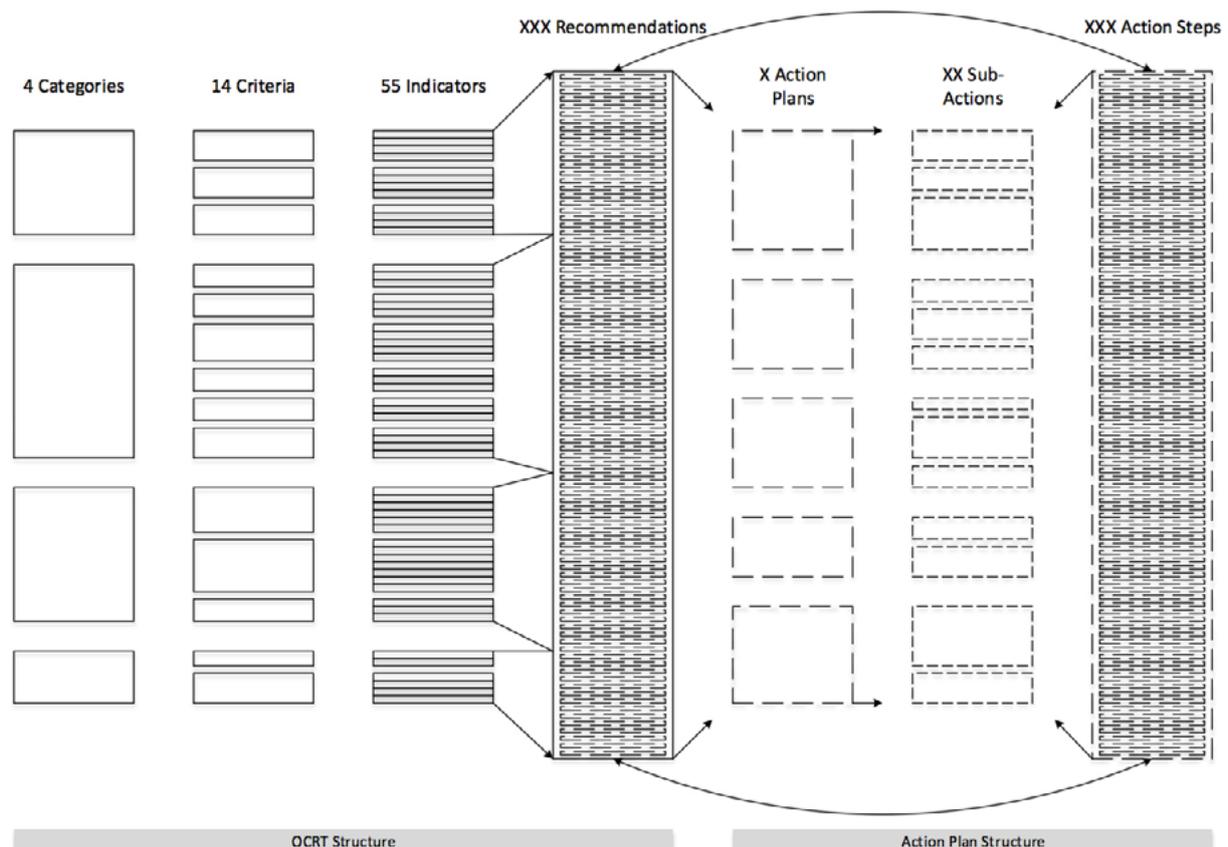
1. Group the recommendations into main clusters of action;
2. Organize each cluster into sub-clusters of action;
3. Populate the action planning template with cluster and sub-cluster information while tracing and noting the links between each sub-cluster and the set of associated OCRT recommendations;
4. Hold a two-day meeting (the OCRT Action Planning Meeting) to develop the action steps for each sub-cluster and to identify the assignees and timelines for each action step;
5. Collate all action planning documents/templates into the action plan;
6. Present the OCR process outcomes, including the action plan, to executive management for approval and resourcing for implementation.

Grouping the recommendations into main clusters of action is an iterative and creative process. One option is to simply use the grouping of the OCRT, namely the four categories. At this step of the process, however, it may be helpful to move away from the OCRT structure to consider a structure for the overall action plan that fits best with the organization rather than the tool.

There is no standard labelling for the main action clusters and the lower-level, more detailed plans. Organizations should define their own set of terms. This guide and CaLP’s proposed action plan templates use the following labels:

	Level	Label
Overall set of actions	High	Action plans (A, B, C, D, etc.)
	Medium	Sub-actions (1, 2, 3, etc.)
	Low	Action steps

The following figure shows the OCRT structure and an example of the action plan structure. A long list of recommendations may be the starting point for the formation of the action plan structure. The end point is a comprehensive list of action steps. It is important in this formation process to keep the links back to the recommendations intact. This means that anyone using the action plan structure can navigate back to the appropriate places in the OCRT structure, where much of the information is, such as the scores, level-4 score descriptions (the desired state in most cases), the evidence, discussion notes, etc. Someone assigned to an action step will need all that information.





CaLP's *OCR Process Standard Action Plan Template* allows for information to be entered for all three levels of action (high, medium and low). The *OCR Process Simple Action Plan Template* leaves out the medium level. Each template covers basic information such as:

- Overall outcome
- OCRT links (list of associated OCRT indicator numbers)
- Associated OCRT recommendations
- Timeframe
- Accountable party (who may delegate but oversees the action)
- Status
- Percent complete
- Potential challenges
- OCRT change (e.g. increase score to 4)
- Priority (low, medium or high)
- Cost (low, medium or high)
- Benefit (low, medium or high)

At a minimum, each action step should have the following information:

- Description of the action and output
- Start date
- End date
- Responsible party (who carries out the action)
- Status

The priority level of an action plan, sub-action or action step refers to its importance and urgency. For example, a high priority sub-action is important to the overall improvement of organizational CTP readiness and/or it is crucial/urgent to implement it in the near future, as it can sometimes be prerequisite of other sub-actions.

The cost and benefit indicators are helpful in identifying quick wins and long-term investments. The cost includes both time and materials, understanding that most action steps will come with time/labour costs. The benefit (low, medium or high) indicator is a simple, quick reference to the anticipated level of improvement after the implementation of the action. The best combination is obviously a *low cost/high benefit* action, but in general, management will be inclined to approve actions for which the benefit at least equals or outweighs the cost.

The development of specific action plans should follow basic project management principles. Each action step should be specific, measurable, achievable, responsible (assignable) and timebound (SMART). Organizations can use CaLP's action plan templates, design or use their own, or adopt of the commercially available project management tools that allow for setting conditions between action steps and for resource-loading each step with labor hours (level of effort/LOE).



Action Plan Management Template

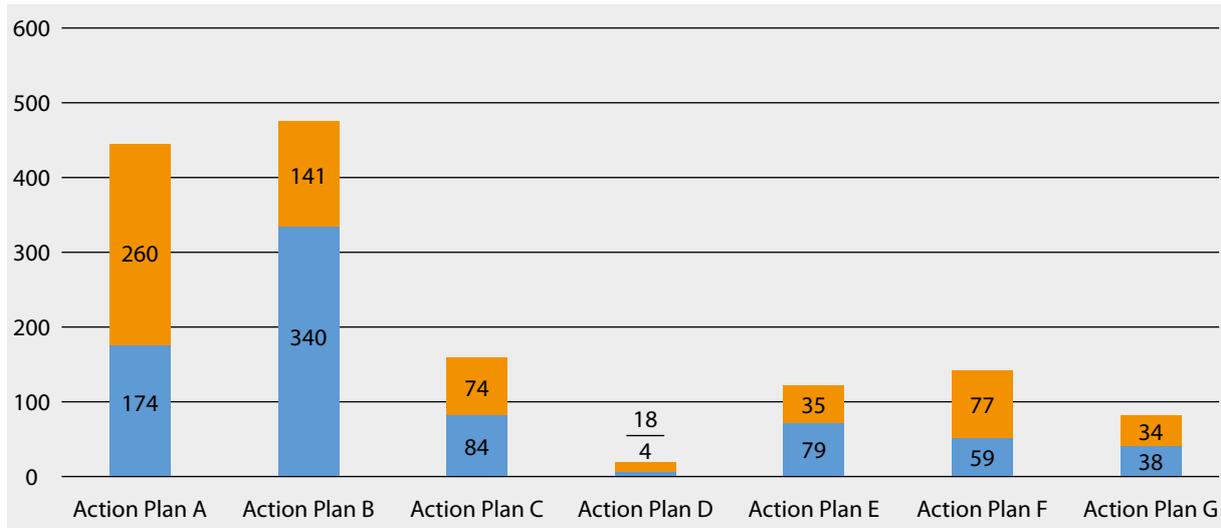
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	
1	ORGANIZATION NAME OCR Action Plans						Start Date	End Date	Assignee	Assignee Dep	LOE-T	LOE-O	LOE-C	Status	% Compl.		
2	A Action Plan A																
3	1 Sub-Action 1																
4		a	Action step				1/25/2017	2/15/2017			2	2		Active	50		
5		b	Action step				1/25/2017	2/15/2017			2	2		Active	50		
6		c	Action step				7/1/2017	7/31/2017			1		1	Pending	0		
7	2 Sub-Action 2																
8		a	Action step				1/1/2017	1/20/2017			1		1	Completed	100		
9		b	Action step				3/1/2017	7/1/2017			20		20	Active	30		
10		c	Action step				1/1/2017	1/20/2017			5		5	Completed	100		
11		d	Action step				1/1/2017	1/20/2017			5		5	Completed	100		
12		e	Action step				3/1/2017	6/1/2017			10		10	Pending	0		
13		f	Action step				3/1/2017	6/1/2017			10		10	Active	20		
14		g	Action step				3/1/2017	6/1/2017			20		20	Active	60		
15		h	Action step				7/1/2017	7/1/2017			2		2	Pending	0		
16	3 Sub-Action 3																
17		a	Action step				2/1/2017	2/28/2017			2		2	Completed	100		
18		b	Action step				3/1/2017	4/1/2017			7	4	3	Completed	100		
19		c	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15	10	5	Pending	0		
20		d	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15	10	5	Canceled	0		
21		e	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15		15	Pending	0		
22		f	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15	10	5	Active	20		
23		g	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15		15	Active	40		
24		h	Action step				4/1/2017	7/1/2017			15		15	Pending	0		
25		i	Action step				1/15/2017	1/31/2017			15		15	Completed	100		

The last part of the action planning step is the review of the plans by senior leadership, which results in a version of the plans that have management approval for implementation. The OCR process facilitator could use CaLP's [Action Plan Management Template](#) to present summary information about the overall plan to management, together with pertinent plan data such as the implementation timeline and the level of effort. Other ideas for communicating summary plan information to senior leadership for review and approval are a one-page executive summary or a short (up to four-page) strategy document. Senior leadership may approve the plans as presented, modify them, indicate priorities, send them back for more information, or a combination of the above. In principle, an initial presentation to leadership could take place towards the end of the OCRT Action Planning Meeting. However, given the amount of preparation work required to communicate the action plans effectively, the OCR process team may opt to present the action plans to leadership for detailed review and decision at a later date.

Management could also use the [Action Plan Management Template](#) to track and manage implementation of the action plans. The template shows a Gantt-Chart-like flow of the actions, and indicates when an action is overdue.

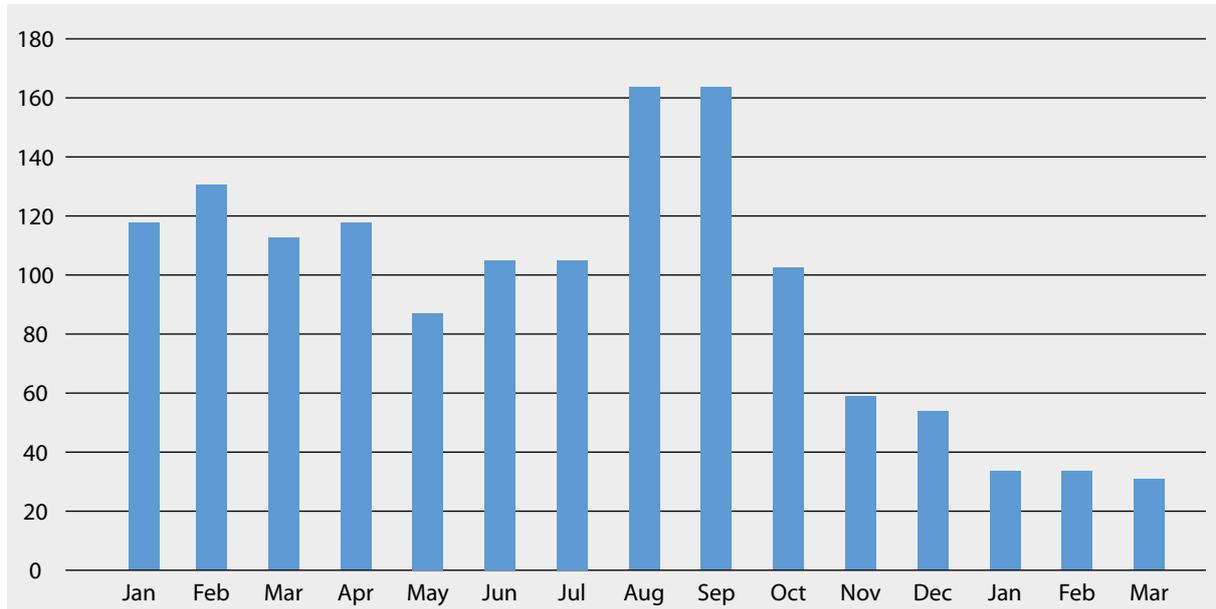


Total LOE by Action Plan, and by Cash versus Organization



Certain action steps will focus exclusively on improving the organization’s readiness for CTP, while some steps may build capacity that benefits the organization in multiple ways, beyond CTP. When estimating the level of effort (LOE) for each action step, the OCR process facilitator may find it helpful to make this distinction. In the example figure, LOE-C (Cash) refers to the effort to improve readiness for CTP, and LOE-O (Organization) indicates the effort that benefits the efficiency of the whole organization in general. The template produces graphs showing total LOE by month and by action plan.

Total LOE



The OCR process facilitator will also need to communicate action plan information to the individuals responsible for each action step. This may involve putting together detailed resource packets for each responsible party that include tracing the action step back to specific OCRT indicators, score descriptions, evidence, scores, reasons for scores, and recommendations. Responsible parties need to understand the context of their action steps, and will benefit from all the work previously completed that led to the formulation of each action step. The resource packets could also list any internal and external resources available to the responsible parties.

The implementation of action plans varies widely across organizations, and so is not part of this OCR process. As such, this guide does not cover that necessary phase; it is crucial to plan for and manage the transition into implementation well, to ensure that the momentum of the OCR process is not lost.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS

OCR process facilitators should use this guide in conjunction with the [Organizational Cash Readiness Tool \(OCRT\)](#) and the [OCRT Instructions](#).

CaLP also offers organizations the following set of OCR process templates:

- Meeting agenda templates for the [OCRT Orientation Meeting](#), the [OCRT Scoring Meeting](#), and the [OCRT Action Planning Meeting](#);
- The [OCR Process Standard Action Plan Template](#) and the [OCR Process Simple Action Plan Template](#);
- [OCR Process Action Plan Management Template](#);
- [OCR Process slides and figures \(for potential use in preparing presentations\)](#).

CaLP welcomes feedback on these products and templates as this enables it to continuously improve its services to its members and to the humanitarian and development assistance community at large.



The Cash Learning Partnership

As more and more organisations respond to the growing call and expanding funding for cash transfer programming (CTP), there is an acknowledgement that individual technical capacity must be supported by organisational structures, systems, policies and procedures that improve readiness to design and implement effective CTP.

To contribute to the institutionalisation of cash CaLP has developed an Organisational Cash Readiness Process to help help a range of committed organisations achieve the practical objectives of the Global Framework. CaLP provides three products for this process: the Organisational Cash Readiness Tool (OCRT), a set of Instructions for using the OCRT, and the Organisational Cash Readiness (OCR) Process Guide.

This research was commissioned by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE