# Organizational Success

## LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

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Strategy

Systems

Services

Policy

**ORGANIZATION** -
a local, regional or First Nation government or municipal corporation

**COUNCIL** -
elected decision-making body

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICIAL (CEO)** -
elected official that presides over the governing body - Mayor, Chairperson or Reeve

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO)** -
principal appointed officer
- Manager, Administrator, Executive Director of a local, regional or First Nation government

## PURPOSE

These guidelines focus on enabling the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and council to regularly review organizational and governance effectiveness. This assessment process is guided by positive success indicators. This eliminates the tendency to focus on past events. The success indicators, effectiveness factors, questions and procedures provided to guide organizational discussions are based on four core local government functions.

1. **STRATEGIC DIRECTION** – the overall roadmap that guides organizational activities
2. **POLICY CHOICES** – decisions that allocate resources and organizational effort
3. **SERVICE DELIVERY** – provision of public and internal programs or services
4. **SYSTEM COORDINATION** – requirements for overall effectiveness and efficiency

# CORE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

## Political Realm

### STRATEGIC Direction

Vision for the Future
Organizational Mission
Shared Values
Long Term Goals
Specific Objectives

### POLICY Choices

Legislative Compliance
Budget Allocations
Policy Decisions
Contract Commitments
Short Term Priorities

### SYSTEMS Coordination

Personnel Practices
Information Systems
Financial Accountability
Resource Deployment
Public Communication

### SERVICE Delivery

Actions Plans
Production Systems
Resource Schedules
Delivery Strategies
Service Assessment

## Administrative Realm

# SUCCESS INDICATORS

Key success indicators are intended to describe the ideal state of:

- **Governance** – political aspects that involve elected officials

- **The Organization** – the administrative realm involving management and staff

Success indicators or expectations provide a basis to identify 'what is working well'. This type of positive discussion encourages celebration of effort and results. It is also a reminder of the strengths and assets that the organization should reinforce and retain.

Success indicators also help to identify 'areas for attention'. Critical analysis can identify concerns and gaps identifying where the organization is falling short of its desired benchmarks.

Key general questions to guide organizational and governance discussions include:

## Strategic Direction

- Do we have a clear strategic direction?

- Is the direction consistently pursued by council and administration?

- Do we assess and celebrate progress and make adjustments?

## Policy Choices

- Does the decision-making process work well?

- Do we have adequate information to make good decisions?

- Do we make good policy and ensure it is implemented?

## Service Delivery

- Are service expectations realistic given our organizational capacity?

- Are people satisfied with services provided?

- Do we provide services in the most efficient manner?

## Systems Coordination

- Do we have a positive and productive work environment?

- How do we ensure a high degree of performance and fiscal accountability?

- How do we maximize internal and external communication efforts?

# EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS

Achieving success is influenced by *internal factors* that relate to the skills and behaviours of people involved in the organization as well as its systems and processes. The internal human and technical elements must be aligned to achieve system stability.

*External influences* also affect success. Societal and community trends along with public and stakeholder demands place pressures on the organization. To be effective, the organization must align its directions with the strategic imperatives of its environment and community needs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL**
**Conditions**

Societal Trends

Best Practices

Other Agencies

**SYSTEM**
**Components**

Reliable Systems

Clear Processes

Adequate Resources

**COMMUNITY**
**Needs**

Public Expectations

Stakeholder Demands

Available Resources

**HUMAN**
**Elements**

Required Competencies

Appropriate Behaviours

Focused Effort

# Explorative Questions

Use these questions to explore the impact 'effectiveness factors' may have on organizational or governance success:

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- What are the significant external influences that impact our organization?
- How is our success impacted by other agencies?
- Are there some 'best practices' that would enhance our success?

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

- What are the prevailing public expectations of the organization?
- How do we sort out wants from needs among stakeholders?
- What resources are available in the community that can be mobilized?

## SYSTEM COMPONENTS

- Do our systems and processes help us to achieve success?
- Are the various sub-systems linked and integrated?
- Can we improve the allocation and use of available resources?

## HUMAN ELEMENTS

- Are there member behaviours that detract from our ability to achieve success?
- Do we have the skills required to respond to issues and opportunities?
- Can we improve employee, council or service performance?

# GOVERNANCE SUCCESS DISCUSSION

Ideally, *Success Indicators* are adopted by council following each election. Should there be a change in council membership or CAO, council may wish to review and update its success indicators.

The Organizational Success Discussion should be done in a closed (in-camera) meeting as it involves the performance of staff requiring that their privacy should be protected. The CEO chairs the discussion upon consent of council to enter into 'closed meeting' in accordance with enabling legislation. The CEO is expected to refer any discussion that is not appropriate for closed to a regular meeting of council.

The meeting should be regularly scheduled (quarterly is ideal) and include the CAO who will follow up on matters raised.

The discussions are a two-way dialogue about how administration is impacting the governance functions and likewise, how political activities affect the administrative realm.

The CAO can also use the *Success Indicators* with staff to assess how the organization is doing and to improve organizational effectiveness.

An organizational check-in itself does not lead to organization and governance excellence. In fact, conducting a check-in without follow-up can lead to more relationship issues. It is important that once some key topics have been identified, consideration be given to what can be done to enhance effectiveness. The nature of the topic needs to be understood and desired outcomes established before strategies can be developed and implemented:

**Preventative Strategies** – ways to prevent the issue in the future or maximize success in a proactive manner.

**Remedial Strategies** – ways to react to an issue that has already occurred so that residual negative consequences can be addressed.

# ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Adherence to political and administrative **roles and responsibilities**

2. Efforts to develop and achieve **strategic directions**

3. Ability to develop a smooth transition of **plans into action**

4. Attention to monitor and recognize **organizational** and **staff performance**

5. Facilitation of a positive and productive **work environment**

6. Accountability for the efficient use of **organizational resources**

7. Adequate information and discussion to arrive at **good decisions**

8. Consistency of attention to **internal** and **external communication**

9. Respect for **diverse opinions**

10. State of organizational stability while addressing **changing conditions**

11. Evaluation of the satisfaction levels and efficiency of **service delivery**

12. Maintenance of external **relations and partnerships**

13. Honour the principles of **transparent processes** and **service public**