Organizational Mapping Tool

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Updated September 2022

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Introduction

This guide is for facilitators of the Organizational Mapping Tool (OMT), a participatory self-assessment survey. The OMT provides the opportunity for an organization to consider itself as a whole, reflect and build on its strengths, asking what works well and what could be improved. It then helps to identify collectively priority areas for improvement and steps for addressing them, all through organization-wide discussion. It is not a strategic planning tool. Rather, it is meant to provide input for an eventual institutional development plan for capacity building. It is intended for groups of different sizes and levels of capacity—from small or recently founded to mature and complex organizations. By the end of the process, the group should have:

- A clear sense of how it sees itself on key aspects of organizational development;

- A short list of highest priorities for institutional strengthening;

- A set of outcomes that would result from strengthening each of these prioritized areas;

- Key steps the organization can take on its own to make progress in each area; and

- A list of specific requests that could be made of a funder in a grant proposal for each area (if appropriate).

While this guide provides general suggestions, each facilitator should come to clear agreements on all aspects of the facilitation of the exercise with whomever contracts him/her/them directly (foundation, the organization itself, or another entity).

Who Participates?

All Staff

The OMT is meant to be filled out by all staff—programs and administration—and, if appropriate, by available board members, since different perspectives are valuable in understanding an organization's strengths and areas for growth. Some groups ask if custodians or other service staff should be included. Unless there is a good reason to exclude them, and when in doubt, it is recommended to err on the side of inclusion.

The process is best done with one person who is not an employee or board member leading as a facilitator.

When Should Board Members Participate?

Each organization should decide whether or not to include some or all members of the board (or other governance body) in the exercise. As a rule, board members who can speak to the operational detail of the exercise are the most appropriate participants. However, some organizations choose to have only staff participate. This decision depends in part on whether or not board members have adequate information to weigh in on the topics covered; whether board participation might inhibit staff participation; and whether it makes sense to involve the board in discussions of management issues that may exceed, and in some cases confuse, their role and mandate.

That said, organizations are encouraged to use the OMT as an opportunity for taking a hard look at the effectiveness of their governance. Sharing the results of the OMT with board members—even if they do not participate in the session itself—may also be a useful way to engage the board (or other body) on governance and/or other organizational strengthening challenges.

Facilitators should encourage and may assist organizations to assess the risks and opportunities of board involvement in the OMT and think creatively about how best to engage board members.

A Note about Large Groups

If the organization is large (for example, bigger than 40-50 persons), conducting the exercise with a smaller group of staff who represent different perspectives, areas and levels of the organization may work best. It is not recommended to divide up a large organization and conduct parallel OMT processes.

The organization should identify relevant **criteria for selecting the representative group**, with the help of the facilitator, if needed. Such criteria might include: gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; race; ethnicity; caste; class; age; culture; combination of field and office staff, program and administrative staff; levels of seniority; and time in the organization. Keep in mind that difference—ranging from personal identity (gender, race/ethnicity/caste, etc.) to position and tenure within the organization—could have bearing on experiences and perceptions of the organization. As a facilitator, it is important to help the organization bring forward different perspectives that may be otherwise obscured by expressions of only majority viewpoints. At the same time, it is important to select individuals who are most likely to be constructive and willing and able to represent others' as well as their own thinking.

The **selection process** for the representative group may take different forms but should be as transparent and democratic as possible. For example, staff may self-nominate or be nominated by supervisors or peers. To the extent possible, it is recommended that those being represented weigh in on who will carry out such a role (for example, staff in a particular program area or office may vote for their own representative).

To begin the session, each person should say whom they represent, and the group should ensure that all relevant perspectives are, indeed, represented. **During the session**, the person representing other staff may: 1) simply represent the perspective of his/her/their group as best he/she/they can, 2) act as a proxy for a person or group who shared their individual survey answers with them ahead of time (which can include their three priorities, if instructed to provide them), or 3) represent their own perspective with the understanding that they do not speak for their whole group.

After the session, it is recommended that facilitators be slightly more detailed in the "comments" section in the final OMT report to capture the main points of the discussion, keeping in mind it will be shared with people who were not in the room during the discussion. Facilitators should encourage the organization's leadership to determine in advance how the results will be shared with the larger group, and should inform the people who participate in the meeting what the process will be.

One option is to have an all-staff meeting (virtual or other) after the session to explain the OMT process, take questions on the report from all staff (whether present at the session or not), and let participants give a sense of the process and the conversations to their peers. One possible sequence for that meeting is: 1) presentation of perspectives represented to see if the group feels any perspective is missing; 2) all read the OMT report; 3) clarifying questions; 4) small groups to detect points that sparked greatest enthusiasm, agreement or disagreement; 5) in groups organized by team, "What can my team do to support implementation of next steps?"

Facilitator's Responsibilities

The external facilitator's **primary responsibilities** involve ensuring that the process moves along quickly and comes to necessary conclusions. S/he/they:

- Encourages participants to think about the whole institution, beyond their program, role or area

- Listens for places where conclusions can be drawn and the conversation can move on

- Ensures that all voices get heard within the group – see in particular: Ensuring the Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives (page 14)

- Leads the prioritizing exercise to conclusion

- Records the conclusions of the deliberations and summarizes the main points of discussion in a final report (found at the end of the OMT survey)

In addition, the facilitator:

- Helps leadership prepare for and make best use of the OMT, including considering how they frame the exercise, how they show up in ways that inspire even participation in the meeting, and how they will follow-up to the outcomes of the discussion

- Determines in advance if any section or question(s) do not apply and should be skipped by all participants

- Reminds individual participants that they can leave questions blank if they feel they do not apply, or if they lack enough information with which to answer

- Develops an agenda for the meeting, including working with the organization's leadership to identify the appropriate duration for the session; how to balance discussing the survey and identifying priorities and next steps; and thinking through most appropriate facilitation techniques.

- Reminds the group that it can collectively agree to skip questions (or an entire section, such as Advocacy, if it is not relevant)

- Explains terminology and concepts, as needed

- Adapts the questions, as they go, based on the discussion, or beforehand, based on their understanding of the organization's structure and operations. For example,
  o If the organization has more than one executive director (such as two co-directors), ask participants to mark their ratings thinking of the leadership as a team, then use the comments section to make specific references to the individuals, if needed.
  o In the case of merging organizations, facilitators should help participants gain clarity before filling out the OMT on the perspective from which they should answer the questions (from "what was" or from "what will be").

- Clarifies that the OMT is not an evaluation

How Long Does the OMT Take?

The OMT exercise has four steps:

1. Setting the context and explaining the OMT
2. Completing the survey and reaching collective consensus
3. Prioritizing three items to work on as an organization
4. Identifying next steps and resources needed for each of those three items

The amount of time involved depends in part on whether participants read and complete the survey before coming together. If they have not filled it out previously, it adds anywhere from two or more additional hours. Both methods are described below. **As a general rule, it is recommended to have participants complete the survey beforehand.** The advantage of this option is that they have more time to read and reflect on their responses, and the in-person meeting becomes more agile.

If participants complete the survey in advance, **the OMT ideally lasts two days.** This involves completing step one and the bulk of step two in day one. Day two would then be devoted to finishing step two and covering steps three and four. That said, some groups will only be able to spend 1.5 days on the OMT, in which case you can seek to do all of steps one and two on day one, and the rest on day two, or adjust the timing as you see fit. Timing will depend, in part, on how much time is allowed for discussion of each survey item; whether certain sections were skipped; how easily the group tends to reach consensus; and the level of detail generated in the prioritization and next steps exercise at the end.

Each organization should decide how much time to invest. Facilitators should help organizational leaders understand the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

How to Conduct the Exercise

Here we describe two versions of how to conduct the exercise, the main difference being whether or not the participants fill out the survey before or during the meeting.

VERSION 1: Survey Completed Before the Meeting

Before Facilitating the Exercise in the Room

In this case, if possible, the facilitator:

- Has an initial introductory meeting with participants to distribute the survey, explain the desired outcomes, discuss what steps will be taken to ensure equity and inclusion of diverse perspectives and welcome questions.

    Note: It is recommended to distribute the survey approximately 72 hours in advance of the collective exercise (enough time for the staff to complete it, but not so far in advance that they are likely to discuss it among themselves before the exercise).

- Asks each participant to complete the survey and bring it to the full group meeting. Encourage participants to answer all questions even with partial information, but they should leave blank those questions about which they do not have sufficient information to answer.

    Note: Participants should be told they can choose to check the circle in between two ratings (as in the circle between Basic and Moderate). They should also be encouraged to read the introductory page of the OMT for more detailed guidelines.

    Note: In cases in which participants plan to come to the meeting with the survey completed electronically (not printed), they should be encouraged to check that their answers have been correctly registered before they come to the meeting. There have been cases in which participants' answers have not appeared correctly once the OMT was opened in tablets or cell phones. If this occurs, participants could use a laptop instead.

When it is not possible to have an introductory meeting, this step is usually replaced by an email communication from the facilitator to the participants (either directly or forwarded by someone from the organization's leadership).

The day of the exercise, once you are with the group in the room:

Part 1: Setting the Context (30 minutes)

1. Welcome everyone, do a round of introductions and briefly introduce yourself. The organization's leader might want to say a few words as well, including sharing any relevant institutional news, thanking the staff for participating, actively encouraging them to do so openly throughout the exercise, and explaining how the OMT fits into the organization's current and future plans. The leader should also, ideally, announce that the OMT final report will be shared with all staff once completed.

2. Provide a brief, initial introduction to the session, including:

    a. An overview of the survey, its purpose and topics
    b. Clarity about the strengths and limitations of the exercise to help manage staff expectations, given that it opens up a lot of issues and needs. This is an important moment to reinforce that the discussions will serve as important *input* into the organization's institutional strengthening priorities, but that no decisions will necessarily be made at the session.
    c. A summary of expected outcomes for the day, including a list of proposed action steps for strengthening the organization
    d. A brief summary of how the day will go, and what steps will occur afterward (when the report will be completed, who will receive and approve it, who will share it with the donor, if pertinent). Make sure to

announce (or have the organization's leadership announce) that the report will be shared with everyone once completed.

    e. Clarity about the facilitator's role, including ensuring even participation, helping all voices be heard, and striking a balance between allowing for some in-depth discussion and keeping the process agile. This could include mention and/or discussion of how the facilitator and/or the group will address various power dynamics in the room, be they related to gender, race, class, age, etc.

3. Answer initial clarifying questions

4. Set up ground rules to guide the group's discussion and remind participants of the participatory and open nature of the OMT. Suggested ground rules might include:

    a. Even participation (many facilitators use the notion of "step up/step back")
    b. Respect all voices
    c. Listen actively/listen to understand
    d. Name "elephants in the room" (an obvious problem or difficult situation that people do not want to talk about, but that is beneath the surface and might hinder the quality of discussion)
    e. Trust positive intent while acknowledging actual impact of words and actions
    f. Balancing inquiry and advocacy in our interventions (so as not to sway participants' ratings with too much "advocating" for one answer)
    g. Be concise
    h. Return from breaks and meals on time
    i. Cell phones silenced except for emergencies to be fully present

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Sample Script for Introduction to the OMT Session

1. **Nature and Purpose of the OMT**
   - The purpose of the OMT is for organizations to assess their institutional strengths and weaknesses in a collective manner, generating organizational wide discussion.
   - It is an institutional self-assessment, not an organizational or performance evaluation.
   - It covers a wide variety of topics (list them).
   - It allows organizations to decide collectively which topics are top priority for future action and what steps they can take to address them.

2. **Today's Outcomes**
   - A consensus rating on each of the points or subcategories included in the survey
   - A list of the top three priority topics that the organization wants to address
   - Desired outcomes for each, and concrete next steps for addressing them
   - What actions the organization can take on its own and what resources it may need or choose to request from a donor

3. **Strengths and Limitations of the OMT**
   - The OMT is relatively quick, agile, and highly participatory.
   - It is low-tech and meant to be used across a variety of contexts.
   - It allows for all staff to provide input and opinions, but does not allow for a deep dive into all topics nor does it result in a full institutional development plan.
   - The consensus ratings are simply indicative of the collective view of the group and so we will not worry excessively about each one.
   - The discussion and collective understanding is the most important aspect of the exercise.

4. **Process and Clarifications**
   - *Describe how the session or sessions will occur.*
   - *Mention and openly address issues related to power dynamics in the room, if appropriate.*
   - *Describe your role as facilitator.*
   - *Describe all post-session steps (how you will elaborate the report, when the report will be ready, who will receive and approve it, that it will be circulated to all staff.)*
   - *Add any clarifications about confidentiality, who else will receive the report (such as board members or a donor, if applicable) and how the results will and will not be used.*

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Part 2: Completing the Survey and Reaching Consensus (roughly 8-12 hours, including lunch and coffee breaks, generally divided over two or more days)

1. Clarify the meaning of consensus and "consensus rating" in the context of the OMT. Suggested language: "What we are going to do now is get a sense of how people voted and then seek to agree on a rating that reflects the collective opinion of the group. This is not based on a strict tally or an exact average. Rather, first, we will get a sense of the group's opinions and then you will decide together the best rating. Not everyone needs to agree; you just need to be able to live with it. On the outside chance that we can't, I will make a note of any minority or dissenting voices in the comments section, respecting individuals' confidentiality. Please remember that the richness of the OMT lies in the discussion and not in the particular rating."

   Note: We recommend taking a moment to establish agreement on the meaning of "consensus" in the context of the OMT (for example, loose consensus, or "the sense of the group"). This definition may be

put up on a flipchart as a reminder throughout the session.

2. Starting with the Mission and Strategy category, help the group identify a consensus rating for each subcategory that reflects the general agreement of the group. See suggested dynamics to help the group reach consensus in the grey box below.

   Some subcategories will take longer than others if consensus is hard to reach. It is the role of the facilitator to strike the right balance between allowing for needed discussion and helping the group avoid getting bogged down in each subcategory.

   Note: The facilitator has a few options for how to record the consensus ratings and the most salient points of the discussion during the exercise, which will ultimately be submitted in the report form found at the end of the OMT survey:

   • The consensus ratings can be marked using the PDF form on a computer or other device, or by hand on a printed version.
   • The notes on the discussion can be logged directly in the same PDF form, or taken by hand, or logged in a computer or other device, not using the PDF (for example, in a Word document).

3. Repeat for each category. The group should complete all sections using the consensus process, **except Executive Leadership**. These questions are more politically sensitive and are usually not discussed in the group.

4. Collect the individual answers to the Executive Leadership section in a confidential fashion. (Participants may hand in that page or may send the PDF to the facilitator if they filled out this section electronically.)

Facilitation Tips for the Consensus Rating

One of your key roles is to help create a brave space for discussion, manage power dynamics, ensure even participation and bring out the quieter voices in the group. Here are some ideas for helping to make that happen. If the facilitator detects that this is not occurring during the session, he/she/they should actively remind the group (especially the leadership, if necessary) about the spirit of the OMT.

• Conduct a "**lightning round**" for each subcategory, in which each participant calls out the level they chose, without explanations (for example, "Basic," "Basic," "Moderate," "Moderate," "Basic to Moderate," "Moderate," etc.)

  - Start each round with a different person and change direction frequently

  - After the lightning round, ask "What are people hearing?"

  - Reflect back to them the number of times that each level was named (you can keep tabs of this on a sheet of paper during the lightning round)

• Have participants indicate which level they chose with a **show of hands** for each level (starting with "Strong") and those in between (e.g., "Moderate to Strong"). This is particularly recommended when working with a group larger than 25 people, though it also works well in smaller groups.

• Have participants **stand along a continuum** or in different places in the room to reflect their rating

• Use **dot stickers on flip charts** to visually capture the range of ratings for some subcategories

• **Straw poll with electronic voting technology** (if available)

Facilitation Tips for the Consensus Rating (continued)

- Where you see **outliers**, call on those persons to share their perspective: "Can you tell me why you scored this as you did?" or "Can someone that marked "Basic" share why they did so"?

- Focus on those who have relevant **expertise** (for example, the accountant when rating financial administration). But call on expert voices (and/or senior management) last, not first, so that others also feel free to speak out.

- Particularly for larger groups, you may choose to break up participants into triads, or three or four **smaller sub-groups** around "clusters" of topics. If participants voted on flipcharts, each group reviews a cluster of categories and tries to identify a consensus rating for each subcategory to report back to the plenary. Other tips for working with small groups include:

    - Beware of the amount of time involved in using small groups
    - Begin the OMT session with facilitation of one or more consensus ratings in plenary so that participants get a sense of how the discussion is supposed to go and what is meant by "reaching consensus," before they are asked to mirror it in small groups, without your active facilitation
    - Look for overlap in consensus ratings among all small groups
    - Focus the discussion on where there is more divergence
    - Have participants self-organize in small groups around topics of their choosing (ensuring that everyone feels that they can opine even if it is not their area of expertise)

- Conduct a "**negative poll**": "Does anyone disagree with moving on?" or "Who can't live with moving on?" Two approaches may be:

    - **Thumbs up, down or sideways**. Thumb sideways means I don't agree but can live with it. For those with thumbs down: "what would it take to move you from thumbs down to sideways?"
    - **Fist to Five**, where number of fingers shows level of agreement. Zero (fist) is "There is no way I can accept this consensus rating;" three is "I don't really agree, but can move on;" and five is "I fully agree with moving on."

- **To capture dissenting voices**, or when consensus is difficult to reach:

    - Move to different places of the room to reflect how in agreement or disagreement each person is and have an "open mic" moment to say why
    - Use a "parking lot" to record dissenting voices (and make sure that these are later reflected anonymously in the comments section in your final report)
    - Have participants listen in to the discussion of a small group of people that agree on a rating, then ask them to share if they dissent
    - Provide post-its for people to share dissent in a more anonymous fashion

- It is helpful to have an easily **visible list of the categories** on the wall and check them off as you go along so that all participants can see how many remain to be covered. You may also get permission from the group at the start of the session to **use a timer** to help with time management.

- Because it's a long exercise, the facilitator needs to **keep the process as agile as possible.** Diverse methodologies that involve **physical movement** to get the energy flowing **and visuals** are important, as are **occasional breaks, energy shifters, stretching, etc.**

Part 3: Prioritizing Exercise (30 minutes to 1 hour)

Once all sections of the tool are completed you will start the prioritizing exercise. There are many ways to do this. Here is one method.

1. Ask each participant to go back through the survey on their own and log what they see as the organization's first, second, and third priorities for institutional strengthening under the section "Prioritizing Exercise," found after the Executive Leadership category. Remind participants that priorities are not necessarily what is most urgent (groups can establish timing later)—or the biggest weakness—but rather the most important issue for the organization to focus on in the coming period.

   Note: Remind participants that they may pick aspects that feel "weaker" or those that they consider strengths that they would like to work on further or differently. Some facilitators even add a brief exercise at some point before prioritization to help groups identify and celebrate their strengths.

   Note: Participants may focus on the larger capacity category (e.g. Advocacy, Learning and Evaluation) unless they want to specify an issue raised in a subcategory. They may also choose Executive Leadership even though it will have not been discussed as a group.

2. Before beginning the tallying exercise, explain to participants that the numbers are merely suggestive, and do not automatically define the priorities.

3. Then ask each person to report what they ranked as first, tallying the individual answers on a large sheet or board in the front of the room, and repeat this process for second and third priorities. Note that this information can also be gathered by show of hands for each category, or by voting on flipcharts. In the first image, the frequency of votes is captured by "sticks" (one stick for each mention). In the second image, those frequencies are converted to digits to facilitate the subsequent multiplication.

4. Sum the information in two ways:

   a. Overall frequencies (e.g., how often was Communications mentioned overall)

   b. A weighted frequency in which first priorities weigh more than second ones, and second more than third

      Note: To do this, every time a category is considered first priority, it should receive three points; for second, it should receive two; and for third, one point.

In this image, the weighted points are logged throughout the chart. For example, 1 x 3 equals 3 points for Governance as priority one; 2 x 3 equals 6 points for External Communication as priority one; 2 x 4 equals 8 points for Governance as priority two, etc.

In this image, the points are summed for each topic (for example, for governance, three points under priority one and eight points under priority two, three points under priority four sums to 14 points total; there are six points for External Communication, etc.).

In this image, the top three priorities are indicated by the circled numbers (Priority one is Goals and Outcomes with 18 points; priority two is Human Resources with 17 points; and Governance and Mission and Strategy tied for priority three with 14 points each.

Tip: To move this step along and foster participation, you may want to have someone from the organization help you calculate and/or check the weighted frequencies.

Tip: The facilitators may use and later transcribe flipcharts for both the prioritization and next steps exercise, writing up the results electronically using the report form at the end of the OMT survey. The prioritization exercise worksheet at the bottom of the form tallies the weighted frequencies automatically.

5. Ask the group to note trends in terms of organizational priorities for institutional strengthening.

6. Remind the group that the numbers are just indicative, and turn them over for discussions with questions like: "What are you seeing?" "Does anyone think that something else should be among the top three priorities?" Conclude by identifying the organization's first, second, and third priorities.

7. Remind participants to answer and turn in the last question on the OMT Survey ("My Evaluation of the OMT Exercise," located on page 40) with feedback on the session. The facilitator may include anonymous, aggregate comments about staff feedback in his/her/their final report.

Part 4: Next Steps and Resource Identification (1 to 2 hours)

Once the group has identified the organization's top three priorities, the facilitator engages participants in a discussion of next steps. This is a critical part of the process and should be given adequate time and emphasis. After having opened up all the areas that require strengthening, it is important for participants to feel that some steps will be taken to make change.

The facilitator helps the group:
- Identify the outcomes they would want to see within a few years for each of the three priorities. Ask participants to answer: for this priority, "what does success look like?"
- Specify steps they would need to take to realize these outcomes
- Identify follow-up actions for each priority (if the group agrees, including persons responsible and deadlines)
- Consider which resources the organization already has to help them realize their outcomes
- Identify those resources that require external support
- If there is time, articulate the request they might make, where appropriate, to a funder in a proposal. This may also be done by the executive leadership or other staff person after the exercise.

All of this may serve as input for an eventual Institutional Development Plan, which may accompany a proposal to a funder, if additional resources are needed to realize the outcomes.

As a general rule, it is recommended that the facilitator divide participants into smaller groups to do the work related to next steps and follow-up actions (for example, three groups, one to work on each priority). Depending on time, the smaller groups may report-back to the plenary and/or hand in written recommendations to the organization's leadership.

> **Tip:** Some facilitators create a Word document that mimics pages 44-46 of the OMT PDF and asks small groups to fill out this form digitally for the priority assigned to them, indicating the expected outcomes, next steps, required resources, etc. Their work can be presented in plenary (using a projector, if desired), and, eventually, cut and paste into the OMT PDF report form.

VERSION 2: Survey Completed During the Meeting

For this longer version, the facilitator will:

1. Complete the steps included in Part 1 from Version 1.

2. Hand out printed versions of the survey to each participant and give them a few minutes to read the introductory page with more detailed guidelines on how to fill it out.

   > **Note:** Some groups are sensitive to the use of paper and will prefer that participants fill out the survey on a laptop, tablet or other device. Facilitators should agree on the best modality with the organization's leadership beforehand.

3. Ask the participants to rank each of the subcategories in the Mission and Strategy section on their own. Encourage participants to answer all questions even with partial information, but they should leave blank those questions about which they do not have sufficient information to answer. Give about 10 minutes for participants to read and complete.

   > **Note:** Participants should be reminded that they can choose to check the circle in between two ratings (as in the circle between Basic and Moderate).

4. Reconvene the group and help them identify a consensus rating for each subcategory within the Mission and Strategy category that reflects general agreement as to where the organization ranks. See suggested dynamics to help the group reach consensus in the grey box above.

5. Repeat for each category: The group should complete all sections using the consensus process, **except Executive Leadership**. As mentioned above, these questions are more politically sensitive and usually not discussed in the larger group.

6. Ask participants to complete the Executive Leadership section anonymously

7. Collect the individual answers to these Executive Leadership questions. (Participants may send the PDF to the facilitator if they filled out this section electronically.)

   > **Note:** Executive directors ideally should not be in the room when the questions around leadership are completed.

8. Complete the prioritizing exercise and work on next steps and resource identification, as described above.

Ensuring the Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives

Participants may have widely varying experiences of the organization based on factors mentioned above, ranging from *personal identity* (race, ethnicity, caste, gender, gender identity, etc.) to *organizational identity* (position, tenure, etc.). While the updated version of the OMT includes more questions that directly explore issues of power, privilege, diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization's culture, governance and approach to its work, more may be necessary to bring forward different perspectives. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to create a space where people are willing and able to share these perspectives while minimizing the risk of harm during or after the meeting.

In preparation for the OMT process, it is important for the facilitator to work with the organization to ensure that different perspectives are not obscured by majority viewpoints. Toward this end, in the design of the survey and in the facilitation of sessions about the OMT, the facilitator should **look for opportunities to foster the exploration of power, privilege, diversity, equity, inclusion issues**. The facilitator should work with the organization to craft strategies that make room for full participation—including using different language versions to remove language barriers, equalizing educational barriers such as the reliance on the written word to take the survey, or ways to share perspectives anonymously to address power differences in the room.

One suggestion that the facilitator may offer to the organization is to **consider using a digital, online version of the OMT that includes demographic information.**[1] Participants would be encouraged to share demographic data so that the data of sub-groups (gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity/caste, department, tenure, etc.) could be disaggregated from and compared to the data of the whole group. Analysis of data in this way may help the facilitator and group see how difference informs experience and perspective. Should the organization decide to integrate demographic data into the survey, the facilitator should work with the leadership and staff around issues of confidentiality and anonymity to address any concerns that may exist around retribution.

Another option would be to have **affinity sub-groups meet** to discuss their experiences and perspectives and how they would like to share them with the larger group. This may be important toward making room for people who feel marginalized within the organization to prepare to share their opinions. The facilitator may want to consult with leadership and the staff about how to configure affinity groups before the OMT session (if considered essential) or during it, taking into account the time implications for the entire exercise.

As you read through this facilitation guide and prepare to lead the OMT process and session, think about how you can help the organization be intentional about bringing all points of view into the assessment and future planning work. If the conversation leads to any conflict, harm or trauma (or you anticipate this occurring during the session), you should assess the possible need to take specific steps to address this.[2]

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[1] Where relevant, the facilitator should be aware of and comply with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation.

[2] Some relevant resources include:

• Healing Justice Podcast "Facilitating Conflict & Leading from the Feminine" with Celia Kutz accessed at https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/healing-justice-podcast/id1308078502?i=1000396274446.

• *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen (2010), accessed at https://epdf.pub/difficult-conversations-how-to-discuss-what-matters-most.html.

• "Moving Toward Conflict for the Sake of Good Strategy," a blog (with written and audio versions) by Yotam Marom, accessible at https://medium.com/@YotamMarom/moving-toward-conflict-for-the-sake-of-good-strategy-9ad0aa28b529.

• "Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace," a TEDx talk by Amy Edmondson, available at https://tinyurl.com/zl7nts7.

Preparing the Report

The final report consists of the full OMT PDF, which includes both the completed OMT survey with the consensus ratings and any comments, and the report form that appears just after the survey. After the meeting, the facilitator:

- Completes the survey by checking the consensus rating selected by the group for each subcategory

- Completes the comments section for each category, making sure to succinctly, accurately and appropriately capture the main points of discussion

- Chooses the most appropriate consensus ratings for the Executive Leadership section based on the individual answers and synthesizes the anonymous comments on this section, noting general trends in a way that is both clear and constructive

- Synthesizes and shares any relevant anonymous feedback on the session (page 40)

- Fills out the "For Facilitator Use Only" report form at the end of the PDF with general information and the results of the prioritization exercise, next steps and resource identification

Sharing the Findings

With the Organization

Once the full report is complete, the facilitator shares this with the organization's leaders (as agreed beforehand, usually the Executive Director(s) or equivalent, or the Executive Director(s) and person(s) in charge of organizational development) and obtains their approval of the report, making any edits, as necessary. In general, these changes should be minor, either for the sake of clarity, or choosing different words that are more appropriate for the organization's culture and sensitivities. If the leadership proposes changes of substance or significant clarifications, the facilitator indicates that s/he/they will include these as an additional opinion in the report, but should not change the report.

> **Note:** Where appropriate, the facilitator discusses any significant trends from the Executive Leadership section with the leader(s) of the organization. The facilitator may choose to share this section with the leadership shortly after the exercise (within 24 hours, if possible) and before sharing the report with any other staff members.

Ideally, the facilitator will also confirm that the final report was shared with participants (and/or others), as agreed and announced at the outset.

With Donors

The report should **only** be shared with donors with the consent of the organization, after they have approved a final version of the report. As a rule, and unless there is an explicit agreement to the contrary, organizations, not external facilitators, should share the report with donors. When in doubt, facilitators should clarify this with the organization's leadership.

Additional Considerations

A Note about Tallying Answers Ahead of Time

Facilitators may be inclined to use an existing, or create a digital, online survey or other mechanism to tally individual answers before the facilitated session. Some who have done so have employed SurveyMonkey. As

the starting point for discussion on each question, they have shared the counts of how that question was answered, so that people could see the range of responses, along with the average rating. While this option provides greater anonymity for participants and may save time around reaching a consensus rating, potentially allowing more time for in-depth discussion, it also affects the participatory feeling and spirit of the OMT associated with having all staff express themselves on each subcategory face-to-face, in the moment.

Adapting the OMT for Each Group

Not all categories or subcategories will apply easily to all organizations. Facilitators should help groups understand each element in a way that makes it as relevant to them as possible, for example, adapting terminology as needed. As mentioned, groups should be reminded that the tool is flexible and that the goal is to spur discussion and discern the "sense of the group" rather than focus on any specific rating. In some cases, the facilitator—in consultation with the organization's leadership—may choose to tell participants to skip a particular section if it is clearly not relevant to them. This should be done as an exception, and on a case-by-case basis.

> **Tip:** Facilitators should be conversant in the organization's mission, structure, and programs and consider marking up the form with comments or text boxes (or preparing a separate, accompanying document) with any notes related to terminology or other opportunities for adapting the tool to the organization's specific characteristics.

> **Tip:** Facilitators should also be aware of any recent strategic planning, organizational assessment or other institutional strengthening efforts that the organization has undertaken (or is currently undertaking), to figure out how the OMT best fits in.

As relates to questions on programming, human resources, organizational culture, etc., facilitators should also be prepared to help groups identify which factors related to power dynamics, privilege, diversity, equity and inclusion are most relevant in their case (gender, gender identity, race, class, ethnicity, caste, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or others) and which historically excluded groups are relevant (for example, women as a whole, rural women, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, members of certain castes or ethnic groups, people of color, transgender people, gender non-conforming people, etc.).

Changing the Order

You may want to change the order in which the categories are discussed to ensure that those that will likely require greater time and energy are discussed earlier in the day. Some facilitators poll the group at the outset to get a sense of which categories they would like to spend the most time on, or they decide ahead of time in consultation with the organization's leadership, adapting the session accordingly.

Having a Note-Taker

Facilitators are encouraged to take brief notes during the exercise and to complete the comments sections immediately after the exercise (or as soon as possible), while the discussions are fresh. In some circumstances, facilitators may prefer to have a designated note-taker (either from the group or an external person that they bring themselves).This should be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the complexity of the case and/or availability or appropriateness of staff taking notes.

Conflict of Interest

Facilitators may face a conflict of interest during the prioritization exercise if they are in any way a candidate to provide institutional strengthening support to the group related to any of the categories or subcategories. Facilitators should be extra careful to avoid steering organizations toward priorities or actions that they, as consultants, can help with, even if this represents a well-intentioned effort to help a group prioritize issues it can most easily address. It is recommended that facilitators remind the group that priorities should be chosen independent of resources available at the time. At the very least, facilitators should disclose and openly discuss this potential conflict of interest with the organization's leadership and reassure the organization that it is free to work with any consultant and should feel no obligation to engage the facilitator in follow-up work.

Technology Issues

A note for MAC users: The OMT PDF Report Form (at the end of the OMT survey) may not work with Preview (the default PDF viewer on MAC computers). If opened using Preview, the file may become corrupted and important fields in the report format no longer work properly. If using a MAC, we recommend that you first download Adobe and only use the OMT in Adobe. (There may be a cost for this). This is not a problem for organizations filling out the OMT survey as it only affects the report format at the end, to be completed by the facilitator.

From time to time, the OMT may also experience bugs due to changing versions of Adobe Acrobat and other PDF readers. Before sharing the PDF with the organization and before the exercise begins, the facilitator should ensure that s/he/they is able to mark, save, change and re-save answers to the survey (checkmarks, comments and the prioritization worksheet). Users should download the OMT PDF before marking it, rather than completing it on a web browser.

> **Tip:** Facilitators should do a role-play test round to make sure they are familiar with the technical aspects of using the PDF.

Checklist of Agreements and Decisions to be Made with Each Organization Before You Start

1. Duration and date(s) of the exercise

2. Who and how many will participate (staff and board), including decisions around selecting a representative group in the case of large organizations

3. Date by which the facilitator will provide the final report to the organization

4. Who will receive and approve the report (the Executive Director(s), the Executive Director(s) and other senior management staff, the Institutional Development person, if one exists, etc.)

5. Who and date by which the organization's leadership will share the report with staff (and board, as the case may be)

6. Background documents that the organization feels comfortable sharing with you. For example, the last strategic plan, organizational chart and organizational development plan (or informal list of institutional strengthening priorities that the leadership may have already developed)

7. Get clarity about the group's structure and power dynamics, if relevant, especially if these are complex and may impact the focus of the OMT

8. Decide together what measures will be taken to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices

9. Come to agreement on any needed modifications, translations, or questions or sections to be skipped

10. Get clarity on how the OMT fits into or complements other institutional efforts underway, including, for example, strategic planning, board strengthening, or a leadership transition.

11. Alert the organization's leadership that the OMT tends to open up a variety of topics and to generate momentum and raise staff's expectations. They should be prepared to announce some sort of follow-up by the end of the session.

Checklist of Agreements and Decisions to be Made with Each Organization
Before You Start
(continued)

12. Logistics:

    a. Where the exercise will take place (location should be of appropriate size to comfortably accommodate all participants), and/or whether the exercise will be held in-person, virtually or hybrid

    b. If people will be required to fill out the survey beforehand, and whether they will use the PDF, digital or a combination of versions. If the group chooses to fill it out during the session, whether they will do so electronically (PDF or digital), manually, or a combination of both

    c. If the survey will be completed beforehand, date for sending out the survey and who will send the survey to staff, with what background information and instructions (for example, the facilitator may obtain participants' email addresses from the organization's leadership and communicate directly, or he/she/they may prepare the introduction and instructions for the organization's leaders to send to their staff)

    d. Who provides materials (markers, flipchart paper, photocopies if relevant, etc.)

    e. Snack break and other meal requirements to be provided by the organization

This guide is a work in progress. Any feedback or suggestions for improvement are welcome. Please write to: martha.farmelo@gmail.com and vicwigo@gmail.com.