

Gerald Rosenthal

Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool (MOST)
for Internal Management Assessment

Family Planning Management Development (FPMD)

Project Number: 936-3055

Agreement Number: CCP-A-00-95-00000-02

Office of Population, USAID

Management Sciences for Health

165 Allandale Road

Boston, MA 02130

November 1997

Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool (MOST) for Internal Management Assessment

November 1997

Introduction

The Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool (MOST) is a package (instrument, implementation modules, and forms) designed to be used to facilitate management self-assessments and to support development of management improvement strategies in a participatory setting. MOST uses an instrument based on the Institutional Development Framework developed by the Family Planning Management Development (FPMD) project of Management Sciences for Health (MSH) to help focus an organization on the actual characteristics of their management, identify directions and strategies for improvement, and set priorities for the management development effort.

Using the Tool

MOST is applied through a 3 to 3 ½ day structured workshop in which a cross-section of the organization's staff and board (if applicable) participate. The products of the workshop are generated from the collective experience and knowledge of the participants focused by the instrument in the course of the meeting. The instrument identifies levels of management performance with the first stage reflecting the weakest performance (with respect to each specific management component) and higher numbered stages indicating better performance. The instrument is used to generate an initial set of individual assessments which form the basis for a series of group exercises designed to generate a consensus diagnosis of current status of 12 critical management components, identify specific target indicators for change, specify activities to produce desired changes, and set priorities for action. The process is guided by a set of predesigned activities which develop these outcomes in stages.

The MOST instrument is designed only to provide a general overview of the relative stage of development of key management components. This information is used to develop indicators describing the current status of development and to specify indicators of improvement. Using these specific indicators developed from the instrument, organizations can identify specific actions and priorities which can improve management and support more effective organizational operations. (A facilitator's manual for this type of exercise is in development.)

The management components selected are common to all organizations and the stages of their development can be described in general terms that are appropriate to all institutions. These general terms serve as reference criteria for which different indicators may be appropriate in different types of institutions. The reference criteria which characterize each stage, therefore, reflect functions and not forms. In particular, we want to make sure that progress from stage 1 reflects improved performance with respect to the management component, not simply more complexity.

For example, for all service providing institutions, the ability to assure supply of commodities is equally critical. However, appropriate organizational indicators of assured long-term adequacy of commodity supplies might include the presence of a complex system of procurement, storage, delivery, and tracking in a large multi-setting organization while the same level of performance could be obtained in a small single site service delivery organization with a simple acquisition and storage procedure.

The argument is that all organizations need to carry out similar management functions and as the organization develops, these functions will be carried out at a more advanced although not necessarily more complex level.

In the MOST application, institutional self-assessment, the instrument simply describes the reference criteria and leaves it up to the user to decide on the specific indicators for these criteria. It is this process of developing an organizational consensus about the indicators which permits specifying targets for improvement and identifying actions to generate the desired changes. (For external assessment where the objective is describing and tracking changes, a similar instrument will incorporate specific indicators appropriate to the type of organizations it is applied to, e.g. Service delivery, training, etc.)

The instrument serves as the building block for a facilitated exercise in which a group of participants from the organization each generate their individual assessments. These initial assessments become the basis for a series of exercises directed at developing specific indicators of current status for each management component which the entire group views as accurate. These indicators become the starting point for identifying indicators of progress and designing strategies for prioritizing and achieving needed improvements. To date (October 1997), this methodology has been used by IPPF affiliates in Eritrea, Paraguay, Tanzania, and Zambia and the materials being developed for facilitating the internal management assessment activity reflects these experiences.

Additional information for field testing purposes

Our intention is to make the Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool available to groups and individuals who are willing to use it. We would appreciate feedback related to that experience as well as additional comments and suggestions. Please send your comments by mail

to Gerald Rosenthal, Management Sciences for Health, 165 Allandale Road, Boston, MA 02130
or by e-mail to grosenthal@msh.org.