Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH)
Overview of Organization Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tools

1. **CCIH's Approach to Capacity Building**
    CCIH partners with Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) to improve access to quality health services for those most in need and improves the overall health of underserved communities worldwide. Bringing deep connections within communities, FBOs are essential partners providing a substantial share of healthcare in low- and middle-income countries and are critically important partners in local, national, and global health. These organizations operate in complex health systems, work with governments and other private health care providers, can quickly partner, and are often the only services available to underserved communities.

    Despite their numerous contributions, the collective efforts of FBOs are often overlooked, misunderstood, or excluded from national and multi-national health efforts. This may be due to the lack of organizational capacity of FBO providers, especially in any of the following areas: leadership/governance (L&G), financial management, human resources (HR), information systems, advocacy, project cycle management, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

    Our rapidly changing environment makes this all the more urgent. Donor funds are decreasing and favor organizations with data/evidence and robust systems. There is a shift to "localization" of decisions where authority over resources better aligns to those responsible for their impact. Technology is accelerating change, creating new service opportunities, and new pathways for sharing evidence and promoting learning.

    > CCIH is committed to strengthening local Christian organizations and networks to respond to a changing environment. In particular, CCIH seeks to advance evidence-based learning and more robust management among local organizations.

    As a partner and supporter of many of these organizations, CCIH understands that each organization is at different stages of growth and development, and that there is a unique opportunity to provide comprehensive and targeted support.

    CCIH developed a tool and process to strengthen the organizational effectiveness and impact of these program partners to promote local ownership and work with organizations to develop realistic and sustainable areas for organizational growth.

    CCIH is grateful to several projects that supported development of these tools including two USAID New Partnerships Initiatives: the SCOPE Program under World Relief and the CPRC Program under Americares. We are grateful for the partnership of the Christian Social Service Commission in Tanzania, the Christian Health Association of Liberia, the Christian Health Association of Malawi, the Christian Health Association of Kenya, and Organization for People's Empowerment & Needs in South Sudan.

2. **Preliminary Organization Capacity Assessment** (P-OCA) - Version 1.2
As CCIH expanded their scope and partnerships through new programs and grants, it was essential to identify a solution to streamlining a pre-award risk assessment process to better understand an organization's ability or "fitness" to implement major donor funds. CCIH reviewed risk assessment tools from World Relief, Jhpiego, Americares, and the US Government's NUPAS, and adapted these to fit the unique needs of CCIH & partner organizations. CCIH named this the Preliminary Organizational Capacity Assessment (P-OCA) tool as it became clear that the elements of it were a subset of ultimate items required in a comprehensive organization assessment. The P-OCA establishes an organizational baseline that accurately assesses an organization's basic capacity to manage funding and comply with award conditions.

   The P-OCA covers five topic areas - Administration, Finance, Governance, Human Resources and Performance Management - each one dealing with an essential element of success for implementing donor funds. The P-OCA was tested with several partner organizations as part of CCIH subgrantee assessments. Each partner was provided the P-OCA and instructions, which included key definitions, to complete the tool. Once completed, CCIH analyzed the results based on three levels of risk - low, med or high. This allowed CCIH to put the necessary systems in place to ensure success for both parties. CCIH's P-OCA is unique because it both includes governance, human resources, and performance management, but also drills down into each topic which provides CCIH with a better understanding to plan for a more comprehensive and focused organizational capacity building.

3. **Comprehensive Organization Capacity Assessment** (C-OCA) - Version 1.1
The C-OCA allows for a comprehensive look at an organization's capacity. It builds on the P-OCA in that it assesses the necessary elements for effective organizational and technical management but in more depth, and helps identify areas that need to be strengthened. Similar to the P-OCA, the C-OCA is a self-administered assessment to improve the quality of your organization's management and program implementation by maintaining any changes gained in their capacity over time. The value of the C-OCA is in its collaborative, self-assessment process that promotes active participation. The framework offers CCIH partners the opportunity to reflect on their current status against recognized best practices.

   Like the P-OCA, CCIH developed the C-OCA by first reviewing tools from JSI, MSH, Casey Foundation, and McKinsey. CCIH obtained input and feedback from technical experts familiar with the organizational makeup of CCIH partners. The CCIH C-OCA pulled from CCIH's partner base is unique and required a tool that was more responsive. CCIH brought on a consultant to develop and implement the tool by serving as a facilitator through the process. The OCA tool assesses organizational and technical capacity in 10 domains listed below, and each domain has a number of sub-areas that drills down into different topics.

   1. ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE assess an organization's motivation and stability by reviewing its guiding principles, structure, and oversight.
   2. ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT looks at the fit and effectiveness of the organization's leadership and management to provide organizational direction, organizational alignment, and organizational commitment.

3. OPERATIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES assesses the capacity to develop and apply policies and procedures, the existence and quality of its administrative systems and its staff knowledge of the systems.
4. HUMAN RESOURCES look at the organization's ability to identify and maintain a satisfied and skilled workforce.
5. FINANCE assesses organization's financial controls, fund and cash management, and accountability.
6. FUNDRAISING assesses an organization's ability to acquire and maintain funding from a varied and diversified donor pool (individuals, government, corporate, foundations, etc.) for operations and programs
7. COMMUNICATIONS assesses the organization's ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders about program implementation and impact.
8. ADVOCACY assesses what extent the organization has basic elements in place to engage in advocacy and political engagement
9. NETWORK EFFECTIVENESS assesses the overall capacity of the network to deliver on its core mandate, grow, sustain, and remain relevant and responsive to members.
10. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT looks at an organization's ability to implement comprehensive projects and programs that respond to local needs and priorities by reviewing compliance with donor requirements, partner management, technical reporting, and whether its comprehensive health services meet the needs of specific target populations.

Like other tools, CCIH developed a rubric that partners could use to describe their capacity for each area.
1. None - No capacity, experience, knowledge, and systems in practice and use
2. Basic - Little capacity, experience, knowledge, and systems in practice and use
3. Moderate - Some capacity, experience, knowledge, and systems in practice and use
4. Strong - Extensive capacity, experience, knowledge and systems in practice and use

Partners complete the self assessment then sum and average their scores across items. The tool provides a quick summary ranking. Partners are then encouraged to develop a realistic, time-bound, resourced action plan based on priorities identified through the assessment tool.

4. **Features and Future Development of the CCIH OCA tool and process:**
   ● The tool comes with a scoring template to support analysis and tracking.
   ● The P-OCA and C-OCA are designed to be self-administered for organizations that may not need or be able to afford external consultants.
   ● Three domains are included because our members often request help on these: communications, advocacy and network. Future development will include a module on Faith Alignment. As Christian organizations, many of our members continue working out how that Christian identity shapes their reputation and influences their programs.

For more information contact OCA@CCIH.org and visit CCIH's website.

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