



PREPARATORY AND READINESS FRAMEWORK

How ready are organisations to access opportunities to sustain their community assets?

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Preparatory and Readiness Framework: how ready are organisations to access opportunities to sustain their organisation?¹

Organisation ready theme/domain	Levels of organisational readiness description			
	Level 1 – Development Phase	Level 2 - Developing	Level 3 - Developed	Level 4 - Highly developed
Governance and leadership	<p>Driven by Founder and almost wholly dependent on an individual with limited board/trustee support or engagement.</p> <p>Highly dependent on volunteers with board members actively operational.</p> <p>Strategic planning: Organisational strategic plan (or Business Plan) is either non-existent, unclear or exists as a set of scattered initiatives.</p>	<p>Formal governance in place but insufficiently robust and strategic, especially in not having systems in place.</p> <p>Though still dependent on volunteers, some project funding attracts short term staffing and delivery personnel.</p> <p>Strategic planning: Organisational strategic plan exists, but is either not clearly linked to mission, vision and overarching aims, or lacks coherence, or is not easily actionable.</p>	<p>Board having diverse membership with some focus on planning and longer-term strategic focus – some delegatory powers to an Executive structure (CEO etc in place).</p> <p>Some use of volunteers though not dependent on them and having both paid full-time and part-time staff, with multi-year core funding support.</p> <p>Strategic planning: Coherent strategic plan has been developed and is linked to mission, vision and overarching aims and is acted upon by most. The strategy is mostly known with some influences on</p>	<p>Board is more policy and strategically driven with executive powers and accountabilities delegated to an Executive structure (CEO etc in place).</p> <p>Use of volunteers greatly reduced while having significant level of paid staff with CEO and core team in place driving the operational delivery within the organisation.</p> <p>Strategic planning: Organisation has coherent medium to long term strategic plan in place, universally known, that are actionable and linked to overall mission, vision and aims that drives</p>

¹ This framework arose out of the research, A Place to Call Home 2.0: Benefits and value of owning community assets (2024), which can be accessed via [...xx \[website url\]](#). Annex 1 provides some definitions of each of the four levels.

			funding strategy and programme delivery.	the day-to-day operation of the organisation.
Operation and infrastructure	<p>No recognised systems for tracking clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes with limited financial information systems in place (e.g. no recognised customer reporting management (CRM) system in place)</p> <p>Web-presence: Organisation has no dedicated website nor intention in the short term to develop one.</p> <p>The organisation does not anticipate legal issues and likely not to be able to pay for legal advice but likely to find in-kind help as and when needed.</p>	<p>The electronic databases and management reporting systems that exist perform only basic functions, are complex and therefore used infrequently.</p> <p>Web-presence There is a basic website containing general information, but with little information on current developments (e.g. the site consists of outdated information).</p> <p>The organisation is able to identify legal support that is readily available and able to employ on 'as needed' basis.</p>	<p>Electronic database and management reporting systems exist and is used to track clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes and financial information (i.e. a robust CRM system is in place).</p> <p>Web-presence There is a comprehensive and highly visible website in place containing information on the organisation as well as updated latest developments and impact reporting (e.g. information is current).</p> <p>Legal support is regularly available and consulted on as appropriate and relevant.</p>	<p>Sophisticated, comprehensive electronic database and management reporting systems exist for tracking clients, staff, volunteers, programme outcomes and financial information; widely used and essential in increasing information sharing and efficiency.</p> <p>Web-presence Sophisticated, comprehensive and interactive website regularly maintained and kept up to date on the latest developments and opportunities inside and outside the organisation.</p> <p>Well-developed effective and efficient internal legal infrastructure for day-to-day work.</p>
	No or very limited financial planning other than the day-to-day finances with high	Limited financial plans, ad hoc update with budget utilised as operational tool to guide/assess financial activities with some	Solid financial planning using 'full cost recovery' principles which is regularly updated while	Very solid financial plans, based on 'full cost recovery' principles, which is continuously updated,

<p>Financial resource</p>	<p>dependence on goodwill and 'self-financing'.</p> <p>Basic systems in place to ensure that incomes are deposited, and bills are paid though having little to no financial and accounting system, policy or procedural guidelines in place.</p> <p>Fund-raising skills: Generally weak fund-raising skills and lack of expertise (either internally or externally) - high level of unsuccessful applications compared to successful applications.</p> <p>Organisation highly dependent on a few or single funder, largely of the same type (e.g. particular foundation/trust or local authority - having no fund-raising strategy or plan in place).</p>	<p>attempt to isolate 'project' funds from 'core' organisation budget.</p> <p>Financial activities are documented with restricted funds disaggregated and tracked periodically.</p> <p>Fund-raising skills: Main fund-raising needs covered by some combination of internal skills and expertise, and access to some external fund-raising expertise.</p> <p>Organisation has access to multiple types of funding (e.g. local authority, foundations/trust and other grant giving bodies) with only a few funders in each type/category.</p> <p>Reserves equate to 6mths.</p> <p>Annual income >£25k to <£100k p.a.</p>	<p>budget is integrated into operations, reflecting organisational needs with performance to budget monitoring taking place.</p> <p>Accounting procedures comply with generally accepted accounting principles on an annual basis and provides information needed to make sound financial decisions with all accounts reconciled during monthly closing.</p> <p>Fund-raising skills: Regular fund-raising needs are adequately covered by well-developed internal fund-raising skills, occasional access to some external fund-raising expertise.</p> <p>Solid base of different types of funders in place (e.g. government, local authority, corporate, foundations/trusts and other grant giving bodies),</p>	<p>developing from processes that incorporates and reflects organisational needs and objectives.</p> <p>All internal and external accounting functions are fully integrated with budgeting, decision-making and goal setting with clear and documented procedures which ensures that all accounts are reconciled and restricted funds are tracked on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Fund raising skills: Highly developed internal fund-raising skills and expertise across multiple funding sources with access to external expertise for additional extraordinary needs.</p> <p>Organisation insulated from potential market instabilities (e.g. fully developed endowments) and/or has developed sustainable revenue-generating activities (e.g. highly diversified</p>
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	<p><i>Reserves equate to less than 3mths</i></p> <p><i>Annual income <£25k p.a.</i></p>		<p>with some income streams to edge against market instabilities with a focus on sustainable revenue generating activities (e.g. charity giving, endowments and legacies).</p> <p><i>Reserves equate to 9mths.</i></p> <p><i>Annual income >£100k and <£500k p.a</i></p>	<p>funding portfolio across all types of sources).</p> <p><i>Reserves equate to 12mths or more.</i></p> <p><i>Annual income >£500k+ p.a.</i></p>
<p>Physical asset ownership</p>	<p>No formal arrangements for leasing or renting premises over a longer term (3yrs min.).</p> <p>The organisation does not own its premises but hire venues as appropriate and relevant (short term and year on year arrangements).</p> <p>Inadequate physical infrastructure, resulting in loss of effectiveness and efficiency (i.e. unfavourable location for clients and employees)</p>	<p>Organisation hire premises suited to their needs over multiyear arrangements though not ideal (<10yrs).</p> <p>Physical infrastructure is made to work to suit the organisation's most important and immediate needs.</p> <p>No good office space for teamwork, no possibility of holding confidential discussions etc.</p> <p>Compliant with most regulatory requirements and building regulations through the landlord.</p>	<p>The organisation owns, lease and/or hire premises (i.e. freehold/long lease in place: >10yrs).</p> <p>Premises is well-suited to the needs of the organisation with sufficient office spaces and confidential spaces etc.</p> <p>Fully adequate physical asset for the current needs of the organisation in favourable locations for clients and employees.</p>	<p>The organisation owns (or have long lease at least 25yrs) its physical infrastructure which is well tailored to the organisation's current and anticipated future needs.</p> <p>The physical infrastructure is well-tailored to the organisation's current and anticipated future needs.</p> <p>Well designed and thought-out physical premises that enhances organisation's effectiveness and efficiency (e.g. especially favourable locations for clients and employees).</p>

	<p>Limited ability or resources to ensure facility safety.</p> <p>Basic understanding of the importance of developing a health and safety plan but lacking any written details.</p> <p>Limited and inadequate overall safeguarding systems and procedures in place (incl. no health & safety policy/procedures, risk assessments, fire drill record and off-site procedures).</p>	<p>Strategies for improving both exterior and interior facility safety is limited.</p> <p>Basic written health and safety policy and plan in place but no mechanism to monitor or evaluate compliance.</p>	<p>Compliant with all regulatory requirements and building legislations.</p> <p>Basic security measures incorporated into organisations operating procedures.</p> <p>Adequate exterior and interior safety measures in place (e.g. security alarm system in place, adequate lighting, etc).</p> <p>Written health and safety policy and Plan exists, including risk assessments with those plans reviewed annually and serves as a basis for recommending improvements.</p>	<p>Compliant with all regulatory requirements and building legislations (e.g. Health & Safety at Work standards etc).</p> <p>All components of a safe working environment integrated into the organisations operating procedures and budgeting process.</p> <p>Written documentation of regulatory compliance is maintained for easy reference for all staff.</p>
<p>Impact and effectiveness</p>	<p>No clear theory of change or logic relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives driving monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Does not have clear performance indicators</p>	<p>Some evidence of having in place a theory of change or logic approach linking programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives guiding monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p>Have a process for identifying risks, issues and lessons learnt</p>	<p>Strong and clear theory of change or logic framework demonstrating relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives which is guiding the monitoring and evaluation processes.</p>	<p>Strong, clear and transparent theory of change or logic framework demonstrating the relationships between programmes, vision, aim, mission or objectives directing the monitoring and evaluation systems in place.</p>

	<p>for the programmes nor systems in place to measure progress.</p> <p>Basic monitoring and evaluation processes and systems in place and no formal reporting or sharing of programme achievements.</p> <p>Expectations are unclear with programme development and delivery ad hoc and reactive.</p> <p>Limited or non-existent reporting of achievements and impact of programmes and/or organisation as a whole.</p>	<p>and for ensuring lessons learnt are reviewed to improve practice.</p> <p>Output and outcome indicators identified with limited evidential basis beyond monitoring data (i.e. limited beneficiaries' feedback);</p> <p>Basic data gathering process in place most of which are a collection of monitoring and feedback forms.</p> <p>Output and outcome reports lack analysis and progression indications though offering description of activities and actions.</p>	<p>Have in place a robust monitoring and evaluation approach, which may include using external evaluators.</p> <p>Output and outcome indicators identified and informed by beneficiaries' and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>Data retrieval system in place (e.g. collection, capture and reports);</p> <p>Analysis and impact reports produced, incorporating data from surveys, interviews with evidence of broad range of stakeholders and beneficiaries' feedback.</p>	<p>Beneficiaries and stakeholders provide feedback on a regular basis supported by external evaluation of impact and achievements as a result of their experiences.</p> <p>Scheduled review meetings undertaken using a standardised tool.</p> <p>Monthly review meeting conducted.</p> <p>Quarterly programme review and support sessions undertaken.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Connectedness and engagement</p>	<p>Organisation's presence is either not recognised or generally not regarded as positive.</p> <p>Few members of the local community constructively involved in the organisation (also poor communication outwards into the community).</p> <p>Limited proactive communication with key audiences.</p> <p>Communications are inconsistent and sporadic.</p> <p>Limited ability to develop comprehensive communication plan (i.e. communication plan does not exist, e-bulletins, newsletters nor promotional materials).</p>	<p>Organisation's presence is somewhat recognised and generally regarded as positive within the community.</p> <p>Some members of wider communities constructively engaged with the organisation.</p> <p>The organisation has a generally positive relationship with its beneficiaries, with views sought.</p> <p>There is a regular exchange of information providing beneficiaries with adequate information on achievements and development.</p> <p>Fairly regular communication with key constituencies but no communication plan or articulated communication strategies in place.</p>	<p>The organisation is reasonably well-known and perceived as open and responsive to beneficiary needs.</p> <p>Members of the wider community (including a few prominent ones) constructively involved in the organisation.</p> <p>The organisation regularly engages and consults with beneficiaries and wider stakeholders and kept well informed about achievements and developments.</p> <p>Ongoing, proactive communication with key constituencies with strong brand management practices defined and applied.</p> <p>Communications generally consistent and coordinated with communication plan and strategies in place.</p>	<p>The organisation is widely known and recognised beyond their immediacy and perceived as actively engaged with and extremely responsive to the needs of their beneficiaries.</p> <p>Many members of the wider community (including many prominent members) actively and constructively involved in the organisation (i.e. on the Board, fund raising etc).</p> <p>Praised for its beneficiary engagement and involvement evidenced through systems being in place to evaluate marketing and communication efforts.</p> <p>Organisation highly adept at getting the right message to the right audience at the right time to achieve the intended effect.</p> <p>Clear, effective, ongoing communication plan and strategies in place which is fully integrated with strategic</p>
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				plan and updated as appropriate with strong recognisable branding in place and consistently followed.
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Annex 1: Definitions of the Levels of organization development phases.

Level 1: Development phase

Organisations that are in their infancy, either recently established and/or having an annual income of less than £25k per annum. Organisation is likely to be 'Founder' dependent and reliant exclusively on volunteers and renting spaces (or provided in-kind) on as-and-when basis (in some instances, working from 'Founders' home').

Level 2: Developing organisation.

Organisations that have been established for many years with an income of more than £25k per annum but unable to command income beyond £100k per annum and likely to be renting spaces on annual or shorter basis. Organisation is likely to be 'Founder' dependent with some short term and ad hoc support such as 'project' costed part-time staff and reliant still on volunteers.

Level 3: Developed organisation.

Organisations that have been well established and able to demonstrate income between £100k and £500k p.a, with strong governance and leadership in place, with limited influence from Founder alongside some core full-time and part-time staffing that drives the organisation. They are likely to have assets on longer term leases and/or own their assets outright.

Level 4: Highly developed organisation.

Organisations that have been established for decades and are able to attract and demonstrate income of more than £500k p.a, with exceptional governance and leadership, strong core full-time and part-time staffing and well recognised nationally and/or internationally. Organisations at this level are likely to have very long leases and/or own their assets outright with strong outward facing persona.

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