

Worksheet 2: Assessment Plan

This worksheet helps you develop an assessment plan for the three performance areas of your philanthropy. For inspiration, look to the charts in the Fundamentals section and the guidance in the Extending the Fundamentals section.

You can start with simple answers and, as needed, skip sections or make notes to do additional research. Depending on how you've structured your philanthropy, you may need to repeat this worksheet for different social impact vehicles, strategies, or tools.

1. Assessing our Partners

Use this section to plan the assessment of partners of one or more of your social impact tools, e.g., nonprofits receiving grants, members of a collaborative or capacity building programs you lead, or social enterprises in which you've invested.

SOCIAL IMPACT TOOL OR PROGRAM:	
SET GOALS	What is most important for us to learn from our partners?
	What is most important for our partners to learn as they use our resources?
FACILITATE IMPROVEMENTS	Who will help facilitate improvements in our partners?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?

MONITOR SHORT-TERM RESULTS	Who will monitor results at the end of a grant, program, or another timeframe?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?
EVALUATE LONGER-TERM IMPACT	Who will evaluate the longer-term impact of partners' work? How will we look across multiple programs or years to see if partners and communities are better off?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?
SHARING WHAT WE LEARN	With whom (if anyone) will we share what our partners and we have learned?
	How will we do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?

2. Assessing Our Philanthropic Strategy

Use this section to plan the assessment of your philanthropic strategy—how the cumulative resources you’ve committed and decisions you’ve made are adding up over time, and how you need to adapt the strategy to changing conditions and context.

STRATEGY:	
SET GOALS	What is most important for us to learn about the context in which we’re working—the conditions, policies, trends, and ecosystem of partners?
	What is most important for us to learn about the roles we’ve taken—our choices of resources, tools, relationships, and niches within the ecosystem?
FACILITATE IMPROVEMENTS	Who will help facilitate improvements as we implement our strategy?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?

MONITOR SHORT-TERM RESULTS	Who will monitor the quarterly or annual results of our strategy?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?
EVALUATE LONGER-TERM IMPACT	Who will evaluate the longer-term effectiveness and impact of our strategy?
	How will they do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?
SHARING WHAT WE LEARN	With whom (if anyone) will we share what our partners and we have learned?
	How will we do it, and when?
	What resources will we dedicate to the work?

3. Assessing Ourselves

During NCFP's 2021 Trustee Education Institute, philanthropic consultant Alexa Cortes Culwell offered a set of questions foundation boards could use to assess their work. We've edited her list slightly and you can adapt the questions for other types of philanthropic vehicles and conversations by other types of governance or oversight groups. Check the questions most important to your internal assessment process.

Philanthropic Vehicle—How is our organization performing?

- Legacy:** Have we stayed true to our purpose and values?
- Impact:** Have we made a difference? Are we on the right track?
- Oversight:** Have we been responsibly stewarding our resources?
- Innovation:** Have we developed or invited new, creative ideas?
- Community:** Do our grantees and communities of focus experience us as good partners?
- Transparency:** Are we communicating our work and impact effectively, including our learning and failures?
- Agility:** Are we responsive and adaptive to unforeseen situations?

Board—How are we functioning as a governing body?

- Roles & Responsibilities:** Have we correctly exercised the authority we've been given and delegated the rest to staff?
- Vision:** Have we ensured our philanthropic vehicle has a philanthropic strategy or strategic plan in place to guide its work and impact? Is everyone aligned around that strategy?
- Oversight:** Have we supplied timely feedback to our CEO or executive director? Have we conducted an annual performance evaluation and compensation review using best practices?
- Culture:** Have we worked together as a group? And partnered effectively with staff?
- Engaging Family:** Do we have strong practices in place for developing the next generations of leaders?
- Composition:** Do we have the right mix of leaders reflecting a diverse range of skills and backgrounds?
- Meetings:** Do our meeting agendas and facilitation ensure the appropriate level of participation from everyone?

Individual—How am I as a board member contributing?

- Role:** Am I fulfilling the duties described for my position?
- Attendance & Preparation:** Do I have strong attendance at board and committee meetings? Do I come well prepared and take part fully?
- Learning:** Am I committed to learning in areas where I lack expertise or sufficient knowledge?
- Communication:** Do I respond promptly to requests? Do I communicate effectively and respectfully my input and concerns?
- Values:** Do my conduct and participation on the board reflect my personal values?