

GOVERNANCE CAPACITY PLANNING TOOL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

The Governance Capacity Planning Tool (GCPT) was developed to support First Nations to create a community-focused, long-term plan for governance capacity development. The GCPT will help you to create a five year road map to governance capacity development based on your community's current capacities, assets and priorities. The plan you create will be a "living" document that you can add to or modify in the future. It will also serve as a reference document for you to measure and report on your successes.

The GCPT focuses on 10 core functions that all governments, regardless of structure or type undertake on a regular basis. These functions encompass activities that are performed by both the community leadership and community administrators. The core functions of government are the foundation upon which all other activities and functions are built. As such, it is critically important that as much effort as possible is placed on ensuring this foundation is strong and sound. The 10 core functions are:

1. Leadership

Involves the processes used for the selection and compensation of leaders, as well as meetings of council and decision making. Examples of activities under this function include: leadership selection / election codes, leadership selection activities, meetings, and roles and responsibilities for chiefs and councilors.

2. Membership

Involves recognition of First Nation (band) membership. Note that the determination of Status under the Indian Act is not dealt with in the GCPT. Activities under this function may include custom First Nation membership codes, and registration of First Nations members and the maintenance of membership lists.

3. Planning and Risk Management

Includes developing priorities and goals, and measurement and reporting of government activities to foster continuous improvement, accountability and results. This function includes visioning, risk management, strategic planning, community planning and the monitoring, and evaluation and reporting of program performance.

4. Community Involvement

Activities that allow community members to participate in government decision-making, and that keep the community informed of decisions and changes. This function includes policies and tools for communicating with First Nation members, community consultation, and appeal mechanisms and dispute resolution measures.

5. Law-Making

Involves the establishment of bylaws required to regulate economic and social activity in the community. Examples of activities that are part of this function include, drafting new bylaws or amendments to existing bylaws, council decisions regarding passing or amending bylaws, and recording or registering bylaws.

6. Financial Management

Is the planning, implementation of budgets and monitoring of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures. This function includes the development of budgets and financial policies, the tracking of financial transactions, the development and distribution of audited financial statements, and the collection of revenues and the tendering/awarding of contracts.

7. Human Resource Management

Includes hiring, retaining, training and compensation of the skilled personnel required to meet community goals. This function includes the development of policies (including a code of ethics and conflict of interest policies), the administration of salaries and benefits, the development of job descriptions, the administration and support of volunteers, and the recruitment and hiring of staff.

8. Information Management and Information Technology

Includes the hardware, software and business practices required to collect, store and distribute information. This function includes data security, access to information and privacy policies, document management, and computer hardware and software.

9. External Relations

Involves the community's relationship with other government organizations, non-government organizations and corporations. This function includes participation in intergovernmental forums and professional associations, communications with the public and other governments, and negotiations with stakeholders on land claims, resource rights and public-private partnerships.

10. Basic Administration

Encompasses the activities required to run an efficient central office. For example, general office policies, procedures and services, compensation of First Nation administrators and administrative assistants, management of utilities for the First Nation office, office security systems, etc.

The GCPT is structured as a step-by-step approach to governance capacity development planning and reporting. The GCPT is composed of six major sections: Preparation, Inventory of Existing Policies & Tools, Needs Identification, Prioritization, a Development Plan and Reporting.

When completing the GCPT workbook, you should keep in mind all of the 10 core functions of government, particularly in regards to their relationship to all the work that goes on within your administration.

Using the GCPT to Apply for Capacity Development Funding

Plans completed with the GCPT can be used to support a proposal for governance capacity development funding from the department. Many communities have already completed governance assessments or developed comprehensive community plans or strategic plans that include governance. In some cases, these plans may also be used to apply for capacity development funding from the department.

A Step By-Step Approach

This workbook will assist you with the task of identifying, prioritizing and planning the development of governance capacities you may need, and / or strengthening existing governance abilities.

Step 1: Preparation

Will help you to organize the contacts and information you need to complete the GCPT workbook and organize your time and efforts as effectively as possible.

This workbook is designed to take approximately 3-5 hours for an individual who is familiar with their community's policies and procedures to complete on their own. It may take more or less time depending on your familiarity with those policies and procedures and the complexity of the governance systems already in place in your community.

You may also choose to involve more people in completing the workbook. Added input may be helpful if you are less familiar with your community's governance system, and may provide a sounding board to discuss the questions in the workbook. Although this will likely produce a more reliable plan in the end, it may require some additional time and organization in the beginning. Once you have chosen your strategy, plan for enough time to complete the workbook in one or more sessions throughout the week, giving yourself or your team enough time to think through the ideas with limited interruptions.

If you have decided to complete the workbook as an individual, take the time to think of the key contacts, including community leaders, key staff members or other knowledgeable individuals who may be able to help you answer some of the questions, or give you useful history and background knowledge.

Step 2: Inventory of Information and Existing Tools

Will help you establish a reference library of key information and documents related to your community governance. As noted earlier, your community may already have undertaken similar processes or projects that would benefit elements of this GCPT workbook.

The next step in creating your governance capacity development plan is to take stock of the tools and policies your community already has on hand. Below, you will find a list of the most common policies, procedures, guidelines and other documentation in use by First Nation communities.

Take the time to collect a copy of each of the documents listed that are available in your community. You will use them to answer questions in Step 3. Your community may have additional documents that are central that can be added at the end.

Step 3: Needs Identification

Begins after you've set yourself up to fill out the GCPT. This will entail determining what specific elements of the 10 core functions and activities of government require strengthening and / or development through a Needs Identification. Some questions are structured in terms of "yes" and "no" answers such as those intended to determine whether your community has a policy or mechanism in place. Some are structured as a "check-box" or list of particular items your community may have. Where more detail may be useful, space has been provided and you should feel free to insert additional pages - this is your tool and you may be referring back to it from time to time in the future. Additional notes might be helpful. To the degree possible, the questions have been structured to prompt objective answers. However, there are a few that may be based on your opinion or experience.

Community circumstances differ from one to another and so do priorities, particularly around development efforts. Having identified what your community governance needs are, you can then go through Step 4.

Objectives of this Section

The objectives of this section of the tool is to identify the governance related needs of your community in terms of products and processes you already have, as well as those you may not have. The purpose of this tool is to assist in taking a structured and pragmatic approach to filling governance capacity needs where there is a need, and strengthening existing abilities. As such, you can determine, later on in the process, the priority you would like to assign to these needs (developing capacity and strengthening existing abilities) relative to addressing them.

Process

This section is organized by the 10 functions and activities of government as noted below.

The questions that follow in this section are grouped under each of the functions and activities above. Please use any extra space you may need to detail your answers if you feel notations or explanatory notes are needed. Later on, you will be asked to prioritize your responses as far as how great the need is in each specific area. Thorough answers will be of benefit to you when you come back and prioritize them.

Section 1: Leadership

Involves the processes used for the selection and compensation of leaders, as well as meetings of council and decision making. Examples of activities under this function include: leadership selection / election codes, leadership selection activities, meetings, and roles and responsibilities for chiefs and councilors.

Section 2: Membership

The recognition of First Nation (band) membership. Activities under this function may include First Nation membership decisions, and registration of First Nations members and the maintenance of membership lists.

Section 3: Planning and Risk Management

The planning and monitoring of government activities to foster continuous improvement, success and accountability in community programs. This function includes visioning, risk management, strategic planning, community planning and the monitoring, and evaluation and reporting of program performance.

Section 4: Community Involvement

The activities that allow community members to participate in government decision making, and that keep the community informed of decisions and changes. This function includes policies and tools for communicating with First Nation members, community consultation, and appeal mechanisms and dispute resolution measures.

Section 5: Law-making

The establishment of bylaws required to regulate economic and social activity in the community. Examples of activities that are part of this function include, drafting proposed bylaws, council decisions regarding passing or amending bylaws, and recording or registering bylaws.

Section 6: Financial Management

The planning, implementation and monitoring of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures. This function includes the development of budgets and financial policies, the tracking of financial transactions, the development and distribution of audited financial statements, and the collection of revenues and the tendering / awarding of contracts.

Section 7: Human Resource Management

Includes all activities required to hire, retain, train and compensate the skilled personnel required to meet organizational goals. This function includes the development of policies (including a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy), the administration of salaries, benefits and training, the development of job descriptions, the administration and support of volunteers, and the recruitment and hiring of First Nation / community staff.

Section 8: Information Management / Information Technology

Includes both the physical systems and business practices required to administer reliable, secure and accessible information. This function includes data security, access to information and privacy policies, document management, and computer hardware and software.

Section 9: External Relations

The community's relationship with other government organizations, non- government organizations and corporations. This function includes participation in intergovernmental forums and professional associations, communications with the public and other governments, and negotiations with stakeholders on land claims, resource rights and public-private partnerships.

Section 10: Basic Administration

Encompasses the activities required to run an efficient central office. For example, general office policies, procedures and services, compensation of First Nation administrators and administrative assistants, management of utilities for the First Nation office, office security systems, etc.

Step 4: Prioritization

Exercise to determine how and in what order these needs can be addressed.

Having completed the Needs Identification, you can now determine what areas you may wish to focus effort on, or prioritize in terms of investing capacity development. To ensure that your individual situation is accommodated, your prioritization should be considered over a five year time frame. This will allow for a strategic approach to your planning and provide you with the opportunity to determine the best approach to development in relation to your circumstances.

Prioritization should follow a format consistent with planning and reporting. As such, priorities should be identified in terms of:

- The function and activities associated with governing (Leadership, Membership, Planning and Risk Management, Community Involvement, Law-Making, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Information Management and Information Technology, External Relations, Basic Administration);
- Need; and
- The timeframe, in terms of which year (over a five year period) you believe it most advantageous to focus on the particular need.

Note: If you have not completed the Needs Identification and have completed a governance assessment such as, for example, that offered by the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA) – you should be able to prioritize your needs with the same approach. However, it is still advisable to go through the GCPT to see if there are any other opportunities you can take advantage of.

Prioritization of Needs by Function

The following tables will assist in converting the information you've collected in the previous section (Needs Identification) into a description of how those needs would be filled and the timing that is most appropriate.

Step 5: Development Plan

The process of interpreting the information of the previous steps into a Development Plan. The Development Plan is based on a five year horizon and will therefore need to be flexible and adaptable. This will mean course adjustments and in some cases, reprioritization of projects and initiatives identified in the Development Plan during the course of its implementation. The Development Plan also allows you to identify a budget for each of the projects being contemplated. At this stage, you have:

- identified your needs;
- selected which needs are of greatest priority; and
- determined the appropriate timing to address those needs.

In Step 4, you identified your needs in terms of functions and activities associated with governing (Leadership, Membership, Strategic Planning, Community Involvement, Law-Making, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Information Management and Information Technology, External and Intergovernmental Relations, Basic Administration and Operations)

The next step is to develop a plan that re-describes your needs as development projects. Using the information in the **Prioritization of needs by function** chart on the previous page, describe the projects required to address your needs in the template contained in **Annex "A": Project identification and reporting**. This template will also be used for the final step - Reporting. Once finalized, **Annex "A": Project identification and reporting** will serve as an evergreen project plan, project proposal and reporting form.

Step 6: Reporting

The creation of a proper Reporting framework that is built right into the Development Plan; is simple in nature; is updated as part of the regular course of business on an incremental basis; includes appropriate indicators and measures; and follows a logic model tied to the Development Plan and not just the specific project or initiative – it includes results, outputs and outcomes.