

**MANUAL FOR COLLABORATIVE  
ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ORGANIZATIONS**

**A Manual for Assessing the Effectiveness  
of Human Settlements Institutions**

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## PREFACE

Increased attention is being paid by governments and other public agencies, both multilateral and bilateral, to organizational capacity-building. It is not surprising, therefore, that training and technical assistance programmes in all sectors and fields increasingly are emphasizing techniques of effective management. The human settlements sector is no exception. Trainers in the field are convinced that technical training alone is not sufficient to ensure the effective management of human settlements organizations.

Another term which appears in today's development literature is "sustainable development." Urban authorities and institutions in developing countries are directly or indirectly responsible for the consumption, production and management of human, natural, technical and financial resources. The resources under their management are often equivalent to those managed by the largest companies or corporations of their respective economies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the expertise required for efficient management of public resources is being examined closely by development specialists.

This manual is designed specifically for analysing the effectiveness and the efficiency of day-to-day performance in agencies and authorities responsible for providing public goods and services. As its title implies, the manual describes a process that is collaborative in design. Parallels between the proposed process and concepts of participatory management found in management literature are intentional. It is our belief that it is through the participation of people at all levels of an organization and a society that development goals are most likely to be shared and that the resources required to achieve them are most likely to be mobilized and used on a sustainable basis.

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## SECTION I

### *Introduction*

There is a growing demand throughout the world for human settlements organizations to be more accountable for what they do and how well they do it. The demand originates from many sources: the public as ultimate customer of the products supplied by these organizations; policy makers answerable to the public for the availability and quality of products; managers who are expected to satisfy consumer demand while containing costs; and donor agencies that expect competent execution and management of externally-funded projects. The need for accountability is complicated by the rapidly changing environments within which human settlements organizations must function.

Despite growing demands for accountability, human settlements organizations rarely examine how well they are performing. Systematic collection and analysis of performance data is virtually non-existent. As a result, officials, citizens and donors alike are frustrated in their attempts to find out how well human settlements organizations are performing in relation to their stated or implied purposes.

### *Organizational assessment*

Organizational assessment is a process in which human settlements organizations gather and analyse performance data to determine whether or not and to what degree these organizations are doing what they are supposed to be doing and how well. To state it more precisely, organizational assessment is, "the critical analysis of an organisation's performance to document discrepancies in effectiveness and efficiency and to design strategies to improve or restore performance to desired levels".

When human settlements organizations undertake organizational assessment, it is for one or more of the following reasons:

- (a) The organization is confronted with a problem it is unable to solve or properly diagnose. The problem poses a serious threat to the organisation's financial or operational health.
- (b) Top management is committed to improving the organizational performance and the quality of the products that the organization delivers.
- (c) Owing to political, administrative, and/or legislative changes, the organization is required to modify its structure and/or operations.
- (d) The organization receives an opportunity for external funding and support that requires major changes in its operations as a precondition for funding.

Ordinarily, organizational assessments are undertaken by human settlements organizations with the help of experienced outside consultants. This is believed desirable for three reasons. First, internal personnel have less experience in data gathering and analysis than external personnel who are well trained for the task. Secondly, internal personnel normally cannot devote the time required to do a thorough assessment. Thirdly, internal personnel are often too close to the activities being performed to be objective.

It is an underlying premise of this manual, however, that employees from organizations being assessed should be involved in all stages of the assessment from the initial preparation of measures and data-collection procedures to the review of findings. Internal personnel are experienced in the ways of their organizations. It is on their shoulders that accountability

rests for making needed changes. Their involvement in carrying out assessment tasks under consultant supervision can substantially lower the overall cost of an assessment and improve its accuracy.

Last but not least, it is the internal personnel who are responsible ultimately for implementing the recommended changes. The participation of these personnel in carrying out assessment tasks will greatly increase the feasibility and ease of implementing these changes.

This manual provides a framework for the conduct of an organizational assessment through the collaboration of internal organization units and external management advisers. We call the process Collaborative Organizational assessment (COA).

(1)

### ***Conventional wisdom***

When managers were asked to describe an "organizational assessment," most of them said something like this: "An organizational assessment is a detailed consultant report with recommendations delivered to management at the conclusion of an intensive investigation of the organization." In other words, there is the common belief that a proper organizational assessment involves hiring an outside consultant to study the organization and to recommend changes which, if implemented, will result in improved performance. The consultant in this scenario is viewed by management as a technical expert who is the best judge of what the organization should be doing and how it should be doing it. However, when asking managers that have taken part in organizational assessments to state what proportion of the recommended changes were made, their answers indicate that very few have been.

### ***The collaborative approach***

As suggested by the title, a different approach to organizational assessment is being proposed in this manual. Stated simply, organizations participating in COA undertake a process of self-assessment with the adviser serving primarily as guide and facilitator. This approach goes further than merely producing a list of improvement recommendations. COA has the additional objective of strengthening the capacity of an organization to evaluate itself.

COA is an attempt to overcome several important limitations in more conventional approaches to organizational assessment. These limitations, in turn, are rooted in several basic assumptions about the process of changing or improving the way organizations do things.

- (a) Most conventional assessments produce considerable information about an organization but provide little opportunity for involvement by the organization itself in gathering and interpreting that information. An often stated principle in the behavioural science literature is that people are more likely to support what they help to create. Let us assume, for the moment, that this principle is true with respect to people in human settlements organizations. If so, it follows that conclusions reached through data gathering and interpreting by members of the organization are more likely to produce action than conclusions reached by outside experts.
- (b) Most conventional assessments are expensive. Fees in excess of \$250,000 U.S. are not unusual for an organization-wide study conducted by a major consulting firm. Fees of this magnitude represent a substantial portion of the funds available under a typical technical assistance project. Many donor agencies are reluctant to fund such undertakings. Moreover, few human settlements organizations can afford to pay these prices. COA, however, at a cost of one third or less of conventional methodologies, is affordable for most donor agencies and human settlements organizations alike.
- (c) Conventional approaches to organizational assessment have other important drawbacks.
  - (i) Many of them lack comprehensiveness. Some concentrate solely on the financial side of an organisation's affairs - payroll, accounting, budgeting, revenue collection. Others rely on a single source of information that may or may not be available in other organizations.
  - (ii) There is a tendency for conventional methodologies to be too quantitative. Complex cost/benefit indicators and similar ratios often are confusing and meaningless to management officials expected to make use of them. Russell Ackoff, a management adviser who has worked with hundreds of organizations world-wide says: "Managers should never use "solutions" that are extracted from models (or methods) they do not understand, nor should they stand in awe of mathematics. Rather, they should be aware of how awful its products can be." (2)
  - (iii) Finally, most studies undertaken by large, private management consulting firms are proprietary to those firms. The methodologies are rarely made public. Nearly all of the work is done by teams of experts trained in the firm's methodology. Little opportunity is provided for employees of the organization to play an active role in the assessment.

It is not the intention to discredit conventional approaches to organizational assessment. On the contrary, these methodologies should be continued where their use can be justified. COA simply represents an alternative with some important advantages over conventional methods. (3)

***"There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all."  
Peter Drucker***

### ***Effectiveness and efficiency***

The terms "effectiveness" and "efficiency" are often used interchangeably to describe how well an organization is performing in relation to its goals. Peter Drucker, a recognized authority on management and organization, says that the two words, actually, mean quite different things. Drucker defines "effectiveness" as doing the right things and "efficiency" as doing things right. (4)

Drucker's definitions of effectiveness and efficiency have been adopted for use in this manual.

When the term "effectiveness" is used, reference is being made to whether or not, or the degree to which, an organization is doing the things it should be doing. In other words, an organization is thought to be effective to the extent that the right organizational components are supplying the right mix of products to meet the demand of customers outside and inside the organization.

For example, a housing bank which is engaged in tasks related to loans for contracts probably is doing "the right thing." If, however, that same agency engages in tourism development, it may not be doing the "right thing." In summary, an organization can be said to be effective to the extent that it is doing the things it needs to be doing to fulfill its mission.

***"There is no right way to do the wrong thing"  
Blanchard and Peale***

A complete assessment also must seek to find out how well or efficiently these things are being done. When speaking of efficiency, the concern shifts away from whether or not the agency in the example above should be in the building loan business. That is an effectiveness question. A test of efficiency in this situation might be how well loan-related tasks are carried out by the agency as indicated by the satisfaction of those who are customers of the agency's products.

The term "efficiency," as used in this manual, is the extent to which the operations of a human settlements organization are being done right. The degree of efficiency can be measured by customer satisfaction with product quantity, quality, cost or timeliness of delivery.

### ***Quantity***

It is common to express the efficiency of a product in units of quantity or output (volume) and the time it takes to produce them (rate). Examples of such outputs include tons of refuse collected per day, kilometres of streets repaired per month, numbers of vehicles serviced per week, or numbers of complaints handled per day.

### ***Quality***

Sometimes overlooked in examining the efficiency of a human settlements organization is the quality of its products. If the quality of a product is not at least maintained, then a rise in quantity or output is not really an improvement in efficiency. For example, a payroll unit may report an increase in the average number of payroll checks processed per month. But, in achieving the record, the unit may have made considerably more errors than usual. This is not improved payroll efficiency. Improvements in the quantity of a product that are achieved at the expense of product quality do not reflect improved efficiency.

Three aspects of product quality, all indicators of efficiency, can be identified. They include timeliness, accuracy, and responsiveness.

- **Timeliness.** The degree to which a product is completed or delivered on time or ahead of schedule. Example: The payroll checks can be picked up at the payroll office after 12 noon on the first day of the month.
- **Accuracy.** The degree to which the delivery of a product is error free. Example: The payroll unit's error rate in processing payroll checks is less than 1 per cent for the past 12 months.
- **Responsiveness.** The degree to which the actions of those responsible for a product are carried out with sensitivity to the needs of the customer. Example: An employee on the payroll who is paid the wrong amount will have the error corrected within one working day after it is reported.

### **Cost**

Also overlooked, at times, in examining the efficiency of a human settlements organization is the price of its products to the customer. If the price of a product is too high according to reasonable customer expectations, then the product cannot be viewed as efficient even if improvements in quality and quantity are evident.

Constant demand is a good indication of customer satisfaction with a product when the customer has a choice of suppliers. Stated another way, customer demand for a product tends to vary inversely with price when there is more than one source for the product. The demand for public transit, for instance, when this product is subject to competition from privately owned firms, is prone to fluctuate considerably according to the fares being charged, the location of stations, the times of day the service is available, and so forth.

Customer satisfaction with a product cannot be assumed, however, merely because demand for the product is constant. Many products furnished by human settlements organizations, like sanitation and water supply, are not competitive. The customer does not have a choice of suppliers. Evidence of dissatisfaction with the price of these products will not appear as a change in demand. In such cases, evidence of inefficiency due to price can be found by asking people who use the service whether or not they feel they are getting their money's worth.

Price is not a factor in determining efficiency when no charge is made for a product. Many work-units within an organization, for instance, furnish products to other work-units simply as a product without charge. This is a customary practice with administrative product units like finance and personnel departments. In these cases, efficiency must be found using quantity and quality measures alone.

### **Products and customers**

Two other words used frequently in the manual may appear strange to the reader in the context of human settlements. The words are "product" and "customer." It is helpful to think of organizational units within human settlements organizations as providers or suppliers of "products." For example, refuse collection is usually a service or product provided by a municipal authority. A municipality which engages in refuse collection can be viewed, therefore, as effective - it is doing the right thing. If the cost per ton of refuse collected by the municipality is below the average cost nation wide or by municipalities of similar size, it might be said that the municipality is efficient with respect to this particular product.

Every product of a human settlements organization is intended to satisfy the needs of an end-user. In this manual, the end-users of the products of a human settlements organization are referenced as "customers." Clearly, one of the customers of a refuse collection department is a resident of the city. To a large extent, it is the customer to whom the organization must turn in order to find out how effectively and efficiently its various components are performing.

In this manual, a distinction is also made between organizational units that serve customers outside the organization, for example, the residents of a city, and units that serve customers inside the organization, other departments. For example, the payroll unit of a finance department in a municipality exists to serve customers inside the organization - its employees. The customers of the payroll unit are the employees of each department in the organization. The entire organization, therefore, can be said to be a customer of the payroll unit.

In summary, COA is a process of organizational self assessment in which the outside adviser serves as a facilitator and guide for a team of assessors who are employees of the organization participating in the assessment. The assessment focus is to find out whether or not and the degree to which the organization is doing what it should be doing to fulfill its mission (effectiveness) and how well the organization is doing it (efficiency). Data are gathered from end-users, customers, from inside the organization (work-units) and from outside the organization. Customers are questioned about their satisfaction with the services, products, they receive from the organization. The COA process is outlined below.

## **The collaborative organizational assessment (COA) process\***

*\*Portions of the COA process were used in a study of needed structural and management changes in the Ministry of Education and Culture, HMG of Nepal, in 1991. This study is described in Section III of this manual.*

The method of organizational assessment presented in this manual is carried out over a period of approximately 15 work days using the following five-step process.

***Step One: Management sanction and preparation***

COA begins with a firm agreement between top management and an external adviser or agency about the scope and duration of the assessment, the nature and extent of organizational participation, access to information and other resources, and organizational follow-through commitments. An assessment team consisting of capable and interested employees is formed. Managers who will benefit directly from COA participate in discussions of the process and how they and others will be involved in it. In accordance with local customs, the organization is notified that an assessment is about to begin and that it has management support.

***Step Two: Scanning the work environment***

This is the data gathering stage of COA. It begins with an inventory of the products of the work-units being assessed. The inventory is prepared through interviews with managers, section chiefs, and other officials knowledgeable about the products and customers of their respective work-units. The inventory includes proposals for improved work-unit effectiveness, i.e., adding, dropping, or changing the delivery system for existing products.

Scanning continues with an investigation of customer satisfaction with the efficiency (quantity, quality, and price) of the products received from the work-units being assessed. The investigation is undertaken in two stages. The first stage is a series of face-to-face interviews with a sample of people who live and work in the service area of the work-units being assessed. This is accomplished using a brief interview form consisting in the main of closed-ended questions. The service area is divided into segments. Each segment is assigned to an interviewer from the assessment team. People representative of the population of the segment are selected at random for interviews.

A second stage in the investigation of customer satisfaction is a survey of officials from work-units within the organization who are customers of the work-units being assessed and who use their products on a regular basis. Officials to be surveyed are selected by their unit managers and asked to attend meetings where survey questionnaires are administered by the assessment team.

Compilation for analysis of data gathered inside and outside the organization concludes the scanning step of COA.

***Step Three: Analysing assessment data***

The analysis of data gathered during the scanning step is carried out in two phases. To begin, product discrepancies are classified as "satisfactory" or "needing improvement" by the assessment team based on customer-satisfaction ratings. Results are discussed by assessment team members with product managers at scheduled meetings to verify that the reported discrepancies do exist and why. Product managers are also asked to describe the level of performance that would result in a high rating of customer-satisfaction for their products.

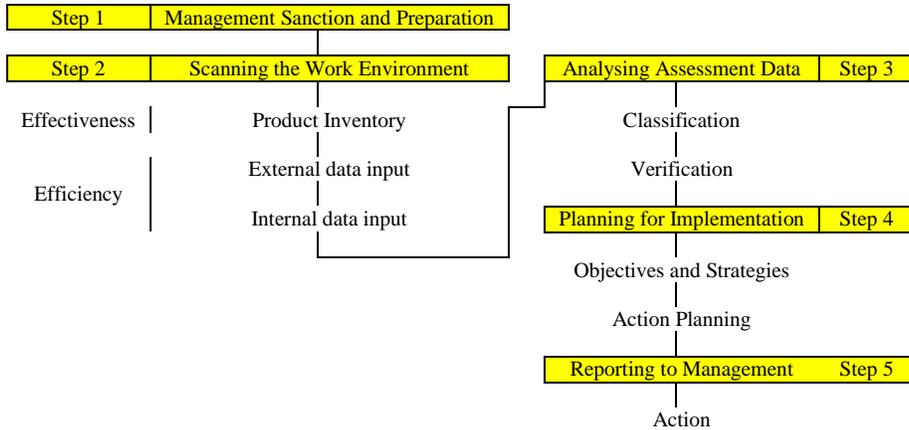
***Step Four: Planning for implementation***

From meetings with product managers, assessment team members prepare product improvement objectives. These are statements that describe the conditions needed to bring about the desired level of customer satisfaction with each product. Assessment team members are trained to lead "idea-generation" sessions with selected managers and supervisors from each of the work-units responsible for products in need of improvement. These sessions produce strategies that, in turn, form a basis for preparing action plans. Action plans specify who is to do what by when to achieve each of the product improvement objectives.

***Step Five: Reporting to management***

The last step in COA is the preparation of a written report that documents all pertinent aspects of the assessment including the approach used, findings, recommendations for change, and acknowledgements for those participating. Key elements of the report are the detailed action plans that spell out what must be done by the organization to implement the suggested improvements in organization effectiveness and efficiency. The report is submitted to the chief executive or other authorizing officials at the earliest possible date after the assessment is concluded.

**Figure 1 - Diagram of the five-step COA process**



## SECTION II

### Guide for conducting an organizational assessment using the COA process

**Overview**

Section I of this manual has furnished the rationale for a new method of organizational assessment in which managers and staff of a human settlements organization collaborate with one or more external advisers to assess the performance of selected work-units. Included in Section 1 was a summary of the steps to be followed to ensure COA's success in improving work-unit performance.

Section II of this manual is devoted to a detailed treatment of each step in the COA process. It begins by providing external advisers and executive officers of client organizations with a blueprint for establishing a contractual foundation for the collaborative undertaking. It furnishes an organization plan for carrying out the assessment and approaches for securing the needed organizational support.

Section II further provides step-by-step guidance in the conduct of COA. How-to-do-it details are provided for advisers and the assessment team on gathering and analysing performance data on the work-units to be assessed and for working in collaboration with participating work-unit employees to develop strategies for performance improvement for management consideration. Each step includes examples and illustrations of work situations certain to be familiar to anyone who has ever worked in a human settlements organization. Worksheets and diagrams are provided in the manual to aid understanding and simplify application of the COA process.

A three-day activity	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Management Sanction and Preparation</b>
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**Introduction**

There is much more to the initiation of COA than the issuance and acceptance of terms of reference. The collaborative nature of the process calls for a substantial investment of human resources by the client organization in return for the promised outcomes. As the experts in organizational assessment, it is up to the advisers to educate the client in the COA process. This is sometimes called "informal contracting." Details concerning team formation and scheduling of management time for data collection and analysis must be worked out to the satisfaction of both parties before any subsequent steps are taken.

The importance of relationship building with the client organization cannot be over emphasized. If this step is carried out patiently and with respect for the client's needs and concerns, COA will achieve the results both parties are expecting.

COA begins when a decision is made by management or the governing body of a human settlements organization to initiate the process for any of the reasons stated in Section 1. The details may be incorporated in a written contract or accepted by the client in terms of reference prepared by the COA advisers. However, the collaboration called for by COA makes it necessary for more extensive discussions of other important aspects of project implementation. They include: (a) negotiating the informal agreement; (b) obtaining and ensuring organizational support for COA; (c) organizing the COA (assessment) team; and (d) defining assessment parameters.

### *Negotiating the informal agreement*

A contract is an explicit written agreement covering what the advisers and the client expect from each other and how they are going to work together. For it to be a contract, both parties must have agreed to the statement, either by signing the document itself, or by exchanging letters of consent to the agreement.

When considering the task of negotiating the contract, the question arises: Who is the client in a COA project? In most cases, the client is the person or persons requesting the services of an adviser and to whom the adviser reports. Normally, this is the chief executive of a human settlements organization or other manager near the top of the organizational hierarchy. Sometimes, the client is a group of top managers from work units to be involved directly in the assessment.

It is realistic to say that the true client of COA is the total organization or, at least, that part of the organization that will be participating in assessment activities. Nevertheless, the immediate working relationship is between the advisers, the chief executive, and key managers designated by the chief executive to be part of this relationship.

Contractual negotiations between the advisers and the client deal with two considerations, the formal contract and the informal contract. A Term of Reference document (TOR) issued by this United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) or some other donor or operating agency serves as the formal contract for COA. In most cases, the TOR calls for the services of an expert adviser to carry out his or her part of the agreement. Normally, the TOR contains a statement of purpose for the consultancy, the scope of work, a timetable for completing various tasks, a budget or fee schedule and information about project administration and reporting. (For a sample Terms of Reference (TOR) document, see exhibit A in Section IV of this manual. The sample TOR is suitable for reproduction although changes in wording may be required based on the needs of a specific client organization.)

The issuance and acceptance of a TOR to initiate COA in a human settlements organization is only the beginning of the contracting process. There are many questions about the conduct of a COA project that can be answered only through direct, face-to-face discussions between the client and the advisers. The product of these efforts, whether in writing or not, is the informal contract.

It is up to the advisers, at this point, to build a relationship with the client that will allow him or her to help implement the COA process in the most constructive way possible for the organization. It is one of the great ironies of organizational life that the advisers, who may possess the most knowledge and experience, have the least control over what happens in an organization or to recommendations resulting from assessment studies. This can be a source of considerable frustration for the advisers who may see what needs to be done but who are powerless to act on that knowledge.

Nevertheless, it is at the contracting stage that the advisers have the greatest influence over what happens during and after the assessment. In fact, there are possibilities for constructive change in an organization that may be overlooked if they are not discussed during the contracting phase. It is for this reason that so much emphasis is being placed in this manual on the development of a sound contractual relationship between the organization being assessed and the COA advisers.

Before describing the elements of a good contract, a word about the process of informal contracting. In order to contract successfully, both parties must be willing and able to:

- State precisely what they are prepared to do and what they are not prepared to do.
- Explain the minimum requirement for COA to be a success.
- Ask for expectations or reservations about COA.
- Ask if the client is fully committed to move ahead with the project as explained.
- If the meeting is not going well, be prepared to discuss straightforwardly why it is not going well.
- Be prepared to delay the project if it has less than a 50 per cent chance of succeeding. (5)

Issues like these are often difficult to confront in face-to-face discussions. The parties may be uncomfortable discussing them. For this reason, they may be overlooked or avoided in contract meetings. A rationalization sometimes used for not dealing with these issues up front is, "it's all right; we'll deal with them if and when it becomes necessary."

Failure to confront these issues at the start of discussions is a mistake. After all, COA is a major undertaking for an organization. If done properly, it can be a major contributor not only to work improvement, but to heighten staff morale and job commitment. If undertaken with poor preparation, it can cause misunderstanding and hard feelings which can lead, in turn, to disappointing results.

*"The best witness is a written paper"*  
*Carl Sandburg*

Other important concerns in contracting for COA are whether or not the understandings resulting from meetings between the client and the advisers should be in writing and, if so, what the writing should cover. The answer to the first question is an unqualified "yes"! Whenever possible, understandings between advisers and the client should be in writing. The value of a written understanding is that it clarifies what has been agreed to by top management and the advisers before COA begins. This is a good test of whether you really have a sound agreement. Writing down the things each party agrees to do in a letter or a memorandum of understanding compels both parties to be more explicit about what is to be done, by whom, and when.

The contents of an informal contract for COA implementation will vary from one human settlements organization to another. There are, however, some common elements.

**1. Objectives**

Begin with a description of what COA is expected to accomplish. This statement will help the client be more realistic about the project and its limitations. The immediate goal of COA, of course, is to point the way toward specific changes in organizational effectiveness and efficiency with details on how these changes can be implemented successfully. A secondary but important goal of COA is to build capacity in the organization to assess itself in the future with little or no outside assistance.

**2. Boundaries**

Describe the scope of the project. A full scale COA includes an examination of efficiency and effectiveness in all departments of a human settlements organization. It includes an investigation of both internal and external customer satisfaction with the products of the organization. However, the client might choose a scaled-down version of COA owing to constraints of time or other considerations. For example, the project might focus only on certain departments or concern itself with considerations of effectiveness only.

**3. Commitment of resources**

Identify who and what must be supplied by the organization and the advisers in order to carry out the process successfully. For example:

**Human resources**

- Up to 10 people from the organization for about 12 working days each to participate as members of the COA team.
- Two skilled clerk-typists for various typing tasks for a total of about seven working days each.

**Other resources**

- Daily use for about three weeks of one conference room suitable for assessment team meetings with ample-wall space for display of assessment data.
- Equipment and supplies including several flip charts and paper, felt-tip markers in assorted colours, masking tape, and several hundred index cards in various colours.
- Access to a computer workstation and a photocopying machine on a 24-hour/day basis.
- Use of a vehicle (and a driver, if appropriate) for about two weeks to transport advisers and COA team members as directed.

**4. Access to information**

COA is an information-based process. Its value to the organization depends on having access to the right people and being able to get reliable information from them. Understandably, line managers may be reluctant to divulge everything that is going on. They want to be seen as doing the best they can under the circumstances. It is up to the advisers to expect this reluctance and to be explicit with the client from the very beginning about what is needed.

**Example:** The advisers might make it clear to the client that: "We need to interview at least ten managers from the departments to be assessed to identify what products they want to add in order to be of greater service to their customers."

And ask the client: "Do you see any problem providing us with access to these people?"

### **5. The adviser's role**

This is the time to state the nature of the relationship as a collaborative one. It is impossible to predict all of the ways advisers and the client will work together. The important thing is to make some statements about a sharing of responsibility and the special capabilities that each party brings to the assessment task.

#### **Example:**

"Our primary role is to show you how the COA process works and help you gather and interpret data from inside and outside the organization. While we have expertise about assessment methodologies, you have a great deal of knowledge about the day-to-day workings of your organization. As we see it, a major part of our role is to transfer what we know about COA to you so that you can use it on your own in the future."

### **6. The product**

It is important to be specific about what will exist when COA is complete. What kind of reporting will be done? How much detail will it contain? What suggestions will be provided for actual implementation? This dimension of a consulting relationship - specificity and nature of recommendations - is a major cause of client disappointment with the services received. It can be avoided by a clear understanding about what the final product will look like.

**Example:** "The final report of COA will be a detailed written document between 50 and 100 pages containing specific recommendations for effectiveness and efficiency improvement by work-unit together with action plans containing specific guidelines and instructions for implementation."

### **7. Client involvement**

This is the heart of COA from the adviser's point of view. It spells out the role to be played by management and employees of the organization in carrying out COA tasks. It may spell out, as well, follow-through tasks and responsibilities for the client.

**Example:** "You have agreed to take part in a meeting for key personnel in participating departments and to assign five (or more) people to the assessment team for a period of 14 working days. We have agreed, further, to about 10 interviews of approximately 30 minutes each with work unit managers and to involve from 10 to 20 employees from participating departments to take part in a satisfaction survey which should take about 30 minutes to complete."

### **8. Scheduling**

Busy people and busy organizations are vitally concerned with the amount of staff time required for COA. Therefore, the contract specifies when COA will start, how long it will take, and when those events that require the direct involvement of key managers are expected to begin and end.

### **9. Staff time/cost implications**

Besides the fee for the adviser, estimates should be made of the amount of staff time required by COA. These estimates can, in turn, be converted into cost equivalents by management.

#### **Example:**

##### **Training**

On-the-job training for three COA team members for 12 days

##### **Total training staff time**

36 days each

##### **Assessment and planning cost**

Initiation meeting for 12 managers for one hour

12 hours

Interviews with 12 work-unit heads for 30 minutes each

6 hours

Interview with 18 line managers and/or staff members for 30 minutes each

9 hours

Questionnaires administered to 20 staff members for 30 minutes per staff member

10 hours

Feedback meetings with 12 managers for one hour each

12 hours

Strategy development and action planning sessions with 36 work-unit employees for one-half day each

18 days

### **10. Confidentiality**

There may be some sensitivity within the organization about the use of information generated by the COA process. For example, who gets the report and has access to its contents may be a matter of some concern to the client. Some aspects of assessment reporting may be covered by the TOR. Otherwise, the adviser is advised to give the client control over when, how, and to whom assessment information is given.

A checklist covering the principal points to be covered in a contract meeting is shown in figure 2. Its use is recommended by advisers who want to get the most benefit from these meetings.

**Figure 2 - COA contracting checklist**

**Objectives**

Are the objectives of the project realistic and does the client understand and accept them?

**Scope**

Has the client decided on the scope of the project and is this acceptable to you and consistent with the TOR?

**Access to information**

Have all the known information sources been discussed with the client and is access to them satisfactory?

**Adviser's role**

Does the client understand your role in COA as a facilitator/coach and is it satisfactory?

**The product**

Has the product of COA been explained adequately and is the client satisfied with what it will look like and how it will be presented?

**Client involvement and commitment**

Does the client understand how much of whose time is being requested for COA, and is this an acceptable level of commitment?

**Scheduling**

Is the timetable for beginning various project activities described clearly and is this agreeable to the client?

**Confidentiality**

Have all sensitive issues about the release of project information been worked out to the client's satisfaction?

**Organization support**

Once the client and the advisers have completed the contract negotiation stage of COA, it is time to extend the opportunity for collaboration in the process to others in the organization. The success of COA depends in large part on the support of key managers - on their commitment (a) to provide ready access to resources and information needed by the COA process, and (b) to act on data generated about the effectiveness and efficiency of their work-units. Support depends, to a large extent, on getting these managers informed about and involved in the process as early as possible.

Informing and involving managers in COA can be accomplished in various ways. How it is done may be governed by custom and client preference alone or together with the advisers. For example, some clients may be inclined to avoid meeting face-to-face with managers of units to be assessed and, instead, inform them by memorandum about the process.

The client may be persuaded to depart from custom to some extent if doing so is likely to encourage managers to more readily accept the process. The client might, at the suggestion of the advisers, invite managers and other key personnel from units to be affected by the assessment to attend a meeting. The meeting might be structured to enlist questions about the process, answer them, and allow those in attendance in various ways to have a voice in the way COA is carried out.

Which of the two methods of introducing the process is best? If strong and active commitment is the goal, the answer is obvious. There is a direct relationship between the willingness of people to commit to the COA process and the manner in which the process is introduced to them. It can be said, in general, that managers and supervisors who feel that they have been given a voice in the design of a COA project will be more inclined to accept the changes recommended by the project.

To go a step further, the client has at least three options for introducing COA to the organization:

**Option 1**

Circulate a memorandum to all work-units outlining what COA is, what it is expected to accomplish, how long it will take, who in the organization will be affected by it, and how.

### Option 2

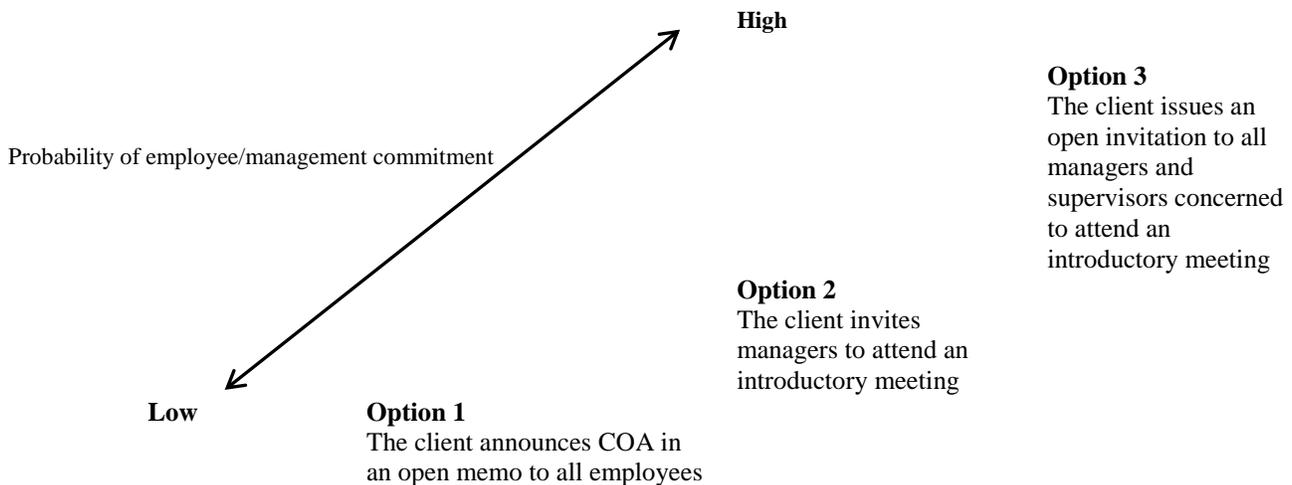
Invite selected managers from departments to be involved in the assessment to attend a COA briefing to hear a presentation on the process, to be introduced to the assessment team, and to offer comments (45 minutes).

### Option 3

Invite all managers and supervisors from departments to be involved in the assessment to attend a COA introductory meeting on a voluntary basis to hear about COA, react to a list of preliminary goals and select the COA assessment team (1.5 hours).

Each of these options are valid ways of launching COA. They do, however, differ substantially in the effect they are likely to have on people - managers and supervisors who the chief executive is counting on to respond favourably to the COA process and act responsibly on its results. The relative impact of the three options on organizational commitment is shown in figure 3.

**Figure 3 - Three options for launching a COA project**



Whether covered in writing or preferably discussed at an introductory meeting, the following matters need to be covered thoroughly with those who will be responsible for acting on COA results or providing resources needed for the process:

- Top management support for COA - legitimization
- The goals of the process
- Timetable and schedule of activities
- Access to people who have information needed by the assessment team
- Composition/appointment of assessment team members - responsibilities
- Products and follow-through activities

Typical objectives of COA in a human settlements organization might be:

- To improve the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of internally and/or externally delivered products
- To enhance the capability of in-house staff managers to analyse the effectiveness and efficiency of work-units under their supervision and to prepare workable follow through action plans

### **Organizing the assessment team**

The principal resources needed to carry out COA are people, information, working space, and equipment. At an early stage of the process, an assessment team is formed to collaborate with the advisers in collecting assessment data, interpreting the data with respect to needed changes in the units concerned, and reporting assessment results and recommendations to the client. Participation on the assessment team should be regarded as an on-the-job learning experience that can provide those taking part with valuable new management skills and capabilities.

The way the assessment team is formed is important to the ultimate success of the project. Team appointments might be made by the chief executive acting alone or appointments might be made by the chief executive from a list of names provided by top managers in the organization using a uniform set of selection criteria. Authority to select members for the team also might be delegated by the chief executive to those attending the COA introductory meeting. Once again, there is reason to believe that the more decentralized the method of selection, the greater the commitment to COA by the organization.

As for selection criteria, it is believed that the team should be composed of individuals selected because they possess knowledge, skills, or capabilities valuable to COA rather than because of the titles they hold or the units they represent. Characteristics which might be given priority when considering candidates for membership on the COA team are these:

- Skill in collecting and analysing data
- Demonstrated commitment to work quality
- Working knowledge of one or more of the work-units concerned
- Skill in written communications
- Curiosity about how things work

The size of the assessment team will vary with the magnitude of the assessment task. A useful rule of thumb is to structure the team to have about as many members as there are work-units to be assessed. Normally, this will average from 5 to 10 members. A minimum of five to six members is required when interviewing customers outside the organization. If the size and complexity of the task requires more members and, possibly, the formation of sub-teams, this is recommended to simplify the assessment task. (6)

People from outside the organization may be included on the assessment team. For example, the team might include a staff member from a local training or management institute if training needs are an important aspect of follow-through activities. (7) However, outside people should not be assigned to the assessment team arbitrarily. There should be a good reason for including them.

#### ***Redefining assessment parameters***

The COA team comes together for its first meeting with the advisers. The purpose of this meeting is for the team to learn more about the assessment task and to modify the initial assessment design as needed to fit the specific characteristics and requirements of their organization - in other words, redefine the assessment parameters.

Ideally, the chief executive or his deputy and heads of the various work-units to be assessed should be present at this first meeting. An opening statement from the chief executive might be planned to give further organizational legitimacy and support for COA and to reaffirm that the team will have access to the people, information, and other resources it needs to carry out the project. The chief executive is asked to issue a "call to action" that lets the team know its work is viewed as important by management and that the product of its work will be taken seriously.

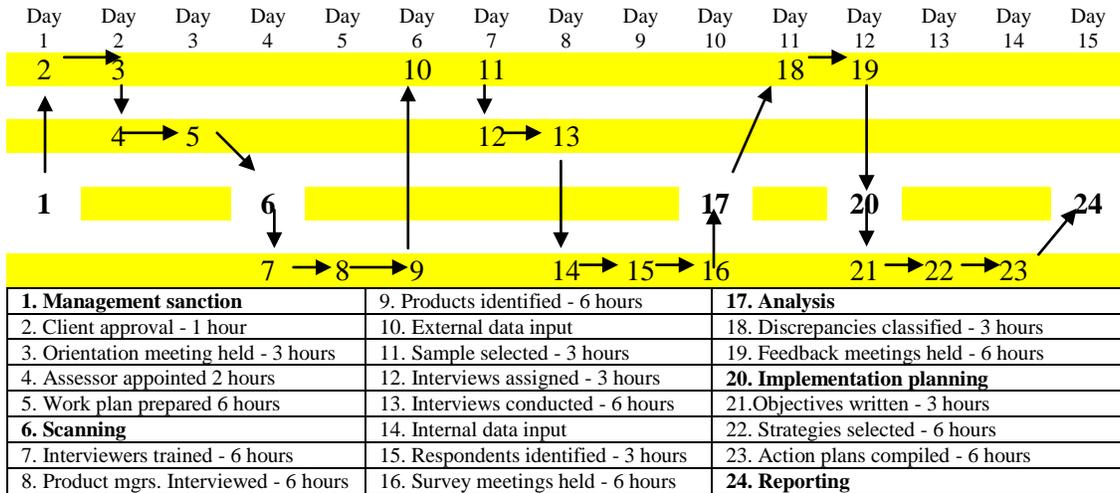
The advisers are responsible for bringing to the team's attention a preliminary set of goals (see the illustrative COA goals presented earlier in this section of the manual) and for developing a realistic work plan to achieve these goals.

Following discussion and possible rewording or expansion of the COA goals, the advisers work with the assessment team to develop a preliminary work plan. The work plan indicates an overall project timetable for COA based on the contracted scope of work and a schedule of tasks to be accomplished.

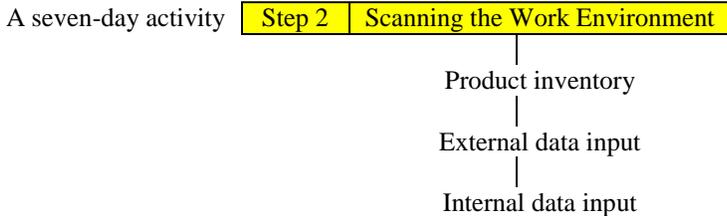
Work plan preparation begins with a list of major assessment steps (sanction, scanning, analysis, implementation planning, reporting, etc.). Next, the critical tasks to be carried out under each step (appointment of assessors, work-unit interviews, sample selecting, action plan development, etc.) are identified together with an estimate of the time required to carry out each task. Finally, a flow chart like the one shown in figure 4 is constructed to show the relationship of planned assessment steps and tasks to one another and to the approved time schedule.

Using the flow chart as a guide, assessment team members "reality test" the preliminary work plan. This is an important task. The perspective of the inside staff is crucial in structuring a work plan that can be counted upon to achieve intended results on time. The ensuing discussion can reveal obstacles not anticipated by the advisers or shortcuts known only to certain members of the team. Changes are made in the work plan based on these discussions. The changes are incorporated in a revised flow chart that is drawn on large sheets and displayed in a place that is accessible to all assessment team members.

**Figure 4 - Sample scheduling chart**

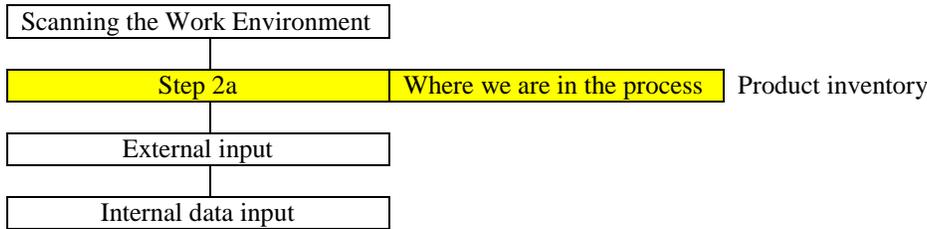


## INTRODUCTION



**Introduction**

Finding discrepancies in work-unit effectiveness and efficiency is the COA team's initial task. This is done by scanning the work environment. Three forms of scanning are used by the COA team to carry out its task. The first is to develop an inventory of products within participating work-units. The focus is on effectiveness (doing the right things) from the perspective of managers in work-units that are participating in COA. The second is to gather data from customers of participating work units who live and work outside the organization. The intent at this stage is to use evidence of external customer satisfaction as a measure of product efficiency (doing things right). The third is to gather data from managers in work-units that are customers (users of the products) of work-units participating in COA. The focus at this stage is on internal customer satisfaction as a basis for establishing product efficiency.



**Introduction**

A good starting point for assessing effectiveness in an organization is to inventory the products of the work-units to be assessed. Such an inventory might show which units furnish what products to whom. Further, the inventory might indicate product effectiveness changes (additions, deletions, and transfers of responsibility) among work-units with the intent of increasing overall or individual unit work effectiveness.

A complete product inventory will require data on products and customers not possessed by members of the assessment team. For this reason, the team should seek this information from the most reliable source available. In each work-unit being assessed there are knowledgeable persons who know the unit's products and its customers whether inside or outside

the organization. The knowledgeable person may be a department head, section chief, or other responsible staff member. It is to these people the assessment team should turn for product information.

### ***The personal interview***

The best method for obtaining effectiveness data from people in participating work-units is the personal interview. Trained assessors with good interview questions can obtain many relevant details about work-unit products and customers. Interviewing allows the assessor greater flexibility in the questioning process. Working face-to-face with the work-unit manager, the assessor can direct the questioning to get exactly the information he or she wants. When necessary, the assessor has the option of using probe questions to get additional or more detailed information.

### ***Scheduling interviews***

In order to expedite the scheduling of interviews, the chief executive officer is asked to prepare a memorandum to managers of all work-units participating in the assessment (see figure 5). In the memorandum, participating managers are informed about the need for effectiveness data and the interview procedure. The managers are asked to schedule key staff members to attend a brief meeting with the assessment team for the purpose of scheduling interviews. Managers also are asked to schedule some of their time later in the process to review the results of data collection and to schedule the time of key staff members to work with the assessment team in planning needed product improvements.

The number of people to be interviewed in each work-unit will vary depending upon the size of the unit and the number of products for which the unit is responsible. For example, it might be sufficient to interview only the supervising manager of a budget office that prepares monthly reports (products) for other work-units (customers). However, it might be necessary to interview several managers in a public works department that is responsible for a number of specialized products used by the department's customers inside and outside the organization.

### ***Interviewer training and preparation***

A workshop on effective personal interviewing is conducted by the advisers for members of the assessment team prior to the meeting with work-unit representatives arranged by the chief executive. Approximately six hours must be planned for the interview training. In design, the training is meant to be participatory; that is, team members will be expected to conduct practice interviews under supervised conditions in order to acquire the necessary skills and to develop confidence in using these skills.

### ***Figure 5 - Sample memorandum on scheduling interviews and other activities***

To: Managers of Units Participating in COA  
From: Chief Executive  
Subject: COA Interviews

As you know, your work-unit has been designated to participate in the organizational performance assessment currently in progress. Your willingness to co-operate with the assessment team is appreciated.

The team has informed me that it will need to gather data in each participating work-unit on the products (services) the unit currently provides to its customers. They are interested in products furnished to other work-units in the organization as well as customers outside the organization.

Please identify responsible section chiefs or other officials who can furnish details about the various products of your work-unit. Then, ask these individuals to arrange to be present for a short meeting with the assessment team on (date, place, and time). The purpose of this meeting is to schedule a convenient time for each of your people to be interviewed by an assessment team member.

At the conclusion of the data collection phase of COA, a few additional minutes of your time will be needed. Please be available personally on (date) to meet for about 30 minutes with an assessment team member to discuss assessment results as they pertain to the products of your work-unit. You will be contacted in a few days for a specific time.

Finally, please ask the same officials mentioned above to be available on or about (date) to invest one working day with the assessment team. The knowledge and experience of these officials will be needed by the assessment team to plan needed product improvements and ways to implement these improvements successfully. With co-operation like this, your work-unit, and the organization as a whole, can get the maximum possible benefit from the, COA process.

The objectives, activities, and conditions for a six-hour training session on effective personal interviewing are shown in figure 6.

**Figure 6 - Design for a workshop on effective personal interviewing**

**Objectives:** By the end of this workshop, each participant will be able to:

1. Create a favourable interview climate with each person being interviewed.
2. Obtain a full and accurate response to all scheduled interview questions and discretionary probe questions.
3. Leave the person being interviewed with a positive feeling about COA and the personal interview process.

**Size of group:** five to 12 participants

**Time required:** four hours

**Process:**

1. People scheduled to take part in the workshop are given a handout on how to begin, carry out and conclude a COA interview and are asked to read it before the workshop begins.
2. The workshop opens with exercises that point out the close association between good communications skills and good interviewing. (30 minutes)
3. The adviser reviews the dos and don'ts in conducting a face-to-face interview in a short presentation. (30 minutes)
4. The adviser demonstrates how a COA interview should be conducted. (30 minutes)
5. Team members are grouped in pairs to role-play a COA interview using techniques observed in the demonstration and to discuss the results. (90 minutes)
6. Team members discuss the role-play exercise and how they can make good use of what they have learned in conducting COA interviews. (60 minutes)

Following the training workshop, assessment team members are supplied by the adviser with interview materials. The materials consist of interview guides containing the key questions to be asked and space for recording information obtained during the interviews. Interviewers will need one interview guide for each of their scheduled interviews. For an assessor's interview guide, see exhibit B in Section IV of this manual. The guide is suitable for reproduction.

In addition to the mandatory key questions, interviewers are supplied with a set of probes. Probes are follow-up questions. They are designed to focus the discussion and get more information from an interviewee. More information about probes is provided later in the manual.

***The scheduling meeting***

As soon as the assessment team has been trained, the chief executive or official acting on behalf of the chief executive should call the scheduling meeting. At the scheduled time, the meeting is opened by the chief executive or other official who welcomes managers and other invited officials from work-units participating in COA. Following an expression of executive support for COA, the adviser is introduced to explain the purpose of the meeting.

The adviser explains that the meeting is to schedule each of the officials present for an interview at the earliest convenient time on a given day or days (usually the day of and the day after the meeting). The officials are told that interviews will last about 30 minutes and will focus on the work-unit's products and customers. Officials are reassured that matters discussed will be treated as confidential by the assessment team and that interviews will be held in the privacy of each official's own office. Each official is given a list of questions to be answered to assist them in preparing for the interview. A sample list of interview questions is shown later in the manual.

After this explanation, the adviser asks the officials to indicate the time when they would prefer to meet with the COA team member for an interview. Each official's preference is recorded by the adviser or a team member on a large scheduling chart that is clearly visible to everyone at the meeting (see figure 7). When each official's time preference and office number has been recorded, the adviser thanks the officials for their willingness to take part and adjourns the meeting.

**Figure 7 - Interview scheduling chart\***

Times	Interviewers				
	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					

\*The total time allotted for interviews will vary from one assessment to another depending on the number of people to be interviewed and the number of trained interviewers. Normally, one full hour is scheduled for each interview including time for the interviewer to tabulate results and get to the next interview. For a reproducible version of this chart, see Section V of this manual, Resource No. 1.

**Conducting the interview**

At the scheduled time, each interviewer is present at the place agreed upon for the interview. If the interviewer is delayed, an explanation should be given. For example, an interviewer who has been delayed might place a call or send a messenger to the office of the person to be interviewed, leaving this message:

"I know we have an appointment at 10 o'clock. My previous appointment has been prolonged by 15 minutes. I intend to be at your office not later than 10.30. I am very sorry for the delay."

The interview begins when the interviewer has arrived at the interviewee's office, the two have greeted one another, and they are seated in the office or other quiet place for the interview. The interview should not exceed 30 minutes. It consists of three distinct phases:

- Initiation (about five minutes)
- Discussion (about 20-25 minutes)
- Closing (about five minutes)

**Initiation**

The interview opens with casual conversation. This is initiated by the interviewer to make the interviewee feel at ease with the situation. Comfortable topics like the weather, regional or local events, or shared personal interests are appropriate. After a few minutes of "small talk," the interviewer begins to move into the interview. A natural way of doing this is for the interviewer to thank the interviewee for taking time away from other duties and explaining again why the interview has been requested.

The interviewer might use the following words to initiate the interview.

**Interviewer**

"We are conducting interviews with work-unit managers like you. There are three things we hope to accomplish: (1) First, we want to find out what your work-units are responsible for their purpose or function in the organization; (2) Secondly, we hope to learn what your units actually produce for users outside the organization. We call these things "products." We call the users of these products "customers." (3) Finally, we want to find out what your units actually produce for users or customers inside the organization - in other words, products used by other work-units.

"We are also interested in finding out if you think there are other products your unit should be supplying or if responsibility for any of the products you are supplying now should be transferred to other units or even discontinued.

"Your answers to these questions are very important. They will help us make suggestions to top management on how your work-unit and other work-units in this organization can be even more effective than they have been in the past."

### ***Discussion***

The objective of the interview, of course, is to compile a complete list of the products currently provided by the work unit for internal and external customers. It is intended, further, to secure honest opinions about possible new products, unnecessary products, and desirable changes in product delivery.

Interview results are compiled by the interviewer in a questionnaire like the one shown in exhibit B. The questionnaire consists of 10 key questions and an assortment of probing techniques. The key questions should be asked exactly as worded and responses written down in the space provided. Questions are to be asked in the order presented. None is to be omitted. The 10 key questions which are the foundation of the questionnaire are shown in figure 8.

### ***Probing***

Probing is used to motivate an interviewee to explain his or her answers more fully or to refocus the interview when an answer given is not relevant to the question asked. By probing, the interviewer can encourage an interviewee to clarify, expand, or re-direct an answer without being openly critical of the answer.

During an interview, the interviewer might have several reasons for probing. For example, the interviewer might want more detail: "Could you tell me more?" It could be the interviewer might want the interviewee to clarify a fuzzy point: "How do you mean?" Or, the interviewer might want to check out the interviewee's reasoning: "Why do you think that?"

Figure 9 provides a list of useful interview probes. Interviewers may wish to transfer this information to a card for quick reference during an interview.

### ***Figure 8 - Key questions for gathering product data\****

Let's begin by discussing customers for the products of your work-unit who live and work outside the organization.

1. What products is your unit now supplying to people who live and work in your organization's service area?
2. Who are the customer's for each of these products?
3. Are there any of these products that should be discontinued? If so, which products?
4. Are there any of these products that should be supplied by some other work-units than yours? If so, which products and which work-units?

Now, let's switch gears and talk about other work-units in this organization that are customers for your work-unit's products.

5. What products is your unit now supplying to other work-units in this organization?
6. Who are the customers for each of these products?
7. Are there any of these products that should be discontinued? If so, which products?
8. Are there any of these products that should be supplied some other work-units than yours? If so, which products and which work-units?

Finally, let's spend a few minutes discussing new products and changes in the way existing products are being supplied by the organization.

9. Are there any new products that your work-unit should start supplying to its customers? What new products? Which of these to outside customers? Which of these to inside customers?
10. Are there any products now being supplied by another work-unit of this organization that should be supplied by your work-unit instead? What products? What customers?

\*Each person to be interviewed is given a list of questions during the scheduling meeting described earlier. See Section V, Resource No. 2, for a reproducible handout.

### ***Figure 9 - Useful interview probes\****

Repeat and/or reformulate the question when the interviewee seems not to understand, cannot decide what to say, or strays off the subject.

Use facial expressions and gestures appropriate in your culture to signal that you understand and are waiting for the interviewee to add detail or explain further.

Rephrase or paraphrase the answer - to confirm what has been said and to stimulate further thinking by the interviewee.

Ask another question - to signal the interviewee that something is unclear or incomplete. Typical questions:

- How often does that happen?
- Where do you mean?
- By whom is that done?
- Why do you say that?
- Can you tell me more?
- Is there some other reason?
- Tell me more about ...
- Are there any others?
- Did I understand you to say ...
- Would you repeat that?
- In other words, . . .
- Is there anything else?

\*See Resource No. 3 in Section V of this manual for a reproducible handout containing this list of probes.

The following example shows how an interviewer can use probes to clarify the meaning of a respondent's answers and add important details where needed. The interview is being conducted by an assessment team interviewer with a line manager in the street-cleaning department of a municipality.

**Example**

Question: "What products is your unit supplying to customers outside the organization?"

Answer: "My unit is responsible for cleaning streets and market areas".

Probe: "How often is the cleaning done?"

Answer: "Every day".

Paraphrasing: "So, if I understand you correctly, your unit is responsible for cleaning streets and for cleaning market areas. Are these two different products or the same product?"

Answer: "They are two different products with two different customers".

Question: "Can you tell me more about the differences between these two products?"

Answer: "Yes, one is strictly street cleaning and the other is more refuse collection".

Question: "Can you think of any reason why either of these products should be discontinued?"

Answer: "No. They are both important for preserving the health and hygiene of the city".

Question: "Which of them, do you think, could be provided more effectively by another work-unit?"

Answer: "As I mentioned, cleaning-up the market is more a refuse-collection job".

Probe: "Would you expand on that?"

Answer: "Our street-cleaning equipment is designed for small amounts of trash, typically paper, ashes left from small fires which guards burn at night, dust and sand. The market places generate tremendous amounts of decomposing material - garbage".

Probe: "Are there other reasons for shifting responsibility for this product, maybe technical or financial?"

Answer: "Yes. For cleaning up the markets, we need two large compacting trucks. These trucks are the same ones used for collecting garbage from large hotels and restaurants. The refuse collection department charges for these services and can afford expensive equipment and rolling stock. Our service is free, but a large portion of my budget is consumed by these trucks which are used every day. I also don't have the mechanics to maintain these trucks and I have lower priority for emergency repairs than the refuse-collection department".

Recapitulation: "So, if I understand you correctly, you are suggesting that the refuse-collection department should be responsible for cleaning up the marketplaces".

Answer: "Yes and no. I am suggesting that the refuse collection department should remove the bulk of the material. It is still my department's responsibility to clean up after them and make sure the market places are clean. That I can do easily and economically."

**Closing**

When answers to the 10 key questions have been obtained to the interviewer's satisfaction and/or the time is about to expire, the interview enters the closing phase. Closing is a way of ending an interview on a positive note, leaving the interviewee with a good feeling about the experience. In closing, the interviewer thanks the interviewee sincerely for his/her time. The interviewee is given an opportunity to ask questions and offer additional facts or opinions on anything that has been discussed. The interviewer finishes by stating what is to be done with interview results. The following words might be used by an interviewer to close an effectiveness data gathering interview.

**Example**

Interviewer "I've enjoyed talking with you, [name]. We have only a few minutes left. I want to be sure you have a chance to ask any questions you may have about COA. If you have further observations about products and customers of your work-unit, I would welcome hearing them now." [allow time for a response]

"We are most grateful for your time and interest in COA. The information you have given us will be of great value to us in making our recommendations to management. We know that management will be interested in your opinions and the opinions of others being interviewed. You may rest assured, however, that management will not be given any information that identifies you as the person who supplied it."

**Recording interview results**

At the conclusion of each interview, the interviewer records the results. This should be done between interviews while the information shared is still fresh and can be documented without distortion or omission of fact. The reason that a full hour is scheduled for each 30-minute interview is to give the interviewer sufficient time between interviews to complete this important recording task. Interview results are recorded on a product improvement summary like the one shown in figure 10.

**Information display**

Assuming a sufficient number of interviewers, assessment interviews can be completed in a single day. The following day is used to compile and display interview results for analysis by the assessment team. The data obtained from interviews in work-units participating in COA are transcribed and summarized in a form that is convenient for group review and discussion. The result is a composite picture of who is doing what for whom among the participating work-units and some suggestions for change.

**Figure 10 - Product improvement summary\***

\*See Section V of this manual, Resource No. 4, for a reproducible handout of this summary report.

Name of product
Work-unit (supplier)
Customers
Type of changes proposed for improved product effectiveness 1. No change 2. Discontinue this product 3. Transfer product responsibility 4. Supply a new product 5. Expand customer base <b>Note:</b> If you checked items 2 to 5 above describe the change(s) and reasons for the change(s) in the space below.
Description of the change(s)
Reason for the change(s)

Display begins with the posting of large sheets containing summary information on each of the products identified by the interviews. The principal information sources for preparing these sheets are the summary reports (see figure 10) prepared at the conclusion of each interview.

On the day scheduled for the inventory display activity, all team members who were assigned to conduct interviews assemble in a work room designated for the assessment team's use. Team members are asked to bring with them all of their interview materials, particularly the summary reports.

As the first step in constructing the display, interviewers are given a set of colour-coded index cards and told to transfer information from their summary reports to the cards. The index cards are colour-coded to indicate specific types of product change proposals. As shown in the following illustration, five colour options are needed.

<b>Action proposed in interview</b>	<b>Colour of index card</b>
No change in the product is proposed	White
Transfer of responsibility for the product to another work-unit is proposed	Red
Discontinuation of the product is proposed	Blue
Expanding the customer base for the product is proposed	Green
The addition of a new product is proposed	Yellow

The interviewer chooses the correct coloured card to use for each of the product-related proposals recorded during an interview. There may be more than one card for a product, of course, if more than one type of change is proposed, e.g., transfer to another work-unit (red card) and expand customer base (green card). On the card or cards, the interviewer enters information needed by the assessment team in order to understand:

- What the product is
- Who is providing it now
- What should be done differently in the future
- Why this change is necessary and desirable

For example, a card containing a proposal for the transfer of responsibility for removing garbage in certain areas from one department to another would be "red" in colour and might read as follows:

***Red index card***

**Product:** Refuse Collection

**Work-unit (current):** Refuse Collection Department

**Change proposal:** Transfer responsibility for the removal of garbage in market areas from the street-cleaning department to the refuse-collection department.

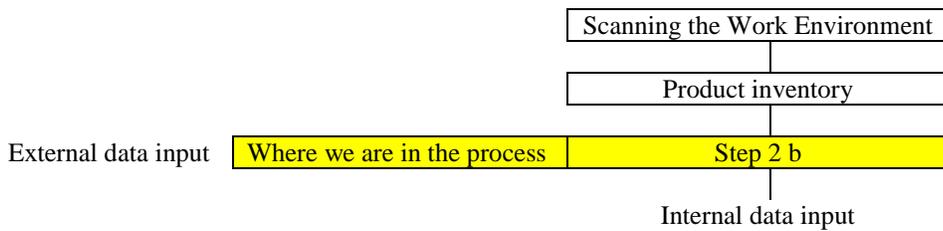
**Justification:** This is proposed to make more efficient use of expensive rolling stock already in use by the refuse collection department and avoid duplication of equipment and maintenance cost by the street-cleaning department which receives no offsetting revenue to provide the service.

When each interviewer has completed index cards for all of the interviews conducted, the cards are displayed on a wall of the room. The cards, each containing information on a specific product, are grouped together by the work-units currently responsible for product delivery. The work-units are identified by labels posted on the wall above their respective card groupings.

When all cards have been posted under the work-units currently responsible for them, the result is a product inventory of the various work-units. In other words, the extent to which these units are doing the right things from the perspective of the managers responsible for their various products is represented in a way that members of the team can review and discuss conveniently.

The assessment team might wish to construct a second display. The second display would show the way participating work-units and products would appear if all of the interview proposals were adopted. Comparisons between the status quo display and the proposed display might be of benefit if there were many proposals for transferring responsibility for a product from one work-unit to another. Otherwise, the second display might be a waste of time and energy. Whether or not the second display is needed is a matter to be decided by the assessment team.

The product inventory serves as a starting point for the next step in the COA process, the gathering of data on product satisfaction from people who live and work within the organization's service area.



**Introduction**

Data on the efficiency with which organizational work-units deliver products to customers outside the organization are gathered by surveying a representative sample of these customers. The intent of the external survey is to find out who is receiving what products, how those responding feel about the products they are receiving, and what, if anything, should be done differently.

The external customer survey requires a face-to-face interview with people who live and work within various parts of the organization's service area. The external survey can be done in two working days including sample selection, team assignments, and field interviewing.

**Selecting the sample**

A sample is a small part of the total customer population of an organization engaging in COA. Obviously, it would be impractical to survey every customer. An alternative used the world over is to reduce the number of customers to be surveyed to a sample that is reasonably representative of the customer population as a whole. The intent is to reduce the workload for the survey team and still produce a valid result.

Selecting a survey sample is a process that consists of several tasks.

**Task 1:** Identify the primary geographic areas in which surveying will be done.

A good starting point for deciding on the number and location of external customer interviews is to divide the organization's service area into survey districts. In some cases, there exist predetermined administrative or political boundaries or precincts. As these may be too homogeneous or heterogeneous for survey purposes, it is recommended that care be exercised in using them. The districts may be distinct geographic or topographic areas bounded by major roads, rivers or other natural features. Districts may, however, be differentiated by wealth, rich areas and poor areas, and by age, older areas and newer ones. In some cases, all of these will be considered in identifying where surveying will be done. In other words, the method that is chosen by an assessment team and its COA advisers for subdividing an organisation's service area into districts will vary from one assessment situation to another.

**Task 2:** Identify the survey population by size and composition.

The actual number of interviews to be conducted is based on the number of interviewers who can be assigned to a district and the amount of time available to the team to conduct interviews. Sometimes there are predetermined administrative or political precincts involved. As these may be quite homogeneous or heterogeneous, caution is suggested in using them. Normally, the team is given one day to conduct interviews with customers outside the organization.

**Example**

Assume: Each interviewer can complete three to four interviews in an hour. Face-to-face interviews are preferred over telephone interviews for the quality of information obtained despite the fact that each interviewer can complete up to 10 interviews per hour by telephone. Also, in many countries, not all of the target population can be reached by phone.

Assume: Interviewers will be engaged in the actual conduct of interviews for about six hours.

Then: One interviewer who conducts three interviews in an hour and works for six hours should complete 18 interviews.

And: Four interviewers who conduct 18 interviews each should complete approximately 70 interviews in all.

Anyone who lives and works within a district is likely to be a customer for one of the organization's products and, therefore, a prospective interview candidate. As a rule, people to be interviewed should be contacted in their places of business or in public markets and shopping areas within each of the districts where surveying is to be done. Local customs will dictate how the assessment team will proceed in contacting people for interviews within each district.

In many countries, there may be an informal sector consisting of squatters, traders, small-scale manufacturers and others who could represent a large portion of the customer population for some products. If there is a significant informal sector within the organization's service area, it should be included in interview planning.

Finally, there are special situations that will require special handling by interviewers. For example, there may be a select and limited clientele for a particular product. In such cases, it will be necessary to obtain a list of customers from the work-unit supplying the product. Interviewers in each district will be given the names and addresses of the customers for this product who are located in their assigned interview districts. The interviewers are instructed to contact several of these customers at random and to make appointments to interview them.

**Task 3:** Assign team members to districts

Each assessment team member who is scheduled to interview customers outside the organization is assigned responsibility for a district, part of a district, or more than one district as the case may be. How many team members are assigned to a district or how many districts are assigned to a team member depends on the size of the district and the size of the interview team. However, in most cases, four team members will be required to undertake a significant number of interviews.

One objective of efficient surveying is to minimize the amount of time spent by interviewers in travelling from one interview location to another. Interviewers are more likely to stay on schedule when they can proceed on foot to cover as many interviews as possible before driving to another part of the district. This can be done by planning interviews in advance so that the interviewer's movements do not require covering the same ground more than once.

One way to increase survey efficiency is by using a survey control sheet (see figure 11) as an aid in interview planning. Locations of markets, shopping centres, informal settlements, and specific addresses of special clientele businesses can be entered by interviewers on the sheet before leaving the office. This is done to get interviewers started promptly and to keep interviews moving briskly. Address information about each interview can be recorded on the sheet when each interview has been completed. Businesses may include hotels and restaurants for refuse-collection services, for example. They may also include other local or central-government authorities.

***The interview questionnaire***

The instrument designed specifically to gather data from external customers of a human settlements organization is called the external product survey. The questionnaire is designed to be administered by an assessment team member in a face-to-face interview of about 15 minutes in duration. Interview questionnaires are designed to collect accurate and complete information about each of the products currently being used by individual households or businesses in the organisation's service area. Businesses may include hotels and restaurants, refuse collection services, for example. They may also include other local or central-government authorities. The external product survey consists of instructions to the interviewer, space to enter the name of products currently being used by the respondent, and a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions about customer satisfaction with each product. A list of basic questions included in the external product survey is shown in figure 12.

**Figure 11 - Survey control sheet\***

\*See Section V, Resource No.5 for a reproducible handout of this control sheet.

Organization		
District		
Area within district		
Interviewer		Date
	Place or address of interview	Occupation or role of interviewee
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

### ***Figure 12 - External customer survey questions***

#### **Questions:**

- Which of the products on the list are you receiving now?
- How would you rate your level of satisfaction with each of the products you are now receiving?
- If your level of satisfaction with any of the products you are now receiving is either "fair" or "poor", explain why?
- Are there any products on the list that you receive now that you would like to stop receiving? What are these products?
- Are there any products on the list that you would like to receive from some other source? What source? Why the change?
- Are there any products on the list that you do not receive that you would like to start receiving? What are these products?

The ability of a respondent to answer these questions completely and accurately is dependent on the way they are worded and the simplicity of the language used. Each question is drafted in an unbiased way. In other words, the tone and language used should not indicate the way a respondent is expected to answer. Moreover, questions are simply stated. This is done so that someone with little or no formal education can understand the questions as easily as someone who is well educated. (A reproducible version of the External Product Survey is shown as exhibit C in Section IV of this manual.)

Attached to each copy of the interview questionnaire is a list of the products that various work-units supply to customers outside the organization. The list is essential since the interview is focused on customer satisfaction with specific products.

#### ***Final survey preparations***

The external customer survey is carried out by a group of assessment team members, each assigned to cover a specific number of interviews during a specified period of time. Members of the survey team are briefed on the survey procedure by the adviser at a meeting early on the day preceding the survey. Among the topics to be covered by the briefing are how to get around, choose the right respondents, use the survey questionnaire, fill out the survey control sheet, and compile survey results.

It is customary for the adviser to include a pilot test. This is done to verify time requirements and to identify weaknesses in the questionnaire or in the interview procedure. The pilot test should be conducted the day before actual field interviews are scheduled to begin. It may be done in conjunction with the pre-survey briefing described above.

Pilot testing usually is carried out in the following manner. One or more of the team members who will be conducting interviews is asked to conduct a "practice interview" with a respondent whom they do not know. Other interviewers are asked to observe. This session is both a training session for the interviewers and an opportunity to identify areas for necessary revision in the wording of interview questions. The practice interview includes completing the survey control sheet and compiling interview results as described later in this step.

Feedback on the practice interview is sought from the interview observers and from the respondent. On the basis of what is learned from the feedback, adjustments may be made in the questionnaire and suggestions offered to interviewers for improving interview results.

#### ***Conducting the survey***

On the day the interviews are to be conducted, transportation of the survey team can be accomplished in various ways. Some team members will prefer to use private vehicles. Being able to move from place to place at will is the most efficient approach. Car pooling may be practical for survey team members who are assigned to areas that lie close together. There even may be situations in which public transport can be used by survey team members. Team members who are scheduled to interview a special clientele may need access to private vehicles.

Every task requires the right tools. Interviewing is no exception. Each COA interviewer is equipped with an ample supply of questionnaires, a complete list of external customer products, and a survey control sheet for each assigned district. The control sheets specify promising areas for contacting interview prospects, such as public markets and shopping areas by name, and specific addresses for special clientele interviews as applicable. Street maps may be needed by team members who are not familiar with the districts to which they have been assigned.

On arriving, the interviewer takes a few minutes to tour the area, looking for shopkeepers and shoppers who are characteristic of the people who live and work in the district. Several of these are selected for interviews. Using the guidelines provided on the first page of the interview questionnaire, the interviewer asks one of the people selected for the

interview for a few minutes of their time to ask some questions about the organization's services. The interviewer goes on to explain why the interview is being held, how long it will take, and that the respondent's name will not be used.

The interviewer begins the interview following the suggestions contained on the first page of the questionnaire. When responses have been received for all the questions, including supplementary (probe) questions, the interviewer enters the address or area code number on the survey control sheet and the respondent's occupation or role in the community. The interviewer thanks the respondent and moves on to the next person selected for an interview.

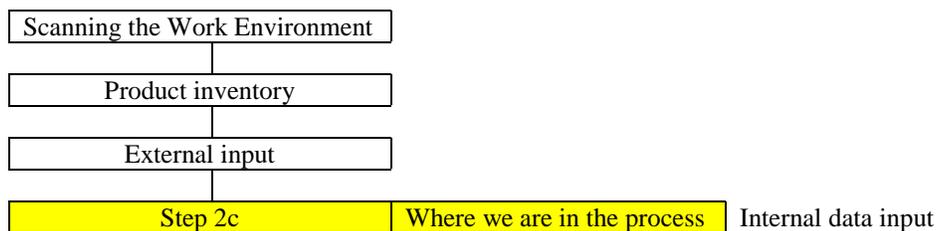
**Compiling survey results**

Compiling is the consolidation of results from all completed interview questionnaires onto a form for analysis. This is done by entering survey information about each product on a form called the external product improvement record. (A sample external product improvement record suitable for reproduction is shown in Section V of this manual as Resource No. 6.)

Interviewers meet with the adviser either later in the day of the interviews or early the next day to compile their results. The compiling task can be accomplished quickly and efficiently as follows:

- (a) A list of the products currently being used by customers in the organization's service area is prepared on a large sheet of paper.
- (b) Starting with the first product on the list, answers to closed-ended questions relative to that product are tabulated, preferably on a flip chart or large sheets of paper. The results with percentages are entered on the external product improvement record for that product.
- (c) Answers given by each respondent to each open-ended question relative to the product are read and discussed. A summary of these responses is prepared on large sheets by the team. When team members are satisfied with the wording, the statement is transferred to the record sheet for that product.
- (d) When a record sheet for the product is completed, team members begin work on the next product, and so forth, until the external product improvement record has been completed for every product mentioned by a respondent to the survey.

When all data from survey questionnaires have been compiled and external product improvement records are completed, the assessment team is ready to begin the process of gathering data from work-units that are customers inside the organization. This final phase of scanning is described in Step 2c.



**Introduction**

Data on the efficiency with which organizational units deliver products to other work-units are gathered by surveying employees of these units who have experience with the products. Employees to be surveyed are selected by their work-unit managers and asked to attend meetings to complete survey questionnaires. The intent of the survey is to learn how satisfied customer work-units are with the products they receive and what changes they would like to see made.

The step in scanning can be completed in two working days assuming that advanced arrangements are made with work-unit managers to release their employees to attend survey meetings.

**Overview of internal customer surveying**

An equally important source of information about the efficiency with which participating work-units manage their products is to look for evidence of satisfaction in other work units that are customers for these products. From the product inventory described in Step 2a, the assessment team identifies each of the products, the work-units that furnish them, and the work-units that are customers for them. Arrangements are then made to survey employees from the customer work-units who have experience with one or more of the products.

The method selected for obtaining information from customer units on their satisfaction with the products of participating work-units is the survey questionnaire. The survey method is quick and inexpensive. Many employees can register opinions

anonymously about many products for a relatively small expenditure of work time. Based on a memorandum from the chief executive, employees from customer work-units are assigned by their unit managers to attend a meeting at which the survey will be administered. Employees who participate will be away from their duties about 30 minutes. Several meetings will be scheduled as needed to accommodate the necessary number of survey respondents. Meetings should be scheduled at locations that are most convenient for the largest number of persons requested to attend.

### ***Selecting survey respondents***

From the product inventory described in Step 2a, the assessment team compiles a list of work-units that have been identified as customers for each of the products described. Each team member is assigned survey responsibility for one or more work-units and for the products used by these units.

As soon as possible after the product inventory is displayed (Step 2a), a memorandum is sent by the chief executive to managers of the various customer work-units concerned. The memorandum is to provide information about the process and encourage participation. The memorandum describes the process, emphasizes the importance of participation by employees of customer units, and furnishes a schedule (day, time and location) for survey administration. In the memorandum, each unit manager is asked by the chief executive to designate three to five responsible employees who have experience with one or more of the products to report to one of the scheduled meetings to complete a survey questionnaire.

A memorandum prepared by the assessment team for the chief executive's signature might be worded as shown in figure 13.

### ***Figure 13 - Memorandum on surveying customer unit employees***

To: Work-Unit Manager  
From: Chief Executive  
Subject: Completion of survey questionnaires

As you know, our organization is participating in an organizational assessment project called COA. We have high expectations for the assessment and hope you feel the same.

Your work-unit has been identified as a customer for a product from one of the work-units that is participating in this assessment. A list of products for which you are shown as a customer can be found on the attached sheet.

The assessment team is conducting a survey of employees in customer work-units to find out their level of satisfaction with each of the products they are using. Survey questionnaires are being administered at several times and locations on (date) as shown on the attached sheet. The time your employees will be away from their duties will be approximately 30 minutes.

Kindly identify three to five of your most responsible employees who have experience with each of the specified products used by your work unit. Designate these employees to attend one of the scheduled meetings and to complete a survey questionnaire.

Should you have questions about this procedure, you may direct them to a member of the assessment team.

### ***The survey questionnaire***

A survey is a quick and anonymous way of gathering a lot of data from many employees about a number of products which are the subject of an organizational assessment. A special survey questionnaire called the internal product survey has been developed for use by the assessment team.

The questionnaire begins by explaining what the survey is for and how it is to be completed. Respondents are told not to sign the questionnaire in order to preserve their anonymity and that it takes about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Directions are provided on what to do after completing the questionnaire.