The Institutional **Bottleneck**
and How to Avoid it

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Outline

How to avoid the institutional bottleneck

1. Preparatory Phase
2. Diagnosis Tests and Questions
3. Data Sources
4. Inconclusive diagnostic results
Preperatory Phase

• The design stage of the intervention programme [ex-ante evaluation]
• View the institution in the wider context of the programme
• Look at the intervention logic of the programme
• Check the complexity of the tasks
• Look at the implementation arrangements
Diagnosis Method

Institutional Assessment

based on International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Universalia, both from Canada

adapted and expanded
Three Principal Tests

• Performance Test (Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Sustainability) ("objective" results)
• Capacity and Motivation Tests (factors internal to the institution)
• External Environment Test (factors external to the institution)
• Develop and design questions to each test
Performance: Effectiveness

The degree by which the institution is achieving its objectives, vision and mission

• Does the institution reach its objectives
• What are the criteria for performance
• Are standards available for performance
Performance: Efficiency

The way in which an institution deploys its resources economically

- Cost structure
- Cost per programme
- **Hidden cost**
- Overhead to programme cost
- **Programme completion rates**
- **Timeliness of service delivery**
Performance: Relevance

Value and usefulness attached to an institution by its stakeholders

• Are stakeholders supportive of the institution
• Recent changes in funders
• Changes in services and programmes
• Is the mission undergoing review

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Performance: Sustainability

Sufficient and stable financial resources to fulfil the mandate of the institution

• Multiple sources of funding
• Funding assured for the next few years
• Financial reserves
• Regular monitoring of finances
• Signs of corruption
Capacity Test

Capacity refers mainly to

• Leadership
• Organisational structure
• Human resources
• Process management
• Physical infrastructure (offices, IT)
Capacity Questions

• Management capacity
• Administrative capacity
• Competence of leadership
• Reporting, monitoring, payment systems
• Organisational structure clear and logical
• Recent changes in the organisational structure
• Transparency of processes
• Number of staff available for the programme and their qualifications

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Motivation Test

• Motivation is related to an institution’s culture and incentive structure

• Motivated staff
  - will have higher productivity
  - make fewer mistakes
  - put effort into problem solving
Motivation Questions

• Does staff identify with the institution, its vision and mission
• Does staff like to work for the institution
• Tensions among staff or between staff and management

• Negative Indicators: - Employee absenteeism
  - Staff turnover rate
External Environment Test

External environment captures the economic, political, administrative, technical and legal framework in which an institution operates.
External Environment Questions

• Is the environment a **supportive** or a limiting factor
• Does the institution *depend administratively* or otherwise on another organisation which could interfere
• Legal or administrative restraints
• Does the institution monitor its environment
• Does the institution **cooperate well** with other institutions
Data sources

Documents (Desk Study)

Interviews and Focus Groups

Surveys
Resource constraints

Concentrate on the 4 Performance tests

Plus some aspects of the capacity test
  Leadership
  HR
  Reporting system

External Environment test
  Contact stakeholders and clients
Unclear diagnostic results

• Institution shows both weaknesses and strengths
• Are the weaknesses in areas critical for programme implementation
• Possibilities of upgrading the institution
• Analyse the risks involved
Contingency plan

Elements may have been overlooked

Unforeseen events

Develop a contingency plan:
  What to do if something goes wrong
Summing up: Preparatory

Clarify the tasks the institution will have to perform

Check the implementation arrangements
Summing up: Tests

• Design the diagnosis questions

• Conduct the
  - Performance Test
  - Capacity and Motivation Tests
  - External Environment Test
Summing up: Data

Obtain data from documents, interviews and Focus Groups, surveys

Be selective in your data mining
Summing up: Inconclusive Results

Strike a balance if the institution has both strengths and weaknesses

Assess the risks related to the weaknesses

Prepare a contingency plan

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Thank you
for your kind attention