

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

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

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

Thank you
for your kind attention