Self-assessment and continuous improvement model (Madac)

Adapted from the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model

Implementing a Madac-based quality approach in a French international solidarity NGO

Methodology guide

Coordination SUD
Solidarité Urgence Développement

F3E
Evaluer • Echanger • Eclairer

Founded in 1994, **Coordination SUD** now brings together 153 NGOs (June 2015), 109 of which are organised into six groups (Clong-Volontariat, Cnajep, CHD, Crid, Forim, Groupe Initiatives), which carry out emergency humanitarian aid, development assistance, environmental protection schemes, work to defend the human rights of disadvantaged persons, and education initiatives aimed at international solidarity and advocacy. Coordination SUD's dual mission is to support the professionalisation of French NGOs and to represent their positions to public and private institutions in France, Europe and the rest of the world.

Created in 1994, the **F3E** is a network of associations dedicated to the quality of international solidarity and decentralised cooperation initiatives. Composed of around 90 French NGOs and local authorities (June 2015), it brings together stakeholders that analyse and share their practices to strengthen their capacities and improve the impact of their actions. F3E supports its members by carrying out studies and evaluations. It offers training. The dynamics of peer exchanges that it facilitates promote collective learning and the production of knowledge. Its involvement in national and international forums facilitates the enhancement and enrichment of its work.

Coordination SUD and F3E would like to thank the following organisations for their contributions to the process of drawing up this guide:

- **NGOs that participated in analysis workshops** using the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model:
  - *Pilot group:* Aide et Action, Afdi, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, CFSI, Eau Vive, Fert, Fidesco, France Volontaires, Inter Aide, La Chaîne de l 'Espoir, Partage, Planet Finance, Secours Catholique.
  - *Resonance group:* Acting for Life, Asmae, CEFODE, CIDR, Essonne-Sahel, Gref, IRAM, L'Appel, Samu Social International, Santé Sud, Secours Islamique, Solidarité Laïque.

- NGOs **that have piloted Madac**: CIDR, France Volontaires, La Chaîne de l'Espoir, Santé Sud, Solidarité Laïque.

- **ACODEV**, for exchanges around the quality approaches initiated by NGOs in Belgium.

- The **EFQM Foundation**, for the possible adaptation of the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model.

- Chaired by Pierre-Jean Roca (CNRS and Sciences Po Bordeaux), the **Pilot Committee** brings together the Presidents of Coordination SUD and F3E, representatives of the Boards of Directors, and the Directors and Project Officers of each collective, so that the entire process can be monitored.

Summary

Preamble

Quality issues for French international solidarity NGOs encompass both technical and political considerations. The quality of an organisation and its actions relates not only to its values and strategies, but also to its approaches to learning, innovation and continuous improvement. If we are to make the most of the diversity in our sector, it is important that we tackle these issues collectively and proactively.

This is why Coordination SUD and F3E have decided to join forces to facilitate discussions and involve their members in the implementation of quality initiatives. The aim is to ensure that the whole sector benefits from this, and to build **operational, tailored responses** that enable everyone to make progress.

For several years now, French international solidarity NGOs have been undertaking individual or collective initiatives to **improve the quality of their actions and organisations**. These initiatives not only respond to concerns about ethics, efficiency and preserving their collective image, but also take into account the expectations of their main stakeholders.

Furthermore, international debates on **development effectiveness** currently address these issues, notably through the Istanbul Principles (2010) and the Civil Society Organisations Partnership for Development Effectiveness (2012).

Through a participatory process that began in 2011, Coordination SUD and F3E have initiated the development of a global quality analysis framework for French international solidarity NGOs, based on an adaptation of the 2010 EFQM Excellence model.

The **Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement Model** (Madac) is the result of this work, which involved 25 member NGOs from Coordination SUD and F3E at different stages. This aid, which is intended as a tool for reflection and action, is designed to support French international solidarity NGOs in their efforts to carry out self-assessment and continuous improvement, based on an analysis of their practices and results. This approach takes their institutional, organisational and operational dimensions into account, as well as the balance between the expectations of their main stakeholder categories.

With the challenges facing our sector, it is in the interests of French international solidarity NGOs to take Madac on board and bring it to life. Our two collectives will support them in its use and in the sharing of the experiences that result from it, so that we can move forward together in the continuous improvement of our organisations and actions.

Philippe Jahshan, President of Coordination SUD
Fabienne Bathily, President of F3E

CONTEXT AND ORIGINS OF THE APPROACH

Context

International solidarity NGOs are making major efforts to **improve both their intervention practices and their operations**, with a view to enhancing the impact of their actions.

In France, the F3E, Coordination SUD collectives and their respective members are engaged in a collective reflection on the approaches and tools that can be used to amplify these quality initiatives, in order to increase both their visibility and their impact.

The context is also marked by the existence of quality considerations and initiatives in other sectors of activity, in particular associations and in the sphere of public action.

Following the 2010 study, **Quality Approaches and International Solidarity NGOs**[1] (Démarches qualité et ONG de solidarité internationale), jointly led by the two collectives, the development of a global analysis model that integrates the institutional, organisational and operational aspects of quality for French international solidarity NGOs emerged as a means of promoting this continuous improvement approach.

The Coordination SUD-F3E Pilot Committee examined a number of existing quality issues in greater detail and exchanged views with ACODEV[2] on its experience of using the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model with NGOs in Belgium. This analysis and these discussions led the two organisations to use this model as a basis for developing a **self-assessment and continuous improvement tool that** could be tailored to the French international solidarity NGO sector.

What is the EFQM model and why should we be inspired by it?

The **EFQM Foundation** (European Foundation for Quality Management[3]) is a non-profit organisation that was founded in the late 1980's. Its mission is to inspire organisations to achieve sustainable excellence, by encouraging them to learn, share and innovate using the EFQM Excellence Model.

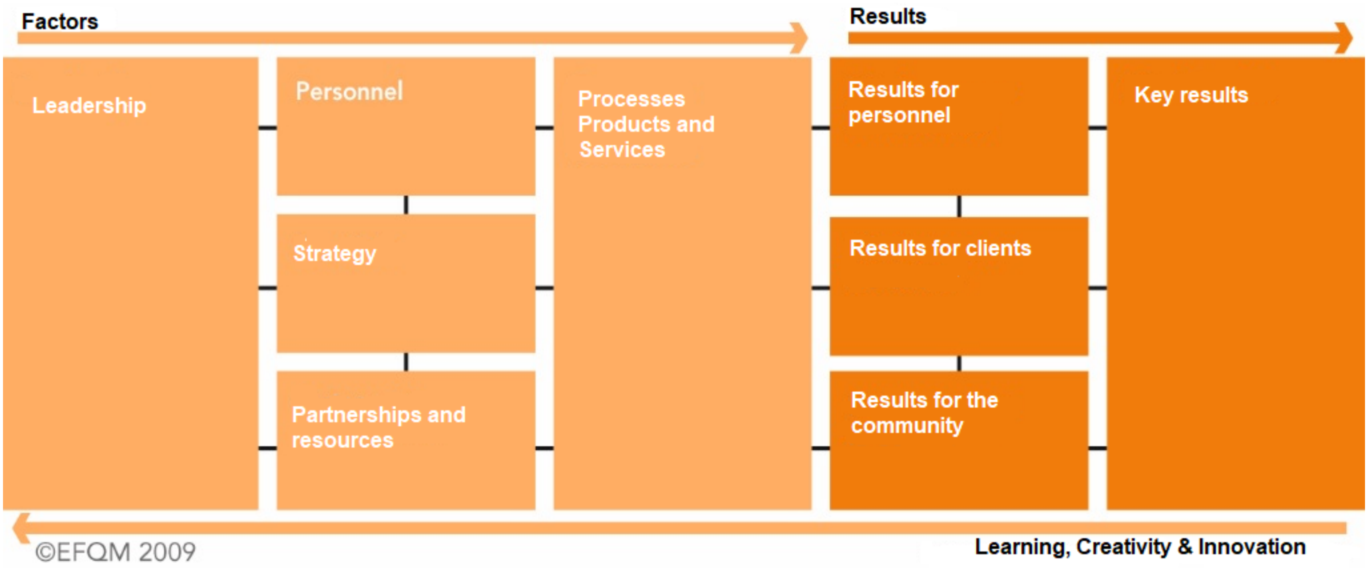
Introduced in 1991 and updated several times since then, its aim is to provide a framework and support for global performance improvement initiatives in all types of organisations. Based on nine criteria, the EFQM Excellence Model enables an organisation's practices (factors) and results to be analysed, and a link to be made between the two dimensions with a view to continuous improvement.

The schematic representation of the **2010 EFQM Excellence Model** is as follows:

[1] The reports from this study carried out by Inter-Mondes are available at www.coordinationsud.org and www.f3e.asso.fr

[2] Belgian Federation of French- and German-speaking NGOs (www.acodev.be), in conjunction with NGO-Federatie on quality approaches (Belgian Federation of Dutch-speaking NGOs, www.ngo-federatie.be).

[3] www.efqm.org.



Several factors led Coordination SUD and F3E to choose this model as a **basis for their work**:

- Suitability of the model in relation to the specific challenges faced by NGOs: possibility to analyse different types of action and issues, taking multiple stakeholders into account
- Relevance to the type of approach required:
  - Non-normative approach, no specifications or standards but a tool that allows for a structured examination of the organisation
  - Global approach to quality at organisational and operational levels
  - Continuous improvement logic
  - An integrator tool that allows approaches and tools that are already implemented in an organisation to be taken into account
- The model's adaptability and recognition capacities, and its ability to facilitate exchanges between organisations on the basis of a common approach
- Positive feedback from Belgian NGOs that have been using this model since 2011

However, both collectives felt it was essential to **adapt this initial model** so that it would better reflect the reality of the French international solidarity NGO sector.

Genesis of Madac and its added value

How was it developed?

In late 2012 and early 2013, 25 NGO members of Coordination SUD and F3E[4] took part in **a process of in-depth analysis** of the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model, the adaptation of which constitutes the Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement Model (Madac) for French international solidarity NGOs. While retaining the logic of the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model, some of the original criteria and sub-criteria have been modified, and examples of practices and outcome measurement themes specific to NGOs were identified.

Madac was **piloted** in 2014 by five volunteer NGOs. This trial confirmed the value of the Madac approach and model, and led to adjustments that are incorporated in this guide. In the long term, it will need to evolve in line with how it is used by NGOs and the feedback it receives.

Ismaïla Diagne – France Volunteers (Secretary General)
"The collective *dimension led by Coordination SUD and the F3E is an integral part of the Madac approach. Pilot and resonance groups, which are representative of the sector, were able to question*

[4] The names of the NGOs involved in the process at various levels are listed in the acknowledgements.

the relevance of the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model, which helped to adapt it to the realities of NGOs. The testing of the model by five NGOs has also given rise to meetings between them so that they can discuss how they use the model, what their practices are and which tools they have implemented."

What is it?

- A generic, **user-friendly tool** designed for all kinds of French NGOs.
- A **participatory** self-assessment process, leading to a reflective approach backed up by "guidelines" that reflect the way we think about the effectiveness of NGOs in the service of emergencies and development.
- A structured and systematic framework through which to **examine** the different facets of an NGO (360° approach), in relation to its strategy and stakeholders.
- A continuous improvement **management** tool that enables an NGO to identify which of its strengths need to be consolidated and which areas of improvement are to be prioritised, all of which needs to be devised as actions and monitored as projects.

Laurent Delcayrou – CIDR (Director of Operations)
"*Madac is a practical and easy-to-use tool that allows NGOs to examine their organisation, practices and actions, and to enter into a process of continuous improvement, taking all their stakeholders into account. It is based on an open and contextualised analysis of NGOs, making it relevant.*".

What it is not!

- A **turnkey** management tool that says what to do or gives typical solutions.
- A **normative** or prescriptive system that shapes all organisations according to a single model.
- A **competitor** to other quality approaches (ISO, charters, governance codes, technical standards, et cetera).
- An additional layer **of administration**.

Anouchka Finker – Chaîne de l'Espoir (Administrative and Financial Director)
"Because of its significant growth, the Chaîne de l'Espoir has become aware of the need to professionalise and structure itself while preserving its associative spirit and creativity. The Madac model is well suited to our needs because it does not involve conforming to pre-established criteria, but places the emphasis on a work ethic of collaboration and exchange. Above all, it is a framework that allows the NGO to think openly about its own structure, while remaining free to prioritise the projects that it feels are most relevant."

What could it be used for?

- To **structure** an NGO's continuous improvement approach in a dynamic, progressive and comprehensive way, by helping it to build an explicit and shared strategy in this area.
- To ensure that an NGO's **continuous improvement** approach is based on clear objectives, through precise, controllable and monitored improvement actions.
- To facilitate exchanges **within an NGO** in order to strengthen collective motivation, team dynamics and cross-functionality (common analytical framework and vocabulary).
- To demonstrate an NGO's **interest** in continuous improvement.
- To encourage communication **between NGOs** about the Madac approach itself or common improvement themes arising from it.

Laurent Delcayrou – CIDR (Director of Operations)
"*The objective for the CIDR was to obtain an operational deliverable at the end of the self-assessment and prioritisation workshops. From the outset, the decision was taken to focus on very practical aspects that were feasible and easy to implement. This immediate result (Quality Action Plan) is now used by the regional office to steer actions and management*."

Nicole Hanssen – Santé Sud (Executive Director)
"Santé SUD has undertaken to update its associative project, in order to better structure its activities for the next five years. As part of this process, we felt it was appropriate to trial Madac, in

order to consolidate our initial findings and courses of action with the results obtained through this approach."

THE OVERALL RATIONALE BEHIND MADAC

A model that supports self-assessment and continuous improvement.

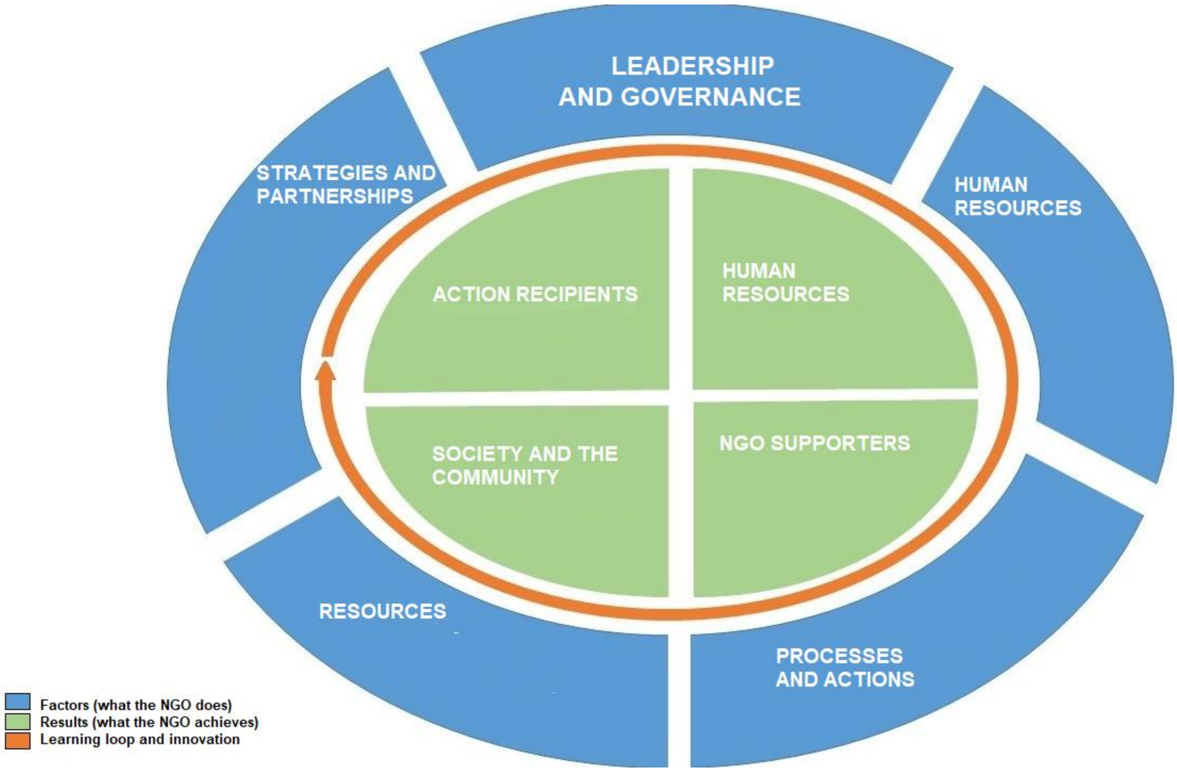
The concept of a **model** relates to the schematic representation of an NGO, as seen through the structuring of a set of criteria, sub-criteria and examples of practices or outcome measurement themes. The model is not the reality of an NGO, but rather a tool with which to analyse its complexity from a systemic perspective.

The Madac approach involves comparing an NGO with the model, so that the NGO can draw lessons from it. With this in mind, the self-assessment helps to highlight which of the NGO's strengths need to be maintained and developed, and identify any areas where there is room for improvement. Based on the **self-assessment** carried out using the model, NGOs needs to define what **improvement actions** look like for them, and these are to be prioritised in relation to their strategy, their main challenges, how much room for manoeuvre they have and how they line up with their main stakeholders' expectations.

This analysis is to be carried out **periodically**, to initiate or fuel a continuous improvement dynamic. So we're in the business of taking stock and making projections: how far have we got? Where do we want to go?

...allowing NGOs to be analysed holistically...

The schematic representation of the Madac model is as follows:



Adapted from the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model

The model is made up of **nine criteria or areas** to be covered by the self-assessment:

Five **practice criteria** (factors, what the NGO does and how it does it):	Four **outcome criteria** (what the NGO achieves):
1. Leadership and governance 2. Strategy and partnerships 3. Human resources 4. Resources 5. Processes and actions	6. Outcomes for action recipients 7. Outcomes for human resources 8. Outcomes for society and the community 9. Outcomes for NGO supporters
Each practice criterion is broken down into four or five **sub-criteria** that correspond to "benchmarks" that NGOs can compare themselves against in order to monitor their own practices.	Each outcome criterion takes **two factors** into account, with respect to each stakeholder under consideration: i) their perceptions of the NGO's outcome, and ii) the outcome measures that the NGO carries out internally[5]. It's a question of asking what an NGO's outcomes are, in relation to its practices.
For each sub-criterion, some **examples of practices** are suggested, to illustrate what the implementation of the sub-criterion might actually look like for an NGO.	For each outcome criterion, and with a focus on these two factors, **examples of measurement themes** for each stakeholder category are proposed as possible areas for analysis with regards to the outcomes of an NGO.

Examples of possible practices and areas where NGO outcomes can be measured are given for **guidance** in the model below. They are not intended to be prescriptive, exhaustive or restrictive.

The **Learning and Innovation** loop shown in the diagram above illustrates one aspect of the systemic nature of the model, through the feedback sought between the analysis of results and the improvement of an NGO's practices.

In this systemic analysis, parameters outside the NGO, which may have an impact on its outcomes beyond its practices, must be taken into account (intervention contexts, other stakeholders and their strategies, et cetera).

...while taking their stakeholders into account.

"*A stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has a direct or indirect interest in the organisation or has an interest in it to the extent that they can either have an impact on it, or be influenced by it.*[6]"

Stakeholders play a central role in the Madac model, insofar as they determine how an NGO's outcomes are examined, and the fact that the NGO must take their expectations into account in a **balanced** way.

For NGOs, there are **four main categories of stakeholders**, all of whom can be identified in a generic way: those for whom the actions are intended (action recipients), human resources, society and the community, and the NGO's supporters. The characterisation of each of these stakeholder categories is presented in the model below, together with the model's outcome criteria (criteria 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Nicole Hanssen – Santé Sud (Executive Director)
"The overall approach inherent in the model makes it possible to identify and position all stakeholders in relation to each other and in relation to the NGO. Formalising this global vision through simple tools has been very useful for our organisation in terms of understanding and valuing the work carried out by Santé Sud".

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[5] Includes data from studies commissioned by the NGO on behalf of external service providers.
[6] Definition taken from the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model.

THE MADAC MODEL

1. Leadership and governance

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

Leadership refers to the way in which an NGO is directed and managed. **Governance** is concerned with the ways in which the different levels of decision-making and responsibility in an NGO are exercised and articulated, along with the conditions under which they are exercised, all while taking participation issues and practices into account.

In an NGO, the term "**governing bodies**" refers to the various bodies, functions and individuals who play a role in running the organisation. Depending on the case, these may be governance bodies (Board of Directors, Executive Committee, General Assembly...), management bodies (Management, Extended Management, Executive Board...), or committees (functional, thematic, geographical...) et cetera. Resource persons from outside the NGO can be associated with these different forums in order to contribute to their work.

This criterion is closely linked to the **Strategy and Partnerships** criterion: leadership generates an NGO's strategy, which in turn determines the other criteria. These criteria relate to direction, in both senses of the word: how directors of an NGO manage the governing bodies and the direction in which they take the organisation.

1A – Structure, mission, vision, values, ethics

Governing bodies are clearly structured; they define and epitomise the NGO's mission, vision, values and ethics.

- Participatory definition and updating of the NGO's vision and mission as part of its strategic plans (associative project)
- Participatory charters that define the NGO's values and ethics
- Statutes, internal rules that define the function, roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies
- Governing bodies that operate and make decisions in line with the values and ethics of the NGO
- Mechanisms for delegation and reporting between bodies
- …

1B – Steering an NGO

Governing bodies that guide, evaluate and steer the NGO's effectiveness and continuous improvement.

- Building, using and reviewing financial and operational dashboards for the NGO's activities as a whole
- Use of indicators on key NGO outcomes to inform strategic decision-making
- Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the NGO's strategy by its governing bodies
- Functional interactions between management bodies, the social base and human resources as part of the NGO's strategic management
- Mechanisms to ensure that the governing bodies are accountable to the NGO's key stakeholders with regard to its main outcomes
- …

1C – Involvement of external stakeholders

Governing bodies engage effectively with external stakeholders.

- Involvement of governing bodies in the NGO's social missions in the field
- NGOs are to be represented by their governing bodies at external events and in collective NGO forums
- Regular meetings between the governing bodies and the NGO's main donors and financial backers
- Involvement of the governing bodies in relations with the NGO's strategic partners
- Validation of the NGO's external representation by the governing bodies and delegation mechanisms
- …

1D – Managing change and making adjustments

Governing bodies ensure that the NGO manages and adapts to change effectively within the framework of its mission, vision and values.

- Identify any issues, or internal and external determinants, that could influence any avenues for change within the NGO
- Involve the social base and human resources in major changes made within the NGO
- Conduct studies before making major changes within the NGO
- Communicate information on major changes within the NGO to key stakeholders
- Involve governing bodies in the implementation of any changes at the NGO
- Match resources to objectives for change
- …

2. Strategy and partnerships

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

Strategy refers to the way in which an NGO combines actions and organises itself to implement its mission, in conjunction with its key internal and external stakeholders, and in line with its vision and values.

This concerns strategies within an NGO as a whole (**institutional strategies**), and not just with regard to its actions (intervention strategies). Strategy at this level involves the NGO's governing bodies to a great extent, in their interaction with the organisation's social base and human resources, hence the close link between this criterion and the Leadership and Governance criterion.

For an NGO, strengthened partnerships with organisations that share the same objectives (in countries referred to as developed or developing, through fieldwork, advocacy or networking, et cetera) can play an important role in its institutional strategy. These can therefore be described as **strategic partnerships**, key partnerships or even alliances. This is why the link between an NGO's overall strategy and its partnership strategy is addressed in this criterion. The Processes and Actions criterion looks at the operational aspects of partnership in relation to actions.

2A – Analysis of needs and the external environment

The strategy is based on the evolution and analysis of the needs and expectations of stakeholders and the external environment.

- Participatory analysis of the environment associated with the NGO's sectors of activity (issues, players, practices, needs, et cetera) and how it is changing.
- Identification and consultation of the NGO's key external stakeholders in strategic thinking
- Identification and analysis of external opportunities and threats
- Mapping, analysis and risk management (external)
- Monitoring mechanisms designed to study and monitor changes in the NGO's external environment in relation to its mission
- Involvement in networks in order to capture information related to the evolution of the NGO's external environment in relation to its mission
- …

2B – Analysis of efficiency and internal capacities

The strategy is based on the analysis and evolution of efficiency and internal capacities.

- Evaluating the implementation of strategic plans
- Identification and analysis of the NGO's strengths and weaknesses
- Mapping, analysis and (internal) risk management
- Taking stock of the NGO's capacities, skills and resources
- Participation of the NGO's social base and human resources in strategic thinking
- …

2C – Operational implementation of the strategy

Definition and regular updating of the strategy and its operational implementation.

- Taking account of external and internal consultations and analyses when defining strategy
- Strategic planning taking into account the NGO's vision and values
- Strengthening the way in which the NGO's strategic projects are managed (involvement of governing bodies, et cetera)
- Translating the NGO's strategy into operational strategies (financial, human resources, intervention, et cetera) and organisational structures
- Development of multi-year action and funding plans for the implementation of the strategy

- Programming and regular review of activities, outcomes and budgets (design, monitoring and reporting tools) in line with action plans, enabling adjustments to be made
- …

Partnership strategy

Key partnerships are developed in line with the NGO's mission, vision, values and overall strategy.

- Identification and analysis of key NGO partnerships as part of the strategic planning process
- Matching the NGO's partnership strategy with its overall strategy
- Entering into agreements, fostering loyalty and steering the NGO's key partnerships
- Identifying key partners' areas of expertise in order to complement those of the NGO in the implementation of its strategy
- Creation of alliances with new key players, with a view to mutually shared interests
- …

2E – External communications in relation to the strategy

External communications are developed in line with the NGO's mission, vision, values and overall strategy.

- Alignment of the NGO's external communications with its mission, vision, values and strategy (audiences, media, messages, et cetera)
- Transparency practices across the NGO (publication of key documents, statutes, internal rules, activity reports, organisation and composition of governance, et cetera)
- Internal and external availability and accessibility of information relating to the NGO's mission, vision, values, global strategy and the resulting action plans
- Verifying that the NGO's strategy is understood and adhered to by its social base, human resources and key external stakeholders
- NGO activity reports that illustrate the main outcomes of the implementation of its mission and strategy
- …

3. Human resources

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

This criterion relates to an NGO's **human resources policy** and its overall strategy, with a view to ensuring the mutual interests of the organisation and its employees.

Here, **human resources** refers to all the people who are employees of an NGO and who contribute directly to the fulfilment of its mission, strategy and actions. Human resources can include anyone involved in an NGO (employees at headquarters, expatriates or locals, unpaid interns or volunteers, et cetera), whatever their status or type of employment contract (permanent, fixed-term, internship, volunteer, et cetera).

3A – Human resource planning

Human resources management effectively implements the NGO's strategy.

- Governing bodies take human resources into account when developing the NGO's strategy and organisational project.
- Human resource planning based on the NGO's strategy, in line with its vision and values, and taking its funding constraints into account
- Adapting the way human resources are organised to meet the needs of the initiatives (in the field, head office, employees, volunteers, et cetera)
- Structured human resource recruitment mechanisms
- Identification of external benchmarks to help improve the NGO's human resources management practices
- …

3B – Skills management

Skills are identified and developed.

- Job descriptions that take into account the know-how and interpersonal skills associated with the role (technical and interpersonal skills)
- Individual appraisal mechanisms, coupled with training plans to enhance human resources competencies
- Peer support and coaching practices
- Mechanisms for sharing and capitalising on experience to enhance human resources competencies
- Identifying the skills and availability of volunteers
- Human resources management that recognises and develops skills
- …

3C – Involvement and taking responsibility

The NGO creates the conditions for human resources to get involved and assume responsibility.

- Setting and apportioning goals for the team and individuals
- Formalised delegation mechanisms linked to initiative-taking and human resources autonomy in the management of actions
- Participation of human resources in meetings between governing bodies (Boards of Directors, General Meetings, et cetera) according to the topics being discussed
- Decisions made by governing bodies to be communicated to human resources
- Mechanisms to ensure that human resources' strategic or operational proposals are listened to and taken into account by governing bodies
- …

3D – Internal communications

The NGO creates the conditions for human resources to communicate effectively internally.

- Internal communication mechanisms via newsletters, intranet, et cetera
- Regular team meetings and circulation of minutes throughout the NGO
- Regular meeting points for and between the different types of human resources within the NGO (employees and volunteers in particular)
- Highlights of NGO gatherings
- Internal distribution of external event summaries
- …

3E – Listening, encouraging and valuing

Human resources are listened to and valued.

- Staff representation mechanisms and social dialogue practices within the NGO
- Fairness in the treatment of human resources and wage policies
- Existence and internal communication of a negotiated agreement on human resources policy
- Ensuring the health and safety of human resources and their well-being at work (including on field missions)
- Internal mobility policy that recognises the skills and motivations of human resources
- Staff assessment including recognition and feedback on completed assignments
- Participation of human resources in external events related to their skills and functions
- ...

4. Resources

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

This criterion concerns all the **resources** of an NGO that support the achievement of its mission, strategy, processes and actions outside of human resources. This may include financial resources, contractors, construction, equipment and technology, and information and knowledge.

This criterion also covers the extent to which an NGO takes into account the preservation of natural resources and the environment (in its operations and beyond its direct actions in this area, where these exist).

In order to consider how NGOs deal with the important issue of **financial resources**, a distinction is made in this criterion between the mobilisation of financial resources (in line with an NGO's strategy and needs) and their management.

4A – Mobilising financial resources

Financial resources are sought in a structured manner in line with the NGO's strategy and needs.

- Analysis of the NGO's business model and definition of a financial strategy
- Funding plans for the implementation of the NGO's strategy and actions
- Strategies for building donor and funder loyalty (relationship monitoring, accountability mechanisms, visits to initiatives, et cetera)
- Strategies for fundraising and the diversification of financial resources (identification and monitoring of existing sources of funding, innovative financing, et cetera)
- Communication strategies and materials on the NGO's activities tailored to the expectations of existing and potential donors and sponsors
- Responding to calls for tender that are in line with the NGO's action strategies
- …

4B – Management of financial resources

Financial resources are managed in a controlled manner.

- Planning and budget monitoring processes and tools (organisation and actions)
- Financial control and audit systems (internal, external...)
- Involvement of governing bodies in the NGO's financial management
- Reporting and financial transparency vis-à-vis the NGO's key stakeholders
- Secure management of funds: financial flows, projected cash flow, transfers, investments...
- …

4C – Management of service providers

Service providers are identified and managed according to the NGO'S requirements.

- Calling on specialist service providers according to their added value in terms of the NGO's strategy and actions, or for aspects not covered by the skills available within the NGO.
- Mission statement drawn up for NGO service providers
- Contractual arrangements with service providers that comply with the NGO's values and ethics and take the interests of each party into account
- Procedures for selecting the NGO's service providers and monitoring the quality of their work (managing relations with service providers)
- …

4D – Social and environmental responsibility

Managing the NGO and its activities involves social and environmental responsibility.

- The NGO commits to responsible and ethical procurement
- Consideration of sustainability in the management of the NGO's buildings and equipment (buildings, vehicles, materials, et cetera)
- Consideration of the environment in the NGO's operations (travel management, supplies, et cetera)
- Consideration of the social dimension in human resource management when selecting and monitoring service providers and suppliers
- …

4E – Managing information and knowledge

Information and knowledge are managed in a structured way to facilitate organisational learning and decision-making.

- Mechanisms for capitalising on and sharing key knowledge within the NGO, both horizontally (between human resources, teams, et cetera) and vertically (with governing bodies)
- Taking part in networks to share ideas and feedback on its themes and working methods
- Research and development activities, academic partnerships in relation to the NGO's themes, working methods and outcomes
- Consideration of evaluations and lessons learned as part of the NGO's strategic thinking process, and to help guide its actions
- Document management systems and tools (database, et cetera)
- Monitoring and development of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in connection with the NGO'S strategy and actions
- …

5. Processes and actions

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

This criterion addresses the practices that constitute the **core business** of an NGO. This concerns the way in which an NGO carries out its mission in practice, addressing the processes of designing, validating, implementing, steering, evaluating and capitalising on its actions (programmes or projects for development in the field, humanitarian aid, capacity building, education about development, advocacy, networking, et cetera).

This criterion draws a link between an NGO's practical areas and the results that are brought about. This refers to the **processes** by which **actions** are carried out, in relation to the core missions of an NGO. The aim is to identify and manage its main operational processes as a means of achieving results for the recipients of its actions.

The NGO practices covered by this criterion reflect the search **for innovation** (thematic, geographical, institutional, technical, et cetera) and **added value for the recipients** of their actions, in conjunction with the other stakeholders concerned. The operational processes developed by NGOs are often part of a project cycle management approach, with a medium- to long-term vision of their aims in terms of the changes they are seeking, while recognising the complexity of development mechanisms (intervention contexts, stakeholders, et cetera). The added value created by NGOs is reflected in the changes that their actions help to bring about, particularly for the people for whom they are intended.

The life cycle of an NGO's actions may involve **operational partnerships** with organisations that are active in their field and/or area of intervention. This criterion therefore addresses the notion of partnerships at the level of the implementation of actions (while in the "Strategy and partnerships" criterion, these are addressed at the level of the overall strategy of the organisation).

5A – Processes for carrying out actions

The processes used to carry out actions related to the NGO's main missions are to be identified, implemented and improved in a structured way.

- Mapping of the NGO's main activities and associated operational processes
- Involvement of relevant internal and external stakeholders in the design of key business processes
- Identification of roles and responsibilities in the NGO for the implementation of its main operational processes
- Consideration of trials and feedback in the development of the NGO's main operational processes
- Guidelines for the NGO's main operational professions that are involved in the implementation of its actions
- …

5B – Action planning

Actions are defined and planned with the involvement of those for whom they are intended and by taking account of feedback.

- Action planning that is based on an analysis of the participants, contexts and proposed changes
- Participatory identification of needs in conjunction with recipients of the actions, taking account of existing players and institutions
- Consideration of previous actions on a theme /territory
- Taking feedback into account and capitalising on it when planning actions
- Pilot phases and in-depth reviews for certain innovative and/or emblematic initiatives
- …

5C – Implementation and management of actions

Actions are implemented and managed in line with the expectations of relevant stakeholders.

- Setting up suitable teams to carry out actions
- Monitoring of schedules, budgets, activities and action outcomes in order to produce reports that meet the expectations of the stakeholders concerned and are useful for managing actions.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the implementation and management of actions
- Mechanisms for piloting actions (participants, organisations, systems, tools, et cetera) to enable anticipation (proactivity) and adjustments (responsiveness to the reality on the ground) in their implementation.
- Strategies for the local sustainability of services put in place for action recipients
- …

5D – Evaluation of actions

Actions are evaluated with a view to learning and accountability in line with the expectations of the relevant stakeholders.

- Consideration of stakeholders' expectations in the evaluation of initiatives
- Involvement of relevant stakeholders in the various stages of action evaluation
- Mechanisms for designing, carrying out and using evaluation results to foster organisational learning and reflection on operational strategies
- Assessment reporting and feedback mechanisms adapted to the stakeholders concerned
- …

5E – Operational partnerships

Operational partnerships are structured on the basis of reciprocity and shared objectives.

- Listening to the various stakeholders involved in the action in a given territory and identifying operational partners
- Joint design of initiatives with operational partners around shared objectives
- Entering into agreements and monitoring commitments made by operational partners, to ensure mutual accountability
- Charters that provide a framework for the implementation of actions drawn up with operational partners
- Regular reviews of operational partnerships to ensure balance and reciprocity
- Consideration of reinforcing the capacities of operational partners with the aim of empowering them
- …

6. Outcomes for action recipients

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

Action recipients are the organisations, individuals and groups for whose benefit the actions are carried out by an NGO. Depending on their intervention strategies and action methods, the beneficiaries of an NGO's actions may be, for example:

- Its final beneficiaries (action target groups, users of services set up through actions, populations targeted by development education or advocacy actions, et cetera).
- Partner organisations in the countries where the project is being carried out, insofar as the actions have a capacity-building dimension (local or national NGOs, grassroots community organisations, local institutions, et cetera).
- Institutions, insofar as their actions are aimed at influencing public policy...

This criterion looks at the impact of an NGO's actions on those for whom they are intended, taking two dimensions into account:

- The recipients' **perception** of the actions.
- The NGO's internal **measurement** of this.

Examples of associated measurement themes

- Achievement of the objectives with regard to the action recipients
- Satisfaction of the action recipients' needs
- Recognition of the quality of the NGO's actions by their recipients
- Recipients' involvement in the design, implementation, evaluation and capitalisation of these actions
- Adherence of recipients to actions
- Appropriation of actions by their recipients
- Empowering action recipients and reinforcing their capacities
- Sustainability of the changes brought about for those affected by the actions
- …

7. Outcomes for human resources

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

Here, **human resources** refers to all the people who are employees of an NGO and who contribute directly to the fulfilment of its mission, strategy and actions. Human resources can include anyone involved in an NGO (employees at headquarters, expatriates or locals, unpaid interns or volunteers, et cetera), whatever their status or type of employment contract (permanent, fixed-term, internship, volunteer, et cetera).

This criterion focuses on NGO outcomes for its human resources, taking two factors into account:

- The **perception** that human resources have of it.
- The NGO's internal **measurement** of this.

Examples of associated measurement themes

- Adherence to NGO values
- Responsibility, motivation and autonomy
- Valuation, recognition and participation
- Mutual support and collaboration
- Fairness of human resources policy
- Attractiveness of the NGO
- Constancy and turnover in the NGO (wanted / endured)

- Training and career development
- Skills development
- Health and safety at work
- …

8. Outcomes for society and the community

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

Society and communities are external entities that are indirectly influenced by the actions of an NGO. By way of example, and depending on the nature of their actions, NGOs' societal and community stakeholders may include institutions (local, national, international), civil society, or opinion formers (media), et cetera.

Unlike other types of organisation, NGOs' missions and actions are **naturally focused** on society and the community. This is reflected in the outcomes sought by NGOs for those who benefit from their actions, or the main outcomes of particular interest to their supporters.

Unless they are already analysed in the Outcomes for Action Recipients or Outcomes for NGO Supporters criteria, this criterion is specifically concerned with an NGO's outcomes for society and communities beyond the scope of its actions, both in its home country and in the countries where it operates:

- In terms of image and reputation, for example, or social and environmental responsibility.
- Or when these outcomes go beyond the direct objectives of the actions (impacts, externalities or indirect effects of an NGO's actions)[7].

This criterion takes two factors into account:

- How the NGO's results are **perceived** by society and the community.
- The NGO's internal **measurement** of its outcomes for society and the community.

Examples of associated measurement themes

- The NGO's image and reputation
- The NGO's ecological footprint
- The impact of the NGO on political, social and economic environments beyond the direct objectives of its actions (influence on public policy or gender relations, et cetera)
- The NGO's contributions to collective spaces in the international solidarity sector (platforms, networks, et cetera)
- How actions are perceived to have an impact beyond their direct objectives
- The extent to which actions take contexts and stakeholders into account
- Replication of an action by other players
- …

[7]The NGO's *contribution* to changes in society and the community is very much in evidence here, insofar as these changes often exceed the capacity of an individual NGO to act on its own (due to the complexity of contexts and the multiplicity of parties involved).

9. Outcomes for NGO supporters

HOW NGOS APPROACH THIS CRITERION

NGO supporters are structures or individuals who support an NGO, either as an organisation or through their actions. By way of example, the supporters of an NGO can be:

- Its members (General Assembly, including members of the Board of Directors).
- Its private and public donors (individuals or institutional funders).
- Its partners, with whom it shares the same objectives and who have a place in its institutional strategy (strategic "alliances", through fieldwork, advocacy or networking et cetera).

This criterion analyses the main outcomes of an NGO that are of particular interest to its supporters. These results may be financial or non-financial and include (in terms of how they are perceived by supporters and/or measured internally by the NGO):

- The **strategic outcomes** that concern the NGO's overall performance in achieving its strategy and mission (which it usually includes in its activity report).
- Its **organisational performance** (internal effectiveness of the NGO's main processes).

Examples of associated measurement themes

- Achieving strategic objectives in line with the organisation's mission
- Main activity outcomes (number of actions, recipients, et cetera)
- Budget performance (adherence to budgets...)
- Good financial health (ratios)
- Ability to finance the organisation and its actions (loyalty and diversification of financial support / funding methods, et cetera)
- Members' loyalty and engagement
- Quality of strategic partnerships
- Supporters' recognition of the organisation
- …

HOW TO USE THE MODEL

General recommendations

Self-assessment: a global approach rather than a one-off tool

In the rest of this guide, we will refer to self-assessment as the process of taking a snapshot of an NGO (qualitative assessment of the progress made, identification of its strengths and areas for improvement), deciding on whether to implement the actions as a priority or over time. Basically, it is important to consider the self-assessment as a **global and continuous improvement** process, rather than as a simple snapshot from which only the observations are retained, without committing to a progress strategy in the medium and long term.

Implementation principles

Self-assessment with Madac can take many forms, depending on the degree to which you wish to participate in the exercise, or how in-depth an analysis you wish to carry out. There are nonetheless intangible principles for effective self-assessment.

Engagement at the highest level of the NGO

Self-assessment is, above all, a voluntary process. The decision to launch this diagnosis can therefore only be the result of a **deliberate choice by the NGO's governing bodies**, even when they involve other people in a participatory approach or when its operational management can be ensured internally by an ad-hoc group.

Self-assessment involves asking some fundamental questions: are our outcomes good? Is our organisation fit for purpose? Are our practices effective?

If these questions are to lead to the desired reflections and decision-making, if the approach is to be credible and lead to the implementation of improvement actions by promoting cross-functionality within the NGO, the visible involvement of the management team is a necessary condition.

Ismaïla Diagne – France Volunteers (Secretary General)
"The Madac approach must be part of an internal think-tank and must be supported collectively if it is not to be seen by the teams as something external or duplicative. The issues of timing and internal participation are important. If these questions are adequately anticipated, the approach can create a good collective dynamic within the structure."

A long-term commitment

Self-assessment is a **long-term commitment**, with improvement actions expected to have an impact in the medium term. In this context, the engagement of the governing bodies consists of carrying out periodic self-diagnoses, for example on an annual basis, with an assessment of the actions agreed the previous year. In the absence of such consistency, actions decided upon may sink into oblivion or be caught up in everyday life; the consequence being that the process would be perceived as an epiphenomenon in the life of an NGO.

An approach in line with the NGO's strategy

Self-assessment takes into account an NGO's strategy, as[8] well as the expectations of its stakeholders. It is therefore important to **clearly link the self-assessment with an NGO's strategy in order to give meaning to this** assessment and projection:

- Prior to defining a strategy, it generates input data in the form of strengths, vulnerabilities and action plans.

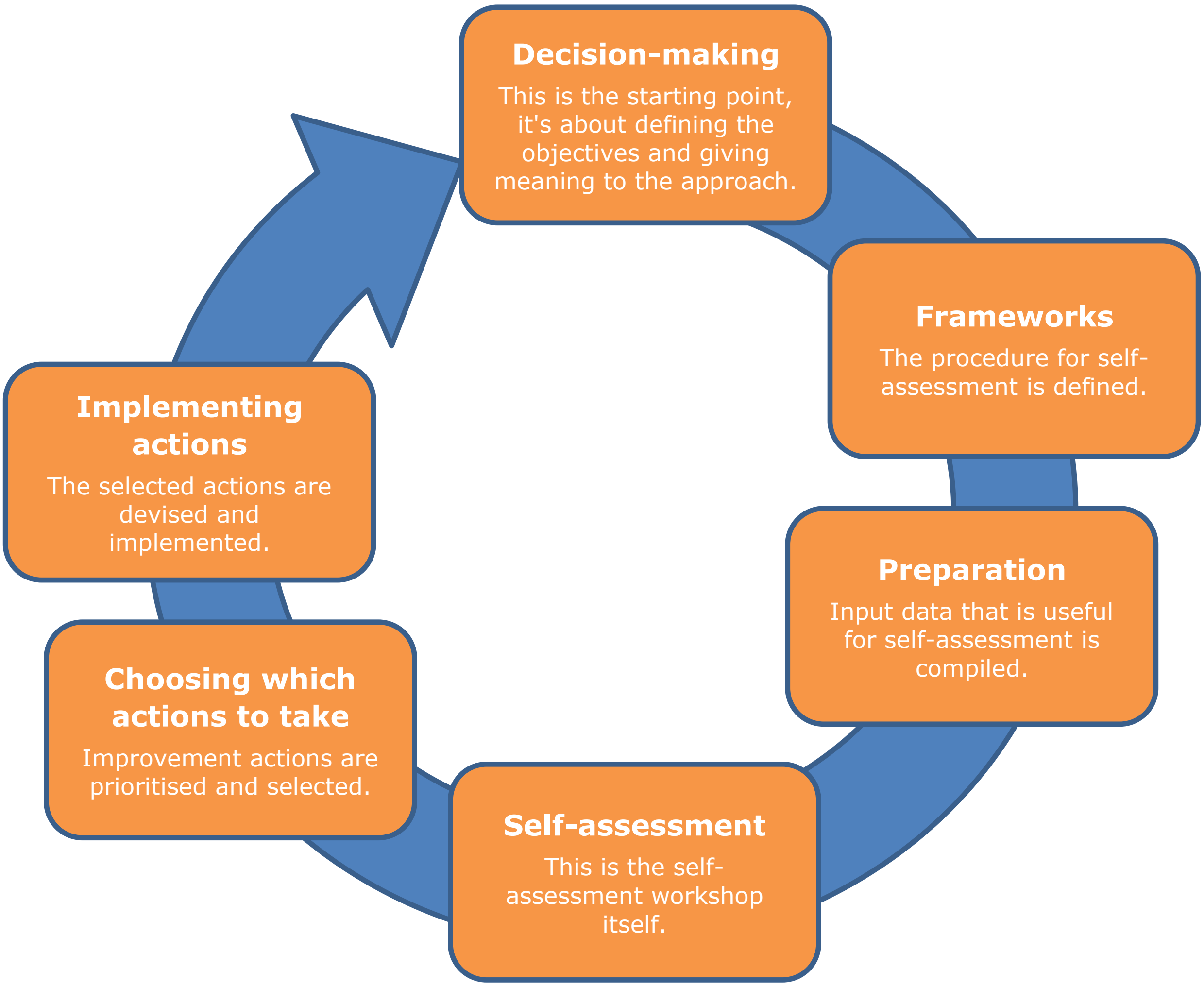
[8] This may be explicit (defined in a communications document) or implicit (with managers representing and promoting it within the company's decision-making and action processes).

- Once the strategy has been defined, it identifies strengths and vulnerabilities and produces action plans to ensure that the strategy is deployed more effectively across the organisation and its activities.

Philippe Jahshan – Solidarité Laïque (Delegate for international solidarity initiatives)
"As Solidarité Laïque embarks on the process of reviewing its strategy for the 2016-2020 period, the results of Madac self-assessment have helped to enrich the organisation's strategic thinking. Following the self-assessment, we now have a 360° view of our organisation (strengths and areas for improvement), which is helping us to develop our new strategy."

Self-assessment and continuous improvement in six steps

Although variations are possible, given the non-normative nature of the tool, the self-assessment and continuous improvement process involves a **sequence of six steps**, from the initial decision to the implementation of improvement actions.



By taking these stages into account, you can ask yourself the right questions and make the choices that are best suited to your circumstances.

Step 1: Decision-making

The purpose of this step is to define a clear message on the primary **objectives pursued** by the self-assessment, prioritising the motivation for it if necessary:

- Why do we want to carry out a self-assessment? What are the objectives and expected results?
- What is covered by a self-assessment within an NGO? Who do we want to get involved?

- How does this relate to other improvement initiatives that may already exist within the NGO? What continuity is there with any previous initiatives?

Philippe Jahshan – Solidarité Laïque (Delegate for international solidarity initiatives)
"Because it is so flexible, Madac can be used at different levels of the organisation's assessment: associative projects, multi-year strategies, action plans. It can be used both as part of a strategic review process and as part of a very hands-on process of developing an operational plan for continuous improvement. It is therefore essential that any organisation embarking on this process clearly defines the objectives and expected results of the self-assessment, and sets out its scope."

The most important thing at this stage is to define the objectives and **give meaning** to the process. Once the framework has been established, it is important to communicate this throughout the NGO, or at least to those who will be affected by the self-assessment.

How should in-house communication about the self-assessment be handled?
Throughout the self-assessment process, communication must be appropriate to the chosen implementation methods. The more participatory the approach, the more effective the communication will be. **Prior communication should above** all focus on objectives, implementation methods, how the results of the self-assessment will be used, and the relationship with existing improvement initiatives within the NGO, if there are any. Follow-up **communication** should be devoted to the actions that are ultimately chosen, together with a provisional timetable for these, along with the names of the individuals in charge of them and any other contributors.

Step 2: Framing

The purpose here is to establish **a procedure** of self-assessment:

- Which governing body or person is in charge of the self-assessment process? What is the associated budget, if it is required? Are there any plans to use an external facilitator to assist in self-assessment workshops and prioritise improvement actions?
- How will the planned self-assessment process be rolled out? Which validations might be possible? What is the timetable?
- Who is taking part? What are the deliverables? What is the input data? Which methods are to be used? How long is each phase?

Who facilitates the self-assessment and prioritisation workshops?
Self-assessment and prioritisation workshops require one or two facilitators to be nominated to carry them out. These facilitators can be **external** or **employed within the NGO**, with advantages and disadvantages in each case. External facilitators will have more objectivity and possibly expertise in facilitating the workshops, while internal facilitators will have a better understanding of the NGO's strategy, issues and context, and will be able to monitor the process over time.
Alternatively, you could train a two-person team of internal/external facilitators, which would allow you to benefit from both contextual knowledge and a certain amount of detachment when facilitating the exercise.

The **facilitator** must be familiar with the Madac model and approach, as well as facilitating groups.

An internal facilitator can be an NGO employee, volunteer or resource person. In all cases, it is useful for the person to be recognised internally in this role, to have an overall view of the way the NGO works and what it does, and to be in a position to stand back from the NGO's internal institutional, organisational and operational issues. Where they exist, people working in a cross-functional capacity within an NGO (in quality, knowledge management, et cetera) are well placed to play this role.
If an external facilitator is brought in, it may be useful to involve them at this stage in order to benefit from the methods they use and, at the very least, imbue these with the chosen operating principles.

Laurent Delcayrou – CIDR (Director of Operations)
"The advantage of this tool is that it can be appropriated. The approach was therefore carried out internally within the CIDR. We see two advantages to this: firstly, the person conducting the self-

assessment has a better knowledge of the organisation and its context, which made the process quicker and more efficient. Secondly, as part of this global approach, where the self-assessment and prioritisation workshops are only one stage in the improvement process, internal adoption gives the NGO a sense of responsibility."

The **scope** of the exercise must also be defined, and it must be made clear that the field of observation is limited to those areas in which the NGO carrying out the self-assessment has the power to act. If, for example, certain activities are delegated to actors external to the NGO or to other departments within the NGO, then it will be the content of this delegation and the associated room for manoeuvre that will be analysed.

Who participates in these workshops?
Choosing who takes part in the self-assessment workshop is crucial. When selecting participants for the self-assessment workshop, the aim is to bring people together who have decision-making authority within the NGO, and who have knowledge of the areas covered by Madac.
Several participation configurations are possible, depending on how the NGO operates, the objectives of the self-assessment, and the feasibility of the various options:

- The self-assessment workshop is carried out with the NGO management team (e.g. the Executive Board, et cetera).
- Such a group is extended to include resource persons from within the NGO (employees or volunteers) on a sample basis, to reinforce the participatory dimension of the exercise.
- All available human resources within the NGO are involved in the self-assessment workshop (in this case, the facilitator must ensure that the group is able to express itself effectively).

It is important to involve at least **the management team** in the self-assessment workshop, because of their overall vision and decision-making capacity. In all cases, the people taking part in the self-assessment workshop are not necessarily the same as those selecting the improvement actions. It is indeed prudent to reserve this last step for the NGO's governing bodies, unless a specific type of validation process is developed.

A group of **around ten individuals** is a good balance for taking part in the self-assessment and prioritisation workshops. However, it is possible to go beyond this for the self-assessment workshop, provided that the facilitator is suitably qualified.

At this stage, it is useful to **compare** the self-assessment and action selection stages with the actual implementation, in anticipation of the whole self-assessment and continuous improvement cycle being carried out within the NGO. The final timetable must be clearly established for the short term (the self-assessment itself) and the medium term (monitoring the selected improvement actions).

Once the decision and framework stages have been completed, the self-assessment **roll out** can be finalised.

Anouchka Finker – Chaîne de l'Espoir (Administrative and Financial Director)
"In order to carry out the self-assessment and action prioritisation workshops, La Chaîne de l'Espoir decided to call on a representative panel of the organisation: members of the association's governance, the Executive Board, and resource persons from its pool of employees and volunteers. Making this exercise a group effort allows for stimulating debate. It's also about unpacking the thinking process".

The identification and formalisation of the following elements form the **terms of reference** for a self-assessment cycle.

Theme	Illustrations
Self-assessment objectives	• Conduct a participatory review of the NGO's strengths and identify areas for improvement • Initiate a process of continuous improvement • Identify and share good management practices • Reinforce team cohesion, et cetera
Expected outcomes and deliverables	• 360° list of the NGO's strengths and areas for improvement...

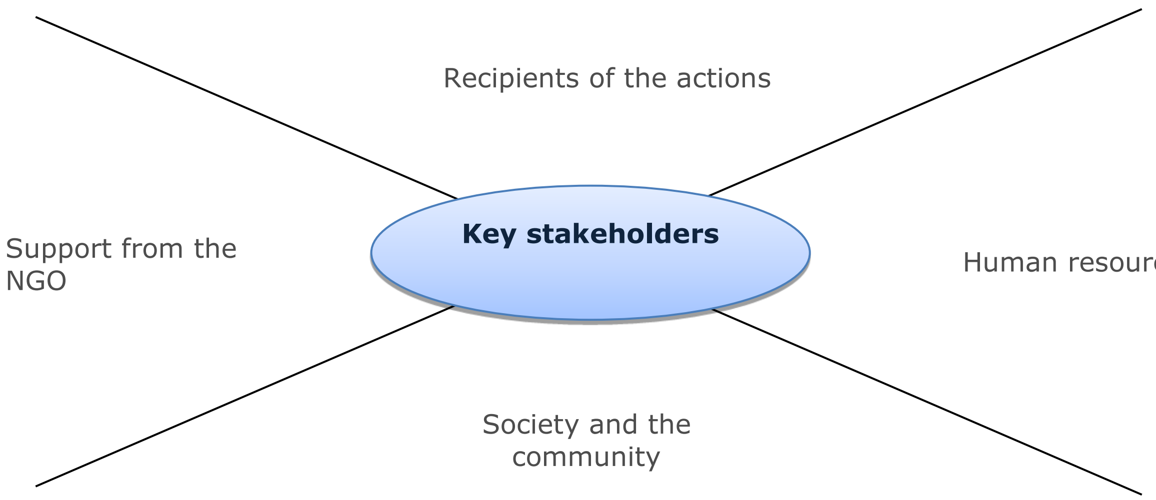
Using the results	• Prioritising areas for improvement • Building an improvement action plan • Setting improvement objectives, et cetera
How wide is the scope?	• Defining the scope of the self-assessment: the entire NGO, a specific department, certain departments, et cetera
Who participates in the self-assessment?	• The Executive Board • The extended Executive Board • All the human resources of the NGO...
Who decides which actions are ultimately selected?	• The Executive Board • The extended Executive Board...
Who is expected to lead the selected actions?	• Members of the Executive Board • Cross-departmental project managers • Workgroups...
What communication about self-assessment is required?	• Prior communication on the objectives, implementation methods and how the results will be used • Follow-up communication on the improvement action plan, et cetera

Step 3: Data preparation

Identifying stakeholders

In preparation for the self-assessment workshop, the NGO's **main stakeholders** will be identified, in other words the external and internal parties with which the NGO has strong interactions: either because the stakeholder is strongly affected by the NGO's decisions and actions, or because the stakeholder has a strong influence on the NGO.

The aim here is not to be exhaustive, but simply to identify the main stakeholder families in the diagram below that are to be taken into account during the self-assessment workshop. This work of identifying stakeholders should ideally be carried out before the self-assessment workshop, with a possible overall validation being carried out by the participants at the start of the workshop.



It is up to each NGO to carry out **its own mapping**, so as to identify the parties that make up its stakeholders within each major category, according to their specific characteristics (mission, strategy, social base, funding methods, partnerships, et cetera).

Some stakeholders may fall into more than one category, depending on their position in relation to the NGO in different situations. For example, in the case of a platform or NGO collective, its member organisations may be both recipients of its actions (insofar as these generate results for them) and supporters of the platform (insofar as they are members of the platform, and as such are interested in the platform's main results over and above what it brings them directly as recipients of its actions).

Collating the results

The data preparation stage also involves the compilation of the NGO's results for each stakeholder category for the self-assessment workshop, based on existing data (dashboards, monitoring indicators, evaluation reports, focus group results, et cetera). This stage can take **different forms**, depending on the availability of the data:

- If the NGO has this data in all four outcome areas (for its four main stakeholder categories), then the preparation stage consists of collating this so that the self-assessment group can use it.
- If the NGO does not have this data, then the participants will have to make an empirical judgement about the results as they perceive them, at the time the self-assessment workshop takes place. If this is the case, the question asked in the workshop is no longer, "Is the level of satisfaction among recipients of the actions high?" but rather, "How satisfied are action recipients?".

How do you assess the results?
Assessing an NGO's performance in relation to its four categories of stakeholders is an essential part of the self-assessment process. Applying the approach to the letter would mean using existing data to assess the achieved results.
However, NGOs either lack data on their results for all categories of their stakeholders, or this data is not sufficiently aggregated across the NGO as a whole. In this case, participants in the self-assessment workshop will be asked to state their **perception of the results for the stakeholder in question**. This approach to the results – only taking a quick look at them rather than conducting an in-depth analysis – takes participants' subjectivity into account.

Step 4: Facilitating the self-assessment workshop

The launch

Carrying out a self-assessment involves evaluating the way an NGO functions as a whole. The exercise is neither natural nor easy, therefore. This is why the objectives, principles and process should be explained to the group that carries it out.

The **rules of conduct**, based on the "three Ps", also require explanation:

- **Protection:** a common analytical framework is used (the Madac model), whereby no judgement is made about individuals nor the ideas they put forward. Every voice is respected, with goodwill as a matter of principle, listening to what others have to say and maintaining confidentiality.
- **Permission:** you may not agree, you may not know, you may bring "proof", you may ask for "proofs", everyone has the right to express themselves.
- **Parity:** one individual = one voice, no hierarchy in what is said.

Prior to examining the various criteria, it is advisable that the facilitator present the Madac model in its entirety (all 9 criteria and a broad outline of their content) to give participants a complete overview of the aspects that will be addressed.

Examining each sub-criterion

For each sub-criterion, the participants in the self-assessment assign a score that reflects their opinion of the way in which the NGO meets or does not meet the sub-criterion in question. The **assessment matrices** are the common basis for structuring this evaluation exercise. Copies of these may be handed out to participants. In all cases, the facilitator should present the rationale before starting to examine each sub-criterion.

While the exact way in which the matrices are used depends on which teaching formulas are chosen, in most cases each participant proposes their own score and a discussion ensues between the differing opinions. The aim is to identify strengths ("What are the reasons for a high score?") and areas for improvement ("Why did you attribute such a poor score?").

Assessment of practices

The purpose of each practice assessment matrix is to evaluate the **level of maturity** achieved by the NGO for each practice sub-criterion.

	Practice assessment matrix
1	Practices are intuitive, and are based on individuals, affinities and initiatives.
2	Practices are implemented on an ad hoc or incremental basis, and rely on specific individuals who have the relevant knowledge and skills.
3	Practices are defined and standardised, and are based on established rules and responsibilities, with everyone acting in accordance with what has been decided.
4	Practices are structured and integrated into daily activities, their effectiveness is demonstrated and continuously improved, and everyone adopts the approaches and shares their aims and methods.
5	Practices are continuously improved and set the benchmark, they make a clear and lasting contribution to the group's results, everyone takes a creative approach and is committed to innovation and anticipation.

Evaluation of results

The purpose of the results assessment matrix is to assess the **level of performance** achieved by the NGO in each performance area.

	Results assessment matrix
1	The results are not conclusive.
2	Some results are satisfactory, but most of them are not positive.
3	The status is mixed, with as many positive results as there are reservations about progress.
4	Most of the results are positive, but there is still room for significant progress.
5	All the results are positive, demonstrating the effectiveness of the practices and overall success of the strategy.

How this sequence unfolds

Each sub-criterion is examined by the group, led by the facilitator. Gradually it becomes routine, making for greater efficiency:

- **Reading the sub-criterion:** the facilitator reads the sub-criterion aloud and checks that the participants have a good understanding of what it is. Any questions that arise are clarified, so that all members of the group share an understanding of the sub-criterion and perhaps even have similar interpretations of it, if this is useful.

- **Analysis:** for the sub-criterion in question, the facilitator will ask the participants to identify the corresponding practices if it is a "Practices" criterion, or the corresponding results if it is a "Results" criterion. The facilitator can present practices and measurement themes provided in the Madac model during the session if required, by way of example only and with the proviso that the spontaneity and creativity of the participants should not be restricted.
- **Qualitative assessment:** for the practices or results in question, what are the NGO's strengths? Which areas could be improved? Is there another way of doing things?
- **Scoring:** taking into account the strengths and areas for improvement, what is the degree of maturity (practices) or performance (results) achieved for this sub-criterion, based on the assessment matrices?

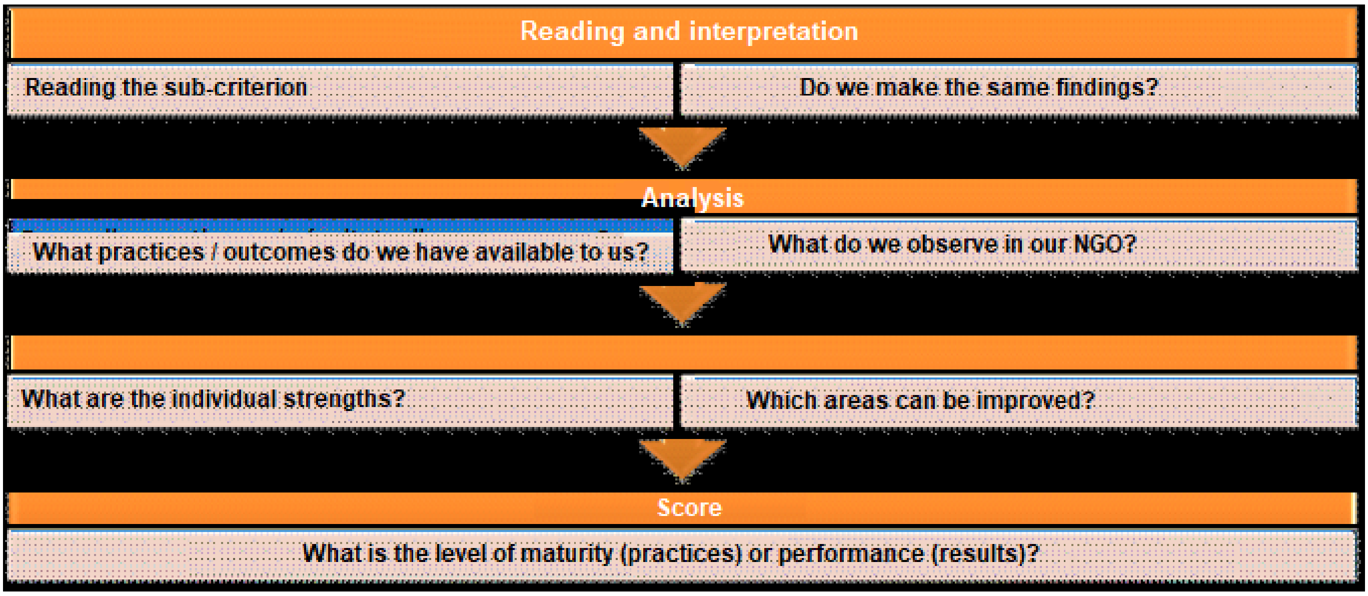
How do we get the level right?
Given that the questions asked in the self-assessment are aimed at the organisation as a whole, it is important that the assessments made by the participants are also at this level. There is a natural tendency to focus on sector-specific areas with which we are familiar, and to ignore those with which we are less familiar.

One way of ensuring that we are addressing the right issues is to compare each area with the NGO's **strategic needs** and the **level of satisfaction of the stakeholders** concerned.

During the self-assessment, the following principles should be adhered to:

- Each sub-criterion should be examined quickly, but not superficially. The time available is quantified at the start of the exercise, so as to provide participants with an educational benchmark, for example a maximum of 10 minutes per sub-criterion.
- The facilitator must encourage creativity and the generation of ideas.

For **the examination of each sub-criterion**, the sequence can be summarised as follows:



Closing points

The facilitator uses **the table of findings** to collate the participants' contributions during the self-assessment workshop. For each sub-criterion examined, participants' ideas are collected as faithfully as possible: strengths, areas of improvement and the average score attributed by the group. Like in a brainstorming session, it is creativity that is sought, since it is through the selection of improvement actions that agreement will ultimately be reached. If the participants show strong differences in their scores, the facilitator will simply note the wide range of scores (standard deviation) without assigning an average score.

Sub-criterion:	Score:
Strengths:	Areas of improvement:

It is useful to have a **round-table discussion** at the end of the self-assessment workshop. This will focus on the participants' feelings about the workshop and remind them of the follow-up action that is to be taken.

The findings table also acts as a **memory aid** for the next self-assessment session: participants go back over their past assessments and evaluate the progress they have made ("Have we upheld our strengths? Have we made progress in our areas for improvement? Has our score improved?").

How long should the workshops go on for?
Self-assessment should be quick, without being superficial. As a benchmark, a medium-sized self-assessment group (about ten people) will need a **full day** to review all the criteria in the model, then a half day to select which improvement actions to prioritise, so a full day and a half in total.

It is recommended that the workshop for self-assessment and the workshop for prioritising improvement actions don't take place too far apart. A period of **two weeks between each workshop** can be considered favourable in this regard.

Step 5: Choosing improvement actions

In most cases, **two separate workshops** will be held: one for self-assessment and one for choosing actions. This is to avoid having to deal with both diagnostics and decision-making issues during the same session. This breathing space is useful, not only because it gives us time to consolidate the conclusions arrived at during the self-assessment, but also because the participants in the two workshops are not necessarily the same.

Using the findings of the self-assessment as a starting point, the **most relevant areas for improvement** are selected. In practical terms, this involves examining the areas for improvement that were identified by the self-assessment group and drawing up action proposals based on prioritisation and selection, taking due consideration of the NGO's context and challenges.

The **criteria for prioritising** improvement actions should at least include the following three points:

- **Their degree of importance:** "Is this really important for our NGO over the next three years?"
- **The ability to implement them:** "Do we have the necessary resources internally or externally?"
- **The timeliness of the action to be taken:** "Is now the right time to take this action?"

The **prioritisation table** below is an example of how these different criteria can be weighted, and above all how this weighting can be carried out in a participatory way, with each participant having an individual vote:

- 4: Yes, absolutely
- 3: Yes, somewhat
- 2: No, not so much
- 1: No, not at all

Proposed action	A - Degree of importance (1==>4)	B - Implementation capacity (1==>4)	C - Timeliness (1==>4)	Score (A*B*C)
Action 1	3	2	2	12
Action 2	4	1	3	12
Action 3	2	3	3	18
Action 4	3	3	4	36
Action 5	3	1	2	6
…				

Once the participants have voted on each of the identified areas for improvement, the totals are recorded on the prioritisation table and the totals obtained for each action are aggregated by multiplying the scores: Importance x Capacity x Timeliness.

The action proposals that are ultimately selected may be those with the highest scores. However, at this stage, it is advisable that the participants hold a discussion to validate this choice. **Other criteria** can then be used in the group's final deliberations when choosing the most relevant actions – these pertain to the **final balance** between the selected actions, the portfolio of which must be representative of the NGO and apply to it across the board:

- **Balance between the relevant stakeholders:** do the selected actions cover action recipients, NGO's supporters, NGO's human resources and the societal dimension in a balanced way?
- **Balance between NGO components:** do the selected actions cover the different departments or services of the NGO in a balanced way? Do each of them contribute to at least one of the selected actions?
- **Overall balance:** is the number of selected actions sufficient to drive a credible and effective improvement process? Are there too many to be realistic and manageable?

Care should be taken not to exceed a maximum of five or six prioritisation criteria in total, so that there is sufficient consistency.

How many improvement actions should be taken, and of what nature?

Even if the selected actions are subject to prioritisation and are only chosen sparingly, **their final number and nature** remain an important point. Once the prioritisation process is complete, it is common to arrive at a dozen or so candidate actions.

The following **important points** should be taken into consideration, regarding the number and nature of actions to be prioritised:

- If all of the proposed actions are of a high strategic level and their implementation requires the NGO to make a significant investment, then it is wise to limit the number of actions that may be selected (to around three, for example), so as not to dilute the resources that are available and so that the dynamics of the approach can be maintained.
- If the proposed actions are very different in scale and duration, it may be useful to "stretch out" the implementation of the selected actions: some will be implemented over a long period (e.g. 2 years), while others will be implemented over a shorter period (e.g. 6 months). The advantage of doing this is that certain results will be visible quickly ("quick wins"), and can be exploited without too much delay.
- Certain actions may require mutual co-operation over time. For example, Action #3 can only start once Action #2 has already produced some results. These sequences must be taken into account when determining the final course of action.

Finally, **it is good practice to set the degree to which an action is ambitious, as well as the timeframe involved**, especially if it is strategic in nature and of significant scale. This involves sequencing the objectives and implementation over time and in stages, looking ahead 1 year or 18 months, for example, towards an achievable level of ambition by that deadline, with an overall vision of the various stages and the action's final objective.

Step 6: Design and implementation of improvement actions

Once they have been decided on, the selected improvement actions need to be drawn up and described so that they can be implemented, managed and monitored as part of the NGO's operations. The following example of an **action framework sheet** is proposed for this purpose. Each action selected will therefore *ultimately* be described in this format before embarking on the actual implementation phase.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION FRAMEWORK SHEET

ACTION TITLE:
ACTION LEAD:
ACTION PROGRESS *(design, start-up, implementation, evaluation)***:**

ISSUES AND CONTEXT OF THE ACTION:
What is the initial assessment (quantified as much as possible)? What justification is there for the action?

ACTION OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
What objective(s) does the action pursue? What is the targeted situation and outcome? In what kind of time frame?

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION:
What are the main areas of activity? What are the main steps? What responsibilities are there? What contributions are there? What resources are available?

ACTION MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION:
Which management (governing bodies, internal organisations, reporting models)? What are the criteria for success? What are the evaluation indicators (results and/or process indicators)? How should the action be communicated?

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD...:
How can we ensure that the action is appropriated and sustained once it has been carried out?

Inspired by the 2010 EFQM Excellence Model

The following five questions can help you formulate an improvement action framework sheet:

- **What is the name of this action?**
  The title of the action can be reworded once the framework sheet has been drawn up, as the work involved in defining the action may lead to its title being narrowed down.

- **What is the initial situation and what results are we aiming for through this action?**
  This can be done by identifying the main stakeholders affected by the action (based on the four main categories of stakeholders proposed by Madac), and analysing the situation as seen by these stakeholders today. This should help to determine which of the intended outcomes of the action are visible to the relevant stakeholders, and whether these outcomes are consistent with their analysis of the situation. This should help to identify any potential successes, in terms of what is expected from the action by the main stakeholders involved.
  If necessary, an improvement action can also be the subject of a more in-depth assessment when it is launched. This assessment can be part of an action step.

- **What do we want to achieve with this action?**
  At this stage, we can analyse current practices in the NGO vis-à-vis the results targeted by the action, in terms of "tops" (what is working well, successes, achievements, strengths to be maintained/developed) and "flops" (what is lacking, failures, limitations, obstacles and resistances to be removed/improved upon). This should help to identify any activities that need to be carried out in order to achieve the intended results of the action. It may be useful to draw a link to the various sub-criteria of the Madac model (and associated practice examples) so as to

identify the levers that can be used to improve practices as part of the implementation of the action.

- **How are we going to do it?**
  This is the rationale behind an action plan, in terms of the stages involved in implementing the action, identifying any parties that will contribute to its implementation, as well as the resources required, and defining what the deliverables will be and the timetable for completion of the action.

- **How will we manage and improve the action in the short and long term?**
  The aim here is to determine how the action will be evaluated, with a view to continuous improvement in terms of how it is managed (strategically and operationally) and reported, and with regard to process indicators and/or the outcomes achieved by the action.

The following **best practices** can guide the way in which improvement actions are conceived and implemented:

- Work in groups to develop the action framework sheet
- Clearly define the desired results and regularly monitor their degree of achievement
- Bring together representatives of the main stakeholders involved in the project during the planning and implementation stages
- Link the action with the NGO's other initiatives, as part of a cross-functional approach
- Plan and monitor the action's progress in project mode, and clearly identify the responsibilities and contributions of each party involved
- Ensure that the action is firmly rooted in the NGO's day-to-day practices

Anouchka Finker – Chaîne de l'Espoir (Administrative and Financial Director)
"It is vital that we communicate internally about the approach so as to encourage participation, particularly when it comes to implementing improvement actions. La Chaîne de l'Espoir chose to have priority projects carried out by combined working groups, i.e. comprised of people from different departments. It was a very rewarding experience, as it helped to break down barriers and energise the team. This approach has also enabled the organisation to develop a common language and to diffuse tensions surrounding quality issues."

When organising an NGO's implementation of improvement actions, the **following three functions** can be identified:

- The action manager for each improvement action is a person who has the legitimacy, authority and capacity to manage and report on its implementation.
- If the person in charge of the action needs support on certain aspects, such as drafting the action framework sheet, a methodological support person may be useful at a second level (if they are available and interested in methodological issues).
- At a tertiary level, it may also be useful to have someone to coordinate the whole improvement process (timing, overall consistency, linking actions together, et cetera).

These three functions are useful, so it is important to identify them. Secondary and tertiary functions can often be carried out by the same person, or even all three in some cases.

How are prioritised improvement actions monitored?
In addition to the elements used to define the actions described in the framework sheet, it is important that the monitoring of improvement actions should be **as integrated as possible** into the NGO's normal operations. If, for example, an Executive Board meets every month, then a review of how improvement actions are progressing will be added to the agenda. If an objectives monitoring system already exists, then the aim should be to "graft" the monitoring of actions onto this system.

Conclusion: self-assessment as a tool for continuous improvement

In addition to identifying and implementing priority improvement actions, the self-assessment also serves as a **barometer of how much progress the NGO has made**.

When should the next self-assessment session be scheduled for?
Usually, a full self-assessment (covering all Madac criteria and sub-criteria) is conducted **every year**. However, if the actions resulting from the first self-assessment are numerous or substantial, it may be necessary to repeat the 360° exercise **over a longer period** (e.g. every two or three years). If this is the case, the interim self-assessments will consist exclusively of assessing the degree to which the actions undertaken in year 1 have been implemented and are effective, with a view to continuing them if necessary, stopping them if they have achieved their objectives, or redirecting them.
In all cases, it is important that this review be carried out as part of a self-assessment for the following year, in order to maintain the continuous and progressive character of the process.

When carried out on a regular basis, self-assessment enables us to take stock of the progress made over the past period, by measuring progress in all areas. Based on these findings, any work that remains to be done is highlighted, with new or updated actions.

As such, you have a veritable **navigation tool** available to you that allows you to take regular stock and decide on new courses of action through participatory processes.

Enjoy the journey!

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The Self-assessment and Continuous Improvement Model (Madac) is a tool designed to help French international aid NGOs reflect upon and take action on how to improve quality, based on an overall analysis of their practices and results.

This guide is intended for international solidarity NGOs that want to initiate and facilitate a self-assessment and continuous improvement approach based on the Madac model. It is intended to be educational, so that interested NGOs can take on board both the institutional and technical aspects of the approach.

It includes a presentation of the context and origin of the approach, some elements of added value of Madac for NGOs, the analysis model itself, methodological advice and tools for implementing Madac in an NGO. It includes testimonies from NGOs that have trialled Madac.

Enjoy reading and using this document!

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