

## Conducting an Environmental Analysis<sup>1</sup>

Your organization exists in the midst of a physical, economic, political and cultural setting (or environment) that has great influence on your organization. When you conduct an environmental analysis, you look at your organization's environment to ***identify any key conditions that you think will help your organization accomplish its mission and goals successfully or that might prevent your organization or group from doing so.***

To conduct an organization environment, you ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are there any geographic or physical conditions that will help my organization be successful or that will make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of geographic or physical conditions that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ Being located in an area that is easy for people to get to if they need to come to your organization's offices – or being located in an area that is difficult for people to get to
- ❖ Improved road systems throughout the province you are serving – or a lack of good roads
- ❖ Having good buildings and facilities to work or teach in – or having poor buildings and facilities
- ❖ Being in an area where there are no problems with safety and physical security – or being in an area where there are problems with safety and security
- ❖ Having good weather conditions to support agriculture and travel – or experiencing drought or excessive rain or temperatures that do not support agriculture and travel
- ❖ Whether or not there are power generating facilities throughout the provinces where your organization is engaged in manufacturing, construction or other activities requiring power

2. Are there any economic conditions that will help my organization be successful or that will make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of economic conditions that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ The availability of government funds to support the growth and development of your organization – or the lack of government funds for this purpose

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- ❖ The availability of banking facilities to provide loans and handle financial transactions in the areas of the country where your organization does business – or the lack of available facilities of this type
- ❖ Whether or not insurance and risk management programs are available to guarantee your organization's operations against loss
- ❖ Whether or not the skilled labor your organization needs to operate is easily available in different areas of the country where your organization does business
- ❖ The willingness of donor agencies to support projects such as those in which your organization is involved – or the lack of willingness to provide such support
- ❖ Whether or not there is significant corruption within your organization or within other organizations with which your organization does business -- and how this will affect your organization's profitability or cost efficiency
- ❖ Whether or not there is accurate and complete reporting on the use of funds and progress on projects to donor agencies – and how this might affect the willingness or unwillingness of donor agencies to continue to provide support
- ❖ Whether or not the illicit drug trade and the way in which it undercuts efforts to rebuild the Afghan economy has any impact on the financial status of your organization
- ❖ Whether or not decreasing investment opportunities will affect your organization's strategic goals and operations
- ❖ Whether or not increasing imports of good & services from neighboring countries would affect your exporting operations and activities.

3. Are there any technological conditions or advances in technology that will help my organization be successful or that will make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of technological conditions/advances that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ Greatly increased availability of the internet and its resources throughout some parts of the country and how this affects your organization's operations or services
- ❖ Whether or not the people in your organization have access to and are trained on how to use new electronic technology
- ❖ The lack of progress made on the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development's plan to implement local electrical, transportation, irrigation, potable water and sanitation projects in all areas of Afghanistan (if your organization deals with different rural areas of the country)
- ❖ The advances made with regard to the availability of mobile communications and TV stations throughout the country and how this affects your organization's operations or services

- ❖ Whether or not there is new equipment or technology available that enables your organization to provide products or services faster, cheaper or in greater quantity or quality
4. Are there political or legal conditions that will help my organization be successful or that will make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of political or legal conditions that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ Whether the rules and regulations that have been put in place over the last few years to govern the legal and financial operations of government agencies and businesses operate have made it easier or more difficult for your organization to manage its operations
  - ❖ Whether or not these rules and regulations are clearly understandable and can be implemented
  - ❖ Whether or not the government has established a clear economic agenda or social development project for specific provinces where your organization does business
  - ❖ Whether or not the growing influence of the Taliban has an impact on how your organization conducts its business
  - ❖ Whether or not the growing anti-foreign sentiment in the country has any influence on how your organization conducts its business
  - ❖ Whether or not the increasing lack of coordination between Coalition forces and the Afghan national army in certain areas of the country will affect your organization's operations
  - ❖ Whether or not the growing independence of the Parliament has any impact on how your organization operates
  - ❖ Whether or not concerns about the fairness of the next Parliament elections will have any impact on your organization's effectiveness
  - ❖ Whether or not the government's inability to provide security or deliver basic services, especially in rural areas, has any impact on the effectiveness of your organization's operations
5. Are there any demographic or cultural conditions that will help my organization be successful or that will make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of demographic or cultural conditions that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ The level of literacy and education in the areas where your organization is providing services
- ❖ The fact that about 55% of the Afghan population is now under the age of 19

- ❖ The entrance of millions of additional young Afghans into the labor force over the next 5 – 10 years, adding to an unemployment rate that is already around 40%
  - ❖ The increasing aggressiveness and violence of the Taliban, and concerns about safety and security in many parts of the country
  - ❖ The significant increase in the numbers of educated women in every sector of the government and industry and the impacts that this will have as up to 30% of women in the country compete with men and each other to obtain key positions and be promoted into senior management positions
  - ❖ The increase in communications and knowledge of what's going on among people in different parts of Afghanistan, due to the availability of mobile communications and greater exposure to TV
  - ❖ Whether or not the education rate for women will continue to increase in rural areas of the country and how a significant increase in health workers and educators in rural areas might affect your organization's effectiveness
6. What is happening in my organization's sector or industry that will help my organization be successful or that might make it more difficult for my organization to accomplish its goals?

Examples of occurrences that might have an influence on your organization's success in accomplishing its mission would include:

- ❖ New scientific, social or technical discoveries that will significantly affect your field, product or service
- ❖ The offering of new products or services that will compete with your organization's offerings
- ❖ New approaches to services or products
- ❖ Development of new markets for services or products
- ❖ New organizations that will be in competition for your customers or clients

Once you have answered these six questions, you will know what environmental factors may have a significant positive or negative impact on your organization's ability to accomplish its goals. What you have learned should be included in your first Assignment in response to one of the following questions (depending on which type of organization needs assessment you are doing):

- A. Questions to Respond to if your Organization Needs Assessment is Focused on the Needs and Service Requirements of a Target Population or Customer Group Served by Your Organization: **Section I, Question 2**
- B. Questions to Respond to if Your Organization Needs Assessment is Focused on the Capacities and Priority Needs of Your Organization in Order to More Effectively Support Its Mission: **Section I, Question 6-a and 6-b**

C. Questions to Respond to if Your Organization Needs Assessment is Focused on the Capacities and Priority Development Needs of a Particular Group of Employees within the Organization: **Section 1, Question 2**