

## TOOL

# TEAM SELF REVIEWS

### WHY

The people, who have been running the project often knows the most about what has been done and achieved in the project. They are also the people who have to put any lessons learnt into practice. They possess a treasure chest of information on the project – and the Team Self Review process lifts the lid on this box of treasure.

### WHEN

The Team Self Review is a good method to evaluate your project at key stages – for instance for a midway review or for the final evaluation. It can also be used as part of a more regular reflection and learning effort in the team that implements the project.

The method can be used by a team, a department or an entire organization with every department carrying out a review.

### HOW

The team allocates sufficient time to carry out a review – with a small project a few hours may be sufficient, whereas bigger or more complicated projects may require a day. The task is to answer the **Three Universal Evaluation Questions**:

- Are we doing what we said we would do?
- Are we making any difference?
- Are we doing the right things?

The team needs to prepare by re-reading the relevant project documents and the documents that have to do with their area of responsibility since the last review (for instance training evaluations, field visit reports, project reports).

The team then come together. The session is facilitated by a team member or an external facilitator. The team goes through each of the questions, reflects together and come to an agreed answer for each.

➤➤ The Team Self Review is a very powerful tool, but it does require that teams are ready to reflect on what they find difficult – both in carrying out the project and in the process of doing the Team Self Review.

Although the questions are simple, it can be a difficult task to do a Team Self Review. Difficult because many people are not used to being asked for their opinions in an open and honest way - and difficult because they often do not know the answers to the three questions.

The first question can be challenging if your team doesn't have clear role descriptions or are not aware of the details of the project. The second question is nearly always a big challenge because most teams collect data and write reports on what they have done, - but not on what the outcomes or changes were.

It is a good idea to notice, when you have difficulty answering a question – and think about why that is. Is it because you do not have clear roles? Is it because you don't know what the effects of your project are on the target group? Is it that there has been a big turnover in team members, and there has been little handover and memory of what has been done?

The list of the problems that the team has faced in the Team Self Review can be used for a reflection on what to improve in your team work during the coming months.

Source: INTRAC

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To get useful reflections going on how you are making a difference you need to *go up in a helicopter and look down at the project*. What are the most significant changes your project has led to among the stakeholders and the target group?

To ensure learning, it is important to be open and honest – and to be able to talk about both successes and challenges. The facilitator must ensure that the team doesn't get bogged down in minor details, this is an opportunity to see the bigger picture.

To ensure that learning can be used in the future, the team is asked to produce a **small Self Review** report of 1-4 pages. It is not about writing a lot – but rather to distill an agreed essence.

The report should capture:

- Whether the team is doing, what it intended to do – and if there are any divergence, the reason for doing things differently
- The most significant changes that can be seen due to the project
- The teams assessment of whether they are doing the right things and in the right way. Also, the team should include learning points for the project that is being evaluated or future projects.

The small reports can remain the property of the team, but it can also be useful to share the learnings to develop a culture of trust and mutual learning – in the organization and with stakeholders outside of the organization.



*This tool paper is inspired by material developed by INTRAC*