



Council Assessment Tool

January 2011

Characteristics of High Performing First Nation Councils

1. **They develop & maintain a longer term vision and clear sense of direction by**
 - having mission & vision statements; longer term plans; clear priorities; updating process
2. **They respect Aboriginal values and worldviews and apply these in the operations of the Council and in the organization as a whole** through, for example,
 - encouraging participation of Elders, youth; decision-making processes; staff policies; program design & delivery
3. **They ensure the prevalence of high ethical standards and understand their legal obligations**
 - encouraging transparency & openness; adopting a written code of conduct; appointing & overseeing key managers; ensuring ethical treatment of staff
 - being aware of and respecting duty of loyalty; duty of care; statutory obligations
4. **They ensure effective performance through sound information by**
 - focusing on results or outcomes (as opposed to activities)
 - having a good sense of their information needs
 - monitoring program performance in a consistent manner
5. **They ensure the financial & organizational health by**
 - focusing on long term sustainability (expenditures & revenues; asset management);
 - exhibiting macro level concern with the quality of management, staff morale etc.
6. **They ensure sound relationships with their key external bodies including**
 - funders, National Aboriginal Organizations, regional and local Aboriginal bodies, governments, businesses
7. **They ensure sound relationships with their members and provide opportunities for them to influence key initiatives by**
 - ensuring high quality and timely services
 - engaging citizens in important Nation issues
 - providing redress mechanisms for complaints
8. **They manage risk effectively by**
 - identifying, assessing, mitigating & monitoring critical developments with uncertain outcomes
9. **They are accountable through**
 - publicly available information (financial, results achieved etc.); audits & evaluations; outreach activities;
 - a significant emphasis on transparency
10. **They ensure the soundness of the governance system by**
 - evaluating the performance of the Executive Director
 - having an effective relationship with staff and managing this relationship on an ongoing basis
 - monitoring contemporary developments; evaluating their collective performance and that of individual Council members; adopting an ethic of continuous improvement
 - having and respecting a comprehensive set of policies and/or bylaws
 - instituting sound training practices
11. **They have effective meetings of Council and its committees through**
 - a sound relationships between the Chief and the executive directors and senior staff;
 - effective chairs, who manage time effectively through well-crafted agendas among other things
 - a positive culture based on members listening to and respecting one another, resolving conflict creatively, and ensuring all Council members are valued and participate to the best of their abilities
 - periodic evaluations of meetings followed by corrective action

Assessing your Council's Performance

How well does your Council conform to each of the characteristics of high performing Councils?

Rating Scale				
No Conformance	Weak Conformance	Some Conformance	Strong Conformance	Exceptional Conformance
1	2	3	4	5

Your Council

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Develops and maintains a longer term vision and clear sense of direction | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Respects and applies Aboriginal values and worldviews | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Ensures the prevalence of high ethical standards | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Ensures effective performance through sound information | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Ensures the financial and organizational health of the organization | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Ensures sound relationships with key external bodies | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Ensures sound relationships with its members | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Manages risk effectively | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Is accountable | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Ensures the soundness of the governance system | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. Has effective meetings of Council and its committees | 1 2 3 4 5 |