

## SELF ASSESSMENT

General Guide to  
Self-Assessment with  
Government Partners



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## Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this Toolkit are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

## Section 1: Introduction

The Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) is a five-year governance programme, funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). The programme focuses support on governments, citizens, and evidence-based advocacy. PERL provides assistance to governments in the core areas of policy development and implementation. This is done by assisting them in tracking and accounting how these policies, plans and budgets are used in delivering public goods and services to promote growth and reduce poverty. The programme supports citizens to engage with these processes.

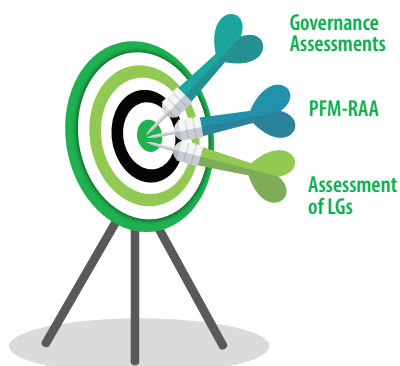


PERL is being delivered through three 'pillars' which work together to support sustainable service delivery reforms: **Pillar 1.** Accountable, Responsive and Capable Government (ARC); **Pillar 2.** Engaged Citizens; and **Pillar 3.** Learning, Evidencing and Advocacy Partnership (LEAP).

ARC specifically supports government partners to improve the way government functions. There is a lot of experience within ARC and its government partners in undertaking **self-assessments** to help establish reform agendas, appropriately house them, communicate them, and use them to drive reform. Much of this experience comes from work undertaken during predecessor governance reform programmes, particularly the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) and the State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) programmes, which both used self-assessment processes. During SPARC, and with government partners, self-assessments were used to communicate, house and drive reform across government (through change programmes and development cooperation frameworks). They were also used within specific themes such as financial management, the management of the public service, or the management of policies or strategies for development and their monitoring and evaluation. This short guide re-introduces self-assessment as a fundamental process to support reform efforts with partners supported by PERL; in this case with government partners supported largely by ARC.

## Section 2: Purpose

The purpose of this guide to self-assessment with government partners is to support continuation and embedding of the self-assessment process for governance reform, whilst ensuring necessary robustness. A number of self-assessment processes are being supported by the PERL partnership, in each case with respect to ARC and government partners in order to ensure local ownership of reform, and an appropriate reform trajectory. Self-assessments currently being undertaken include:



- Governance Assessments with partner State Governments in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and at Federal Government level;
- Public Financial Management – Rapid Annual Assessments (PFM-RAA);
- Assessments of Local Governments, or the interface between State and Local Governments.

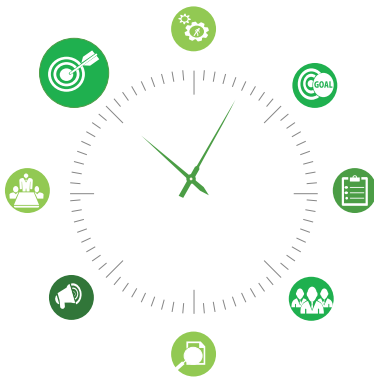
In each case, experience from predecessor governance reform processes has been learnt and applied – largely around simplifying and streamlining processes to make the tasks of establishing, housing, communicating and driving reform simpler. Governance Assessments are a simplified version of the previously used State Evaluation and Assessment Tool (SEAT) and Public Expenditure Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessments, while the PFM-RAA is a similarly streamlined and updated version of the PFM assessment framework, both previously used in SPARC.

Self-assessment processes are also useful for establishing a baseline, mid-line and end-line assessment of the PERL-supported governance reform process.

## Section 3: Main Activities and Timetable

Self-assessments need to be carefully planned and managed if they are to effectively support establishing, housing, communicating and driving reform. Schedules, responsibilities and participants should be clear in advance, and approved within government partners.

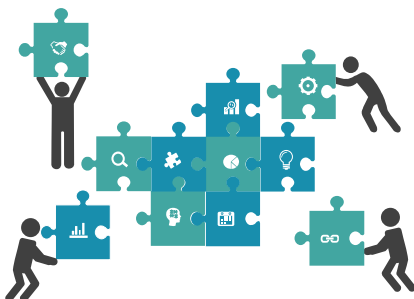
Schedules should include, with major steps **highlighted**:



Activity	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Identification of partners and participants including <b>responsible agencies</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Preparation of schedules and agreement of indicators	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Approval</b> of schedules, responsibilities, partners and participants, and indicators	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collecting and collating background material and <b>evidence</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Briefing</b> of partners and responsible agencies (not more than half a day)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Undertaking <b>self-assessment</b> led by responsible agency (typically two or three days, often in the style of a retreat)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Draft Self-Assessment Report</b> preparation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Self-Assessment Report circulation within responsible agency and partners/participants	
<input type="checkbox"/> Collation of comments on Draft Self-Assessment Report	
<input type="checkbox"/> Undertaking a <b>validation</b> meeting led by the responsible agency (not more than half a day)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Report validated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Report <b>agreed</b> with Government Executive	
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Assessment Report published/circulated for <b>action</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Progress <b>review</b> of actions	

## Section 4: Responsibilities for Self-Assessment

Responsibilities within government partners are generally clear, as identified in their own official mandates:



- The *Office of the Head of Service* has overall responsibility for leading and coordinating civil service reform.
- The *Ministry of Budget and Planning* (or equivalent<sup>1</sup>) has overall responsibility for the planning and budgeting process, including policy and strategy setting, monitoring and evaluation;
- The *Ministry of Finance* (or equivalent) has overall responsibility for financial management including the operation of the Government Treasury;
- The *Bureau for Public Service Reforms* (or equivalent<sup>2</sup>) often acts as an overall reform coordinator, providing secretariat functions for self-assessment processes. These bureaus are often part of the Office of the Head of Service.

PERL can be responsible for providing logistical and technical support to the self-assessment process, but all the time ensuring the appropriate establishment, housing, communication and local driving of reform.

Committees and Core Teams can be established among responsible agencies, partners and participants, if this is necessary. Various forums have been previously established and should be used where appropriate, including:

- State Steering Committees;
- Governance Committees;
- Committees for Public Financial Management or Public Service Management or Policy and Strategy (including Monitoring and Evaluation).

Currently ongoing self-assessment processes which are envisaged to have a long-term future also have clear responsible owners within government:

Self-Assessment Process	Responsible Government Agency
Governance Assessment	Ministry of Budget and Planning supported by Bureau of Public Service Reforms
PFM-RA Assessment	Ministry of Budget and Planning supported by Bureau of Public Service Reforms and in partnership with Ministry of Finance
Local Government Assessment	Bureau of Public Service Reforms <sup>3</sup> in partnership with Ministry of Local Government

<sup>1</sup> Some State Governments have Planning Commissions that assume this authority.

<sup>2</sup> There is a Federal Government Bureau of Public Service Reforms, and State Governments such as Kaduna have a State Bureau of Public Service Reforms, whilst some other states have other bodies such as an Office of Creativity and Transformation, or a coordination department within the Ministry of Planning and Budget.

<sup>3</sup> At present, there is only one Local Government Assessment that has been conducted, in Kaduna State, as part of the process of fully establishing functioning Local Governments.

## Section 5: Self-Assessment Process and Key Steps

An overview of the Self-Assessment Process is shown in *Figure 1* below, reinforcing the key steps identified in this Guide. Some of the key steps include:

**Briefing:** The first key step in the self-assessment process will be to conduct a pre-retreat briefing to cover the indicators that are going to be scored. The briefing should also cover the status of background documents and evidence collection prior to scoring. The responsible agency should lead the briefings, with relevant members who will participate in the respective assessments. The briefings are anticipated to be half day sessions held within the state. Key topics to be covered during these briefings include:

- Overview of the process to be followed during the self-assessment retreat;
- Review of the indicators to be scored during the self-assessment retreat;
- Overview of the background information to be reviewed ahead of/during the retreat;
- Review of the self-assessment retreat logistical arrangements;
- Overview of the retreat follow up process.

**Self-Assessment Retreat:** This will often comprise a two or three-day retreat style working event often out of the state or location, or in an appropriate setting within the state that will allow for discussions without distractions. Relevant participants should have been briefed prior to the event, which must include individuals within government that have actual leadership responsibilities. This should therefore include Commissioners, Special Advisors, the Head of Service, Donor Representatives and Permanent Secretaries. Discussions during the self-assessment retreat will be guided by the reform area and indicators to be scored. A detailed schedule should be made available in advance of the retreat, covering, in addition to normal protocols:

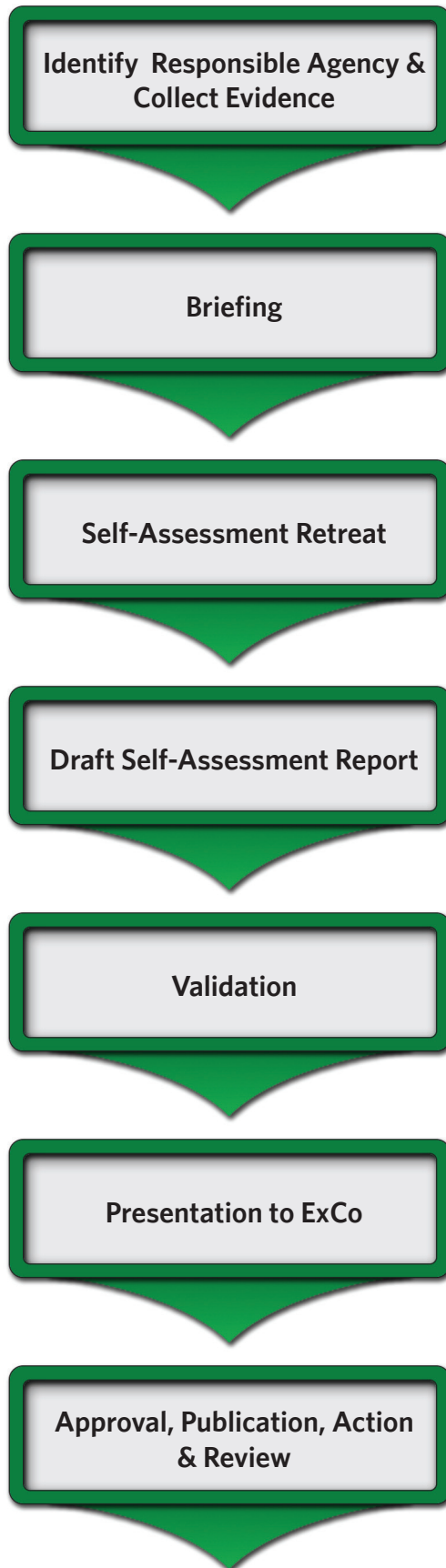
- Purpose of the self-assessment retreat;
- Overall methodology and working arrangements to be followed;
- Detailed working sessions for scoring of indicators;
- Plenary review and confirmation of indicator scores;
- Next steps and actions.

**Validation Meeting:** This will often consist of a half day meeting within the state. A draft Self-Assessment Report should have been already prepared and circulated, based on summarised discussions and mutually-agreed scores from the Self-Assessment Retreat. Only select participants need to convene for validation, concentrating on those with senior leadership responsibilities. Based on the draft report, the validation meeting should:

- Identify and resolve any contentious scores or evidence for scores and make any necessary adjustments;
- Review and agree indicative reform priorities to take forward, including any necessary presentation to the Government Executive.



## Stages in Self-Assessment Process





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