Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) Resource on Pre-Situational Analyses for Grantees

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The purpose of this document is to provide a resource on how to conduct a Pre-Situational Analysis (PSA) to Grantees implementing capacity-building, awareness-raising, or other non-direct service projects. OCFT Project Managers can confirm whether a PSA is required of a specific project. The PSA requirement may be fulfilled through planned research that is integrated into the project design,¹ by following this PSA resource, or by some combination of activities with the approval of the OCFT Project Manager. Grantees should consult with and receive approval from their OCFT Project Manager on their approach to fulfilling the PSA requirement before planning their PSA or using this resource. This document should be viewed as an optional resource rather than required guidance on PSAs.

What is a PSA?

A PSA is a risk mitigation and analytical tool to help projects to focus resources on activities and strategies that have the greatest potential for success. A good analysis will identify the most promising entry points (or areas to begin efforts) for project activities and strategies, identify relevant actors and appropriate methods for engaging them, and identify areas where change may not be realistic within project life (see Section 3 for examples).

Completed at the beginning of a project, the PSA identifies how various actors, given their incentives and constraints, can influence and shape the project’s strategies and outcomes. PSAs may be completed by either an external contractor or qualified project staff at the start of the project, in consultation with OCFT, and typically take from one to three months to complete.

The data that feeds into the study can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, depending on the scope of the PSA. Given the possibly sensitive nature of the analysis, PSAs will be for internal discussion and use between Grantees and OCFT staff, and other stakeholders as agreed with OCFT.

Since they help inform project strategy, PSAs are completed only at the beginning of projects. Any follow-up analyses at the end of the project should be integrated into either the project’s final evaluation or the final data analysis related to Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) data collected throughout the project.

Why complete a PSA?

PSAs help Grantees strategically identify potential risks, opportunities, and policy and capacity gaps in the operating environment. This information is then used to help target resources to where they will be most effective in moving towards project outcomes and objectives. Understanding the interests and incentives of actors that are important to the project’s work will help projects understand both where positive change could occur and potential obstacles and gaps to reaching project goals. Thus, the PSA exercise can help projects manage risk, prevent failures, and ensure project activities and interventions are focused, feasible and based on realistic expectations of progress.

¹ Examples of such activities include needs assessments, gap analyses, and Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys.
When should my project do the PSA? How will it interact with the CMEP development process?

Projects should begin developing the scope of work for their PSA with their OCFT Project Manager immediately after key personnel and M&E staff begin work (see OCFT Management Procedures and Guidelines – MPGs, for timing requirements for the scope of work). Since the results of the PSA can lead to more appropriately defined activities, outputs and outcomes, it is best to conduct this analysis early enough to inform the project’s CMEP. 2

CMEP development is a separate process coordinated with OCFT. During the CMEP development process, the project will identify indicators to measure the outcomes and outputs of the project, and the data collection for CMEP indicators will occur separately from the PSA. The separate PSA/CMEP activities should allow projects to keep the PSA process focused and timely, so that the analysis can be used in project planning as soon as possible.

Steps to implementing a PSA3

The PSA may consist of seven steps4, outlined below:

1) Planning discussions to determine scope of the PSA, including: areas of focus, whether to involve partners in the analysis, and how findings will be communicated, given any possible sensitivity.
2) Develop a written scope of work. Select a contractor or staff member team with appropriate qualifications to conduct the work.
3) PSA Component 1: Stakeholder mapping and suggested planning for stakeholder engagement, based on understanding of incentives and constraints.
4) PSA Component 2: Identify entry points or areas to begin efforts most likely to enable the project to successfully reach its outcomes or objectives, as well as risks and mitigation strategies for addressing identified risks.
5) PSA Component 3: In realistic terms and based on Components 1 and 2 above, identify the best next steps that maximize the potential for the project to bring about change, organized by major project intervention. Identify steps to be prioritized, as well as new or replacement strategies when previously planned approaches are shown to be unlikely to reach the project’s stated outcomes and objectives.
6) Complete draft PSA Report and submit draft and final versions to OCFT.
7) Integrate recommendations from PSA into project planning/strategy as applicable and as agreed with OCFT (and integrate into strategy review memo, as relevant – see MPGs).

Each of the above steps is discussed in detail below.

1) Planning discussions to determine scope of the PSA, including: areas of focus, whether to involve partners in the analysis, and how findings will be communicated, given any possible sensitivity.

2 See timetable of deliverables in the MPGs for the required deadline for finalizing the PSA.
3 This exercise is adapted from a UNDP methodology, as outlined in: UNDP. Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance Note. 2012. Available at: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/Institutional_and_Context_Analysis_Guidance_Note.html
Grantees can use this more detailed resource for more information on the components outlined in this document.
4 Project should discuss any changes to the seven steps with the OCFT Project Manager; proposed changes can be approved by the OCFT Project Manager.
a. The scope of the PSA should be determined by the project’s unique activities, outcomes, and objectives, and should cover all primary areas of planned project activities, as well as the methods outlined in Sections 3 – 6 of this document.
b. The scope will be determined by project staff in consultation with OCFT. Where parts of this guidance overlap with already-planned project activities, Grantees should discuss how to integrate or separate the PSA from the other activities. For example, if the Grantee plans to conduct a gap analysis, the Grantee and OCFT should determine whether this gap analysis should be part of the PSA, a separate activity, or if it will fulfill the Cooperative Agreement requirement for a PSA.
c. Define scope in terms of ‘what’ specific problem(s) are to be addressed and ‘why’ the analysis is needed. Be clear about primary purpose of the analysis versus additional ‘desirable’ areas of analysis, taking into account realistic time and budget resources available.
d. Consider best timing in relationship to CMEP and other project planning activities. PSAs can take anywhere from one to three months, depending on the scope and the availability of data sources. Plan for unforeseen delays with contingency plans and strategies for dealing with potential blockages from actors with competing interests.
e. Identify stakeholders whose buy-in is critical to project implementation, and consider involving them in the PSA.
f. Develop clear strategy for dealing with politically sensitive information and findings.

2) Develop a scope of work. Select a contractor or staff member(s) with the appropriate qualifications to conduct the work.

a. Based on the outcomes of the discussions under number 1 above, draft a written scope of the PSA for internal staff (or staff team), or Terms of Reference for an external contractor to complete PSA, including the components and scope of analysis agreed with OCFT, and adhering to the timeline outlined in the MPG.
b. The TOR/scope should include clear outputs for the steps outlined below, and must be approved by OCFT prior to moving forward.
c. The output of this PSA – the PSA report – can be brief, but should include, at a minimum, three sections (described below) unless otherwise agreed with OCFT:
   i. Mapping of institutions and stakeholders, including mapping of stakeholders against rating graphic provided below, with accompanying narrative;
   ii. Narrative identifying entry points most likely to bring success, as well as risks and mitigation strategies;
   iii. Narrative identifying: realistic potential for change by project intervention area, project activity areas to be prioritized and new or replacement strategies when previously planned approaches are shown to be unlikely to reach the project’s stated outcomes and objectives.

d. Any methodology that can satisfactorily address the three sections outlined above may be approved for use by the OCFT Project Manager. Regardless of methodology used to collect information, the contractor/staff should be required to triangulate data (use several data sources to verify information) wherever possible.
e. What qualifications or expertise should a PSA researcher possess? While the PSA researcher could be just one person (staff or contractor), the optimal situation would be for a mixed team of national and international staff to bring both cultural understanding and outsider views of dynamics, norms, and institutions to the PSA analysis. Regardless of the team composition, PSA researchers should have the credibility to interview stakeholders without being associated with a particular political agenda. We recommend that the staff or team possesses most or all of the following attributes:

i. Masters or Ph.D. in relevant area (social sciences), or Bachelor’s degree with significant work experience.

ii. Expertise in political economy or similar analyses.

iii. Experience in analyzing development challenges and linkages to the institutional context, preferably in areas related to child labor or forced labor.

iv. Expertise in semi-structured interviewing methods of social science research. Expertise in facilitating focus groups if this methodology is included in the PSA (the sensitivity of information being collected should be considered before choosing to conduct focus groups). Experience conducting interviews with any vulnerable groups to be interviewed. Expertise in analyzing qualitative data.

v. Basic level of understanding of gender-related issues and dynamics that can be underlying drivers of norms.

vi. Understanding of ethics standards of human subjects research, and the ability to comply with local human subjects and data protection laws, including those of informed consent.

vii. Experience drafting similar research, analytical reports, surveys or evaluations.

3) PSA Component 1: Stakeholder mapping and suggested planning for stakeholder engagement, based on understanding of incentives and constraints. This exercise should map formal and informal institutions that could affect the project’s planned activities, and try to understand the incentives they provide to actors that operate within them. The purpose is to understand the stakeholders’ incentives and constraints in order to develop a tailored engagement strategy on the identified areas that will allow the project to reach its outcomes and objectives. This section includes step-by-step procedures and helpful questions to ask during the process.

a. Map formal and informal institutions through methods such as desk review, individual interviews, focus groups, stakeholder analysis, and validation workshops.

i. Identify the existing legal framework and its policy or implementation gaps (Grantees may use OCFT resources, such as the TDA report, or other primary data collection sources).

ii. Identify groups that challenge the current status quo or legal framework (for better or for worse).

1. Guiding questions: Have they attempted reforms before? What were the results and why?

iii. Identify and describe the informal institutions that are likely to impede (constrain) or enable both the problem and the project’s activities.
1. Guiding questions: What are the formal or informal rules\(^5\) that prevent or enable legal frameworks or institutions to work? Is the project likely to challenge informal institutions directly or indirectly? If so, who is likely to defend these and how can the project strategy be adapted accordingly?

b. Map and analyze stakeholders (individuals, organizations, government officials, civil society, etc.) in the context of the formal and informal rules and institutions identified above, through methods such as desk reviews, individual interviews, focus groups, stakeholder analyses, and validation workshops. The purpose of mapping is to identify who is important to project activities, and to identify the best ways for projects to engage stakeholders in order to successfully achieve project outcomes.

   i. Guiding questions: What are the main interests of the stakeholders, and are there divisions within groups? Who benefits from the status quo versus changes brought about by the project? What could they lose or gain? What is their interest in the project? If past reform attempts have failed, why would stakeholders want them to work now? Who are potential allies? Who can block the project’s work? Who could work together if brought together by the project? What external factors may shape the opinions of the stakeholders?

   • Example: For a National Statistical Office and/or key personnel/sub-departments, identify: what are incentives and norms of work in the office (for example, work hours, cross-office collaboration, etc.); what are the power dynamics of relationships of the NSO with other Ministries, or divisions at the national and local levels; how could budget allocation processes and/or amounts influence willingness to engage; how do civil service codes (performance incentives) influence staff; or how do other legal or budget controls of the NSO influence staff?

   • Example: For a Labor Inspectorate, identify: who are key personnel/leadership, and are they likely allies or does the project need to work to gain their support; what are incentives and obstacles for leaders and staff-level inspectors, both bureaucratically and in the field; are there relationships with other Ministries that influence their work; who could they better work with to improve services; what would drive an individual inspector’s interest in the project’s area of work?

ii. After completing the analysis above, project leadership should define what “advocacy”, “close engagement”, “awareness raising”, and “empowerment” should mean during project life, and have the PSA contractor/staff/team make recommendations on how the project should engage each stakeholder by rating them from 1-4 on power and interest, and mapping them per graphic below.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) ‘Rules’ here are the formal or informal policies and procedures that govern the way people work in a given organization, culture, or country.

\(^6\) This exercise is similar to the common SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. See pages 23-25 of the UNDP resource for more information on this exercise. UNDP. Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance
iii. Propose tailored engagement strategies for individual stakeholders that clearly identify potential risks to the project, and use this mapping to prioritize engagement amongst stakeholders and allocate funds in Components 2 and 3.

4) PSA Component 2: Identify entry points or areas to begin efforts most likely to enable the project to successfully reach its outcomes and objectives, as well as risks and mitigation strategies for addressing identified risks.
   a. Have contractor or personnel analyze the recommended items below, in consultation with project team and OCFT:
      i. Most feasible entry points, and pros and cons (and costs, if relevant) of each;
      ii. Sensitivity of different entry points to changes in government, natural disaster, economy, etc.;
      iii. Identify risks of most likely entry points, and mitigation strategies, organized by major project intervention;
      iv. Recommend best path forward to accomplish project outcomes and objectives.

5) PSA Component 3: In realistic terms and based on Components 1 and 2 above, identify the best next steps that maximize the potential for the project to bring about change, organized by major project intervention. Identify steps to be prioritized, as well as new or replacement strategies when

previously planned approaches are shown to be unlikely to reach the project’s stated outcomes and objectives.

a. Guiding Questions: What kind of change is possible, and how likely is it? Is there any action that could be taken by stakeholders, or a coalition of stakeholders, that could support or impede the project’s activities?

b. If project is trying to change something that is a cultural tradition or otherwise sensitive, identify feasible progress and any win-win scenarios with stakeholders.

c. Clarify what the project can do within the project implementation time frame (this can feed into the CMEP theory of change or build from it, depending on timing). Be realistic.

d. Identify what the project cannot realistically do. If project cannot realistically influence progress, provide frank assessment of why and recommend other paths forward. The project should discuss these items with OCFT and work to ensure that relationships with any stakeholders invested in previously planned activities are handled in a sensitive manner.

e. Given the above analysis and available resources, what activities or strategies should be prioritized or minimized? What are recommended next steps? If there is time sensitive information that must be acted upon to immediately, the project should discuss this information with OCFT staff without delay.

6) Complete PSA Report and Submit to OCFT.

a. Once the analysis for the three PSA sections have been completed, a brief report should be assembled. The draft and final versions of the report should be submitted to OCFT as described in the MPG General Timetable of Deliverables.

7) Integrate recommendations from PSA into project planning, including strategy review memo and CMEP development, as applicable and as agreed with OCFT.