

**ETHICS**



**SURVIVAL**

**Special thanks to:**

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# **ETHICS SURVIVAL**

**A Local Government  
Manager's Guide  
to Assessing  
Ethical Health  
and Administering  
Necessary Care to  
Ethics Programs**

Perhaps nothing is as valuable to a local government as its reputation. Reputation is derived through trust—trust from the highest elected officials to the newest employee. It is a respect which must be earned not just over time, but each and every day. It has to permeate an organization, and, increasingly, as local governments in this interconnected, global economy rely upon procurement and contracts to provide services to our constituents—our reputation is also measured by those third parties.

This publication and related materials are an effort to enhance the ability of Virginia local governments to earn trust and respect—to help you to demonstrate how very, very good local governments can be.

In our view, that requires increased focus on our relationships with third parties for the achievement of the public’s objectives, and on ongoing means to assess each and every member of our governments and our third parties with regard to how we are doing. We try to think of it like the 1-800 number: Call us—How are our ethics? This constant reinforcement is, in our view, indispensable to effective and responsible governing.

These materials are intended to be resources. As one long-time public official said, ‘too many times a situation arises, and I look for help, but there do not seem to be any guidelines.’ This publication does not profess to be a comprehensive set of guidelines, but rather a tool kit, a resource, a guide.

It was just this year that the issue of Third Party Ethics reached such a level of attention and importance that the Conference Board published its own guide, “Finding the Right Balance,” as its members, the largest corporations in the world, came to appreciate how critical and fleeting one’s reputation can be unless you work hard—every day—to protect, enhance, and build it. It is our hope through this effort to enhance every public official’s ability to do just that.

- F. Shafroth



# **A brief look at what's inside...**

## **Introduction**

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Assessment Tool

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# A little help from your friends...

As you adventure through this guide, you will encounter a host of callout boxes. These callouts offer additional information, insight, or call your attention to critical information. Be on the lookout for:



## Case Studies

No need to reinvent the wheel. Some folks have “been there, done that.” We found a few. We’ll tell you about them here.



## Food for...

A good instructional tool should compel its readers to engage in discussion. This callout is intended to provide the spark.



## Quotes

In this callout you will find subject relevant quotes from people the world over.  
(Maybe even you)



## Attention

Your attention will be drawn here – you can’t help it. We will exploit that by placing critical info here.



“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”

- Warren Buffett



# INTRODUCTION



"First, Rufus will present the agonizing quandary of this ethical question."



## Introduction

How often do we make decisions every day without questioning whether our actions are consistent with the mission, values, and beliefs of our organization? Concerns about accountability and ethical behavior are not a response to sensational transgressions, but reflect the need to protect the public good by demonstrating transparency and building trust.

Do you want your organization to excel at its mission? And do you want it to do so both efficiently and effectively? Those organizations that accomplish these objectives on a consistent basis are characterized by high systemic accountability, trust, and integrity.

These attributes contribute toward greater organizational competitiveness, decisiveness, stakeholder loyalty, and prosperity. Convincing supporting arguments include:

- Guiding principles improve decision making and foster sustainability
- Establishing operating routines which reinforce accountability, ethical organizations are better able to increase productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness
- Ethical organizations are trusted by their constituents, and their employees, which leads to faster strategic decisions, and being able to attract and retain a stronger workforce
- Ethical organizations demonstrate good governance
- Strong, ethical leaders are focused and embrace their responsibility. They make wise decisions and guide others when multiple options and difficult choices must be made
- Sustained, ethical organizations demonstrate a commitment to serving the public and responsible stewardship

How does an individual or an organization measure ethical behavior? Similar to financial audits, ethical audits gauge an organization's efforts toward promoting compliance and minimizing risk by managing behavior that conflicts with ethical standards.



“Transcendent values like trust and integrity literally translate into revenue, profits, and prosperity.

- P. Aburdene

*Megatrends 2010*

An ethics assessment tool – such as the one in the following section of this manual is an excellent way to measure the overall health of your organization's ethics. An organization can choose to begin assessing its behaviors at any time; the initial assessment will help an organization understand the current condition, a “pulse check” if you will, which will provide you with the information necessary to build a stronger ethical climate. Ongoing assessments and reevaluations will help your organization commit to sustaining such a climate. 🌐



Winner of the 2008 World Bank Jit Gill Memorial Award for Outstanding Public Service, Karina Constantino-David, retired Chair of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of the Philippines (2001-2008), achieved this honor for successfully reforming that government's civil service pay system.

She championed merit and objective performance measurement, and fought systemic patronage and corruption. Constantino-David describes her advantage over those who tried to thwart her from her principles as "having no skeletons to hide" and "no fear" (Uy 2008).

Her accomplishments include: establishing a computerized database for the country's 1.4 million government workers, reforming the CSC's finances, establishing policies to reduce discretionary power, simplifying the reporting of employee financial assets and liabilities to increase ease and transparency, and reforming outdated protocols.

The result: greater accountability, trust, and integrity for both the organization and the individual and better execution of the organization's mission.

Section

1

# ASSESS



"Make sure everything's done ethically.  
Within reason, of course."



## Assess

Each assessment focus area may be completed individually or taken and considered as a whole. It is important to note that each focus area tends to build on the other. Any time there is a breakdown in one or more of these areas, the organization's ability to achieve its mission may suffer as a result of poor decisions. Poor decision making leads to actions that are inconsistent with an organization's core values, stated ethics code, or best business practices.



An individual assessment is designed to determine the perspective of each participant. Although individual assessment questions tend to focus on a single person's behavior and decisions in relation to their work, questions may also relate to behavior and decisions made outside the workplace. Individuals who consistently act in an ethical manner contribute to building an ethical culture that utilizes ethical systems and ethical compliance measures.

Compliance assessments focus on an organization's compliance with applicable policies, procedures, rules, standards, and laws.

Cultural assessments explore the perceived ethical effectiveness of employees, managers, and other stakeholders with regard to internal core values, beliefs, practices, and the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. Leadership, communication, change management, and confidence are also addressed here. Unlike the individual or compliance assessments, the cultural assessment often points to patterns of behavior and the causes of these behaviors. Knowing the root cause of a behavior may assist in modifying the culture for better results.

Systems assessments are the broadest and most comprehensive approach. Systems assessment is intended to examine the relationships within and between multiple components, including (Navran):

- Environment
- Resources
- History
- Mission
- Strategic goals
- Strategic plans
- Task definition
- Formal systems
- Informal systems
- Individuals
- Feedback

Honest answers are critical to helping your organization determine its ethical baseline. Please take all necessary steps to ensure that the identity of all assessment participants remains absolutely confidential.

## Assess

After the assessment is completed and scored by all participants in your organization, its results can be used for two purposes:

- 1) to continue to foster ethical behavior and;
- 2) to enhance the organization's values, practices and overall effectiveness.

The results from each of the assessments that follow will help your organization commit to implementing strategies that affirm positive results or make changes that will help to better align future decisions and choices with the organization's core values. 🏛️



“...institutional assessment efforts should not be concerned about valuing what can be measured but, instead, about measuring that which is valued.”

- T. Banta, J. Lund, L. Black, F. Oblander

# Assess

## DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ASSESSMENT

### TYPES OF QUESTIONS

There are four types of questions in this assessment.

#### *Questions about Individual Perceptions*

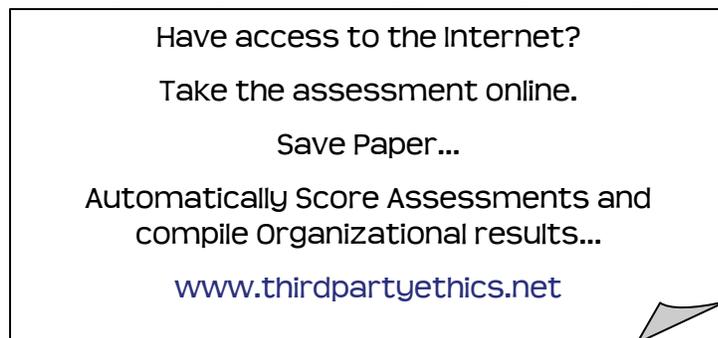
These questions generally appear in the form of “I think” or “I do” something. These questions are designed to determine the perspective of each participant—whether a manager, support staffer, line staffer, official, board member, etc.

#### *Questions about Organizational Culture*

These questions are focused on the perceptions of employees, managers and other stakeholders about the internal core values, beliefs, practices and effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

#### *Questions about Compliance*

These questions are designed to determine whether the organization generally complies and encourages compliance with applicable policies, procedures, rules, standards and laws.



#### *Questions about Systems*

These questions are intended to examine the values of the organization as perceived by customers, vendors and other external stakeholders within its environment.

### HOW TO TAKE THIS ASSESSMENT

This assessment is virtually self-explanatory. In each section, simply read the questions and choose only one response for each question from the following options:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know

There is no pressure or time limit for completing this assessment so please consider your answers thoughtfully and carefully.

# Assess

## HOW TO USE THE RESULTS OF THIS ASSESSMENT

After all participants have completed the assessment process, compile and score your organization's overall assessment. Use the matrixes in the "Build" section of this manual to assess your organization's ethical health and develop an action plan. Communication of the results and your plan of action throughout the organization will encourage dialogue about the organization's values as they relate to staff, customers, vendors, board members, volunteers and other stakeholders. Understanding these values will assist leaders in determining what resources in the "ethical toolkit" will best meet the organization's needs.

## HOW TO SCORE THE COMPLETED ASSESSMENT

To the left of each checkbox a number appears indicating the value for that checkbox's response to the question associated with the checkbox. The assessment uses both positive and negative worded questions – the values of the responses vary for each. This requires greater attention when completing and scoring the assessment.

At the end of each assessment section are spaces for calculating total scores for each column and then the overall total for the section. A space to calculate the overall assessment score appears at the end of the "Systems" section of questions along with a scoring methodology.

Example:

Assessment Section	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know – N/A
Question (Positive Wording)	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question (Negative Wording)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Column Score:	__	__	__	__	--
Total Section Score:	____ (sum columns) : ____ (%)				
Overall Assessment Score:	____ (sum all sections) : ____ (%)				

## Assess

### INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

The questions in this section apply to the individual's perception of his or her own ethical conduct.

Individual Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
1. I view myself as impartial and objective.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I value and promote honesty, integrity, and fairness in my organization.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I treat my co-workers fairly and equally regardless of their race, religious beliefs, or gender.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Co-workers are not receptive to discussions about ethical issues.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I maintain the confidence that others entrust in me.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I fulfill the promises I make to others.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My organization's code of ethics is confusing and difficult to understand.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I believe ethical values are the foundation upon which individuals make decisions.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My actions are in conflict with my organization's policy and governing professional associations' ethical standards.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I understand my role and responsibility to report any instance of ethical misconduct.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I have divulged confidential information.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I advocate ethical decision-making among my peers, supervisors, and elected governing officials.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I don't have mentors to ask for advice when making ethically challenging decisions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. There are resources available to me if I am faced with an ethical issue.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. In decision-making, I place community benefit over personal gain.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I have knowingly violated an organizational rule or procedure.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Assess

Individual Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know – N/A
17. I conduct personal business on my employer's time.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I have engaged in negative gossip about other employees or about the organization.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I have accepted a gift meant to influence my professional judgment.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I have never taken credit for someone else's idea or work.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I have manipulated the truth for personal or organizational gain.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I have purposely withheld information needed by others.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I have knowingly delivered or provided a service that was of low quality.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. I feel that my actions have an effect on public perception of the organization.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. I think the "right" thing to do is always clear and easy to recognize.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Column Score:					--
Total Individual Score:					%



Jeanine works as an administrative assistant for a local government, in the fleet management shop. The shop has a contract to dispose of automotive anti-freeze in a safe, legal and environmentally responsible manner. During the course of her work, Jeanine comes across documents that suggest that the vendor has actually been disposing of some of this toxic waste in the local municipal landfill. Jeanine is shocked. She knows this practice is illegal and seems to her to be a worrisome threat to public health.

Jeanine gathers together the documents and takes them to her boss, Dave. Dave says, "Look, I don't think that sort of thing is your concern, or mine. We're in charge of record-keeping, not making decisions. I suggest you drop it."

Jeanine considers her situation. She strongly suspects that making further inquiries about this issue could jeopardize her job.

What should Jeanine do?

## Assess

### ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The questions in this part of the assessment are focused upon how employees, managers and other stakeholders perceive the culture of the organization, its ethical standards and its effectiveness as a whole.

Organizational Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
1. The organization has implemented a Code of Ethics.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The organization promotes a professional code of ethics and/or values statement.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Employees are not given any information regarding the organizational code of ethics upon hire.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A Code of Ethics is provided to employees.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ethics training is available through the organization.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ethics training is voluntary for employees.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The ethics training offered prepares employees to deal with ethical conflicts.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. No one in the organization is explicitly tasked with overseeing ethical issues in the organization.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My co-workers and supervisors are ethical.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The leaders in the organization are good role models of ethical behavior.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. My manager has only his/her best interest in mind.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Decision makers provide positive feedback when ethical issues are brought forward.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The organization maintains a safe atmosphere to report the misconduct of others.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Employees are not comfortable discussing ethical concerns with their supervisors.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Employees in the organization routinely tell their supervisors of behavior that they believe is unethical.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Assess

Organizational Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
16. Ethical issues can be raised in my organization without fear of retribution or reprisal.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. People in the organization are generally treated fairly and equitably.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My organization:</b>					
18. Applies ethical standards across all strata of the organization.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Neither recognizes nor publicly rewards ethical behavior.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Does not hold employees accountable to the organization's ethical standards.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Has a program or procedure to prevent any form of discrimination.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Does not communicate information about its ethics policies, practices, and expectations to its vendors.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Is receptive to the needs of customers.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Conducts ethics training for its customers.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Asks its customers/citizens about their perceptions of its ethics.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Column Score:					--
Total Organizational Score:					%

## Assess

### COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

Similar to traditional financial audits, this section of the assessment focuses on what laws, regulations, policies and standards apply to the organization and whether the organization is complying with these mandates

Compliance Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
1. The organization has written policies that apply to ethical behavior.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The organization generally enforces its ethics policies.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The organization has no policy requiring the reporting of ethical misconduct.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The organization has policies and procedures in place to ensure proper documentation of unethical activities.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The organization has been cited with legal/ethical violations mandated by a regulatory authority or a court in the past three years.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The organization offers ongoing training to managers on how to implement its ethics policies, procedures, and activities.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The organization offers ongoing training to line staff on its ethics policies, procedures, and activities.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The organization takes no corrective action when employees commit theft, misappropriation, or embezzlement.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The organization has no ethics review board.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The organization has an ethics review process.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The organization conducts regular ethical surveys/audits.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Assess

Compliance Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
12. The organization has no procedure to implement timely corrective action for deficiencies identified by ethics audits.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The organization has a program or procedure to protect confidentiality whether verbal, written or electronic.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Reporting misconduct is a confidential process free of retaliation or reprisal.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Management has no commitment to integrity and ethical behavior in their day-to-day activities.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Column Score:					--
Total Compliance Score:					%



“We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.”

- J. F. Kennedy

## Assess

### SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

Questions in this section focus on the organization as a “system” and how it functions with external stakeholders in its environment.

Systems Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know – N/A
1. The organization treats all of its customers equally and fairly.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The organization disregards ethical considerations when conducting business.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The organization’s customers perceive it to be ethical.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Vendors and suppliers perceive the organization to be ethical.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The organization does not solicit feedback from its vendors and suppliers in terms of “satisfaction surveys” or polls.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The organization’s written policies address employees’ unethical conduct or deliberate or reckless violation of ethics rules relative to customers, vendors and/or the public.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The organization has received complaints about ethical aspects of its procurement process.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The organization promotes familiarity and compliance with policies governing relationships with customers, vendors and suppliers, the public, and elected or appointed officials.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Access to system software and information is controlled and monitored.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The organization documents to whom access to sensitive or confidential system software and information is granted.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The organization conducts business even if a conflict of interest exists.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The organization concerns itself with the legal, not ethical, aspects of business.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Assess

Systems Assessment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know - N/A
13. The organization understands that its cumulative behavior as well as its independent actions must be perceived as ethical.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The organization only conducts business with vendors and suppliers it perceives as ethical. The organization encourages its vendors and suppliers to establish ethics policies.	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The organization has no policies and procedures concerning conflicts of interest with external stakeholders.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Column Score:					--
Total Compliance Score:					%
Total Assessment Score:					%

### Scoring



The maximum total for the:

- Individual assessment = **100** points
- Organizational assessment = **100** points
- Compliance assessment = **60** points
- Systems assessment is **60** points

The maximum total for the entire assessment = **320** points

Divide the total assessment section score by the maximum number for that section and convert the resulting decimal to a percent score

**Example for an overall assessment with a total score of 256**

$$256 \div 320 = .80 \text{ (80\%)}$$



Section

# 2

## BUILD



"Let's take a minute to allow  
the bad karma of the old regime to lift."



**ASSESSING YOUR ETHICAL HEALTH  
STRATEGY – RECOMMENDATION MATRIX**



**HOW TO USE THIS MATRIX:** This matrix is designed to allow organizations to evaluate all four areas of ethics (individual, organization, compliance, and systems) individually or cumulatively. Score ranges are ranked high, medium, or low based on your assessment results. Each score level includes a description of what the score means, opportunities for action, and category indicators identifying which component(s) of ethics the actions can improve.

Categories indicators are defined as follows:

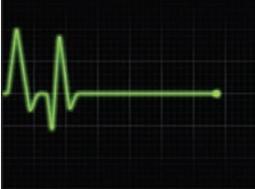
**INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS = I  
ORGANIZATION = O  
COMPLIANCE = C  
SYSTEMS = S**

Assessment Score	What Does it Mean?	Opportunities for Action
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>High</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Score: 90% - 100%</p>	<p><b>Assessment: Excellent</b></p> <p><b>I</b> - Individual(s) within the organization recognize the value of ethical principles in decision-making and consistently adheres to high ethical standards.</p> <p><b>O</b> - Ethical standards across the spectrum of the organization are highly valued by employees, managers and other stakeholders who strive to make ethical decisions on a daily basis.</p> <p><b>C</b> – There is full compliance with laws, regulations, policies and standards applicable to the organization.</p> <p><b>S</b> – The organization’s policies contribute to a highly ethical environment creating positive and ethical interactions with external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Continue reinforcing the value of ethical behavior to the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish an Ethics Award Program (<b>I,O</b>)</li> <li>✓ Appoint highly recommended and proven employees to an ethics review board or to the ethics liaison program (<b>I, O</b>)</li> <li>✓ Include ethics evaluation question(s) on citizen/customer survey (<b>I, O, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Ensure the code of ethics and other policies are reviewed on a regular basis by internal and external stakeholders for relevance and applicability to current circumstances and environment (<b>O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Ensure regular audits for all lines of business are conducted and reviewed for action (<b>O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Review opportunities for action listed below to enhance current program effectiveness</li> </ul>

## Build

Assessment Score	What Does it Mean?	Opportunities for Action
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Average</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Section Score 70% - 89%</p>	<p><b>Assessment: Good, but should continue on a path of continuous improvement.</b></p> <p><b>I</b> - An individual(s) within the organization is cognizant of ethical values and generally makes good ethical decisions.</p> <p><b>O</b> - Indicates that ethical standards across the spectrum of the organization are valued by employees, managers, and other stakeholders, but there may be gaps preventing full buy-in.</p> <p><b>C</b> - There is generally full compliance with laws, regulations, policies and standards applicable to the organization.</p> <p><b>S</b> - The organization's policies contribute to an ethical environment creating generally positive and ethical interactions with external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Increase the reinforcement of the value of ethical behavior to the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase regular communications received by staff and the public (newsletters, highlights on website and/or Intranet, emails, pledge cards) <b>(I, O, S)</b></li> <li>✓ Enhance ethics training program to include relevant case studies and interactive decision making <b>(I, O)</b></li> <li>✓ Develop an ethics liaison program in which individuals have a resource to discuss ethical dilemmas on a day-to-day basis <b>(I, O, C, S)</b></li> <li>✓ Convene an ethics assessment action committee or solicit an outside consultant to help identify problem areas (low scoring questions) and possible ways to improve the organization's ethics program <b>(I, O, C, S)</b></li> <li>✓ Implement and commit to regular ethics audits to measure progress <b>(I, O, C, S)</b></li> <li>✓ Review opportunities for action listed below to enhance current program effectiveness</li> </ul>

## Build

Assessment Score	What Does it Mean?	Opportunities for Action
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Low</b></p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Score: 0%- 69%</p>	<p><b>Assessment: Poor, immediate action required.</b></p> <p><b>I</b> – An individual(s) within the organization does not find a connection between ethical principles and personal decisions and actions. An individual(s) scoring low in this area may engage in unethical and possibly illegal behavior.</p> <p><b>O</b> - Indicates that ethical standards across the spectrum of the organization are not valued by employees, managers, and other stakeholders. There are significant gaps in the organization’s approach to communicating and fostering an ethical environment.</p> <p><b>Compliance</b> – There is generally full compliance with laws, regulations, policies and standards applicable to the organization.</p> <p><b>Systems</b> – The organization’s policies contribute to an ethical environment creating positive and ethical interactions with external stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop written standards of conduct (<b>I, O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Ensure laws, regulations, policies are documented, updated regularly, and communicated to appropriate parties (<b>C</b>)</li> <li>✓ Establish an agency auditor to review all lines of business on a regular basis (<b>C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Discuss code of ethics during new employee orientation (<b>I, O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Solicit community support by engaging them in the process of creating an ethical organization (<b>O, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Implement a formal ethics training program which is required on predetermined basis (within first year of employment, every 2 years, every 3 years, etc.) (<b>I, O</b>)</li> <li>✓ Develop a communications strategy for ethics (newsletters, website, intranet, posters, pledge cards) (<b>I, O</b>)</li> <li>✓ Establish an ethics hotline (<b>I, O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Enforce discipline for violations of the ethical standards (<b>I, O, C, S</b>)</li> <li>✓ Consult with legal and regulatory stakeholders on possible violations and take immediate action to establish an external audit function for financial and information technology systems (<b>C, S</b>)</li> </ul>

## Build

**C**ongratulations, you have completed one or all of the Assessments for Individuals, Cultures, Systems and Compliance and you have scored the results to determine where you and your work team, division, agency or entire organization fall on the Strategy – Recommendation Matrix.

This completes the first step in building ethical behaviors, and good judgment/decision-making into the daily activities of your organization. Equally important, these behaviors will likely resonate in partnering agencies and organizations with which you regularly interact as the expectations of all healthy relationships is one of trust and respect built upon honesty and trustworthiness. 🙏



### Build Ethical Habits

- 🕒 Do a regular principles check
- 🕒 Make ethics part of routine operations
- 🕒 Commit to training and compliance
- 🕒 Offer opportunities to discuss ethical issues
- 🕒 Seek counsel and advice when in doubt
- 🕒 Be consistent in enforcement actions and messages
- 🕒 Recognize and commend employees' expressions of ethical concerns

Section

# 3

## COMMIT



"Remember, you can fool some of the people all of the time.  
Those are the people we need to concentrate on."



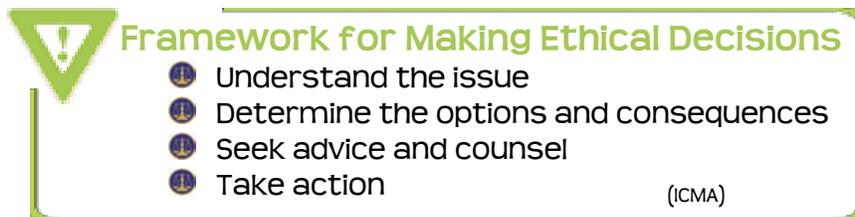
# Commit

## COMMITTING TO AN ETHICAL CULTURE

### What Now?

**D**epending upon the assessment results from each of the various sections, you are ready to commit to the implementation of strategies that affirm the positive results or create the necessary changes to improve the likelihood that future decisions and choices will be aligned with the core values of the organization. As stated above, individuals who consistently act in ethical ways and always use their best judgment in choices and decisions contribute to an ethical culture that uses ethical systems and ethical compliance measures. However, anytime there is a breakdown in one or more of these areas, the organization may suffer from poor decisions or choices that result in actions inconsistent with their core values, stated ethics code or simply business practices that contribute to successful achievement of their mission.

Whether the assessment results indicate a highly ethical organization, or one in need of education, training, and monitoring for improvement – the follow-up guidelines below offer steps to take in building an improved environment and committing to sustaining its health and alignment with your core values. Each focus area represents a specific element of a larger complementary system – with individuals making ethical decisions as the foundation for the



**Framework for Making Ethical Decisions**

- 1 Understand the issue
- 2 Determine the options and consequences
- 3 Seek advice and counsel
- 4 Take action

(ICMA)

other areas. Individuals work within cultures and systems that adhere to structural constraints on their actions that often contribute positively or negatively to their

individual choices and decisions. Collectively, organizations will benefit from creating and sustaining ethical practices in all areas and continuing to self-assess their adherence to and alignment with their core values and mission.

### ***Implementing the Results of the Ethical Assessment Tool***

Ideally, the assessment results indicate that all the individuals within your organization are operating in an ethical manner. Regardless of whether individual scores are shared, completion of the assessment offers a terrific opportunity for discussion of ethical behaviors and how they contribute to the ethical culture by using organized and facilitated discussions. Critical to the success of any effort to assess, build and commit to sustaining an ethical organization is the priority expressed by the organizations' leadership to investing the time and resources necessary to empower each member of the organization with the belief that their individual daily actions make the difference.

As public service organizations grow and evolve into the 21st century, there is a greater emphasis on efficiency and accountability for use of public resources. Technology provides both mechanisms for more effective oversight, but may also create opportunities for abuse. This is particularly important in assessing the transparency and reliability of systems and compliance audits for ensuring ethical outcomes. Achieving and sustaining a highly ethical culture of

## Commit

individuals can be undermined by systems that encourage or allow unethical behaviors to be hidden or ignored.

Successful ethical organizations take the results of these assessment tools and apply them in a positive self-reflective manner, that encourages open and respectful dialogues between all levels of the organization. Use of the assessment questions in group discussions below will encourage the steps necessary to build and commit to a sustainable ethical culture. The Opportunities for Action in the recommendation matrix offer numerous ways for improving and empowering ethical decision making and good judgment in situations where individuals or systems may be challenged.

### *Facilitating Discussion*

#### *Individual & Cultural Assessments*

- Discuss the organizational leadership's support and examples of why ethical decisions are important to successful alignment with core values and mission;
- Discuss the results of implementing the assessment tool within an organization by having an independent and objective facilitator review each of the assessment questions:
  - By department
  - By geography
  - Among elected governing bodies and constitutional officers
  - Among professional staff
  - Among interns, volunteers, part-time and temporary staff
- Discuss expected outcomes and relationship of assessment results to actual evaluation results using small-group discussions and group table top exercises that call for specific remedies and/or follow-up actions – if warranted, and commitment to core value alignment by all organizational members.
- Discuss Cultural assessment questions and use results of the cultural table top exercises as part of the evaluation/discussion of results by work group, division, department, etc. This will illustrate the importance of how cultural environments contribute to or hinder the opportunity of individuals to make the most ethical choices or decisions.



### **Long Lunch, I Deserve It (Improper Use of Agency Time)**

You are a new employee in a government agency and have started to notice that several employees always go to lunch together with their boss. It seems that these lunch periods are getting longer and longer, beginning with a an extra 15-20 minutes, which now seems to have become 30 -45 minutes longer than the allowed period. You start increasing your lunch period as no one seems to care.

Is this a problem?

(Navigating Everyday Dilemmas, 34)

# Commit

## *Systems & Compliance Assessments*

- Discuss Systems assessment questions and scoring results with discussion building upon Individual and Cultural results. Determine how the scoring indicates alignment with previous results, and/or recognition of discrepancies – what this means, and how to address remedies and changes to policies and practices that encourage ethical systems are structurally sound and implementable within the organization.
- Compliance assessment results indicate the effectiveness of checks and balances within a particular system or application. While these are typically regulatory in nature, they often depend upon ethically sound decisions and actions of individuals and cultures to implement successfully.



### **Bad Bookkeeping (Politically Unpopular Decision)**

You work for a public sector organization that mistakenly over-claimed central government funding for several consecutive years – by substantial amounts. You are tasked with filing future reimbursement reports, but are asked by superiors to keep the past mistakes confidential because returning the funds would cause severe financial hardship to the organization, perhaps causing it to end its operations. The leadership claims this was unintentional and does not intend to over claim in the future. No one is directly harmed by the previous errors and the funds were properly spent on legitimate activities. However, current staff might be adversely affected or punished (lose their jobs) should the funds need to be returned.

How would you handle this situation?

(Navigating Everyday Dilemmas, 29)

### ***Navigating Everyday Dilemmas – Additional Case Studies for Discussion***

The previous work completed in 2007 by George Mason University’s MPA Cohort 4 contained an extensive collection of toolbox resources. Many of the group discussion cases they identified are ideal for use in facilitating the table top exercises suggested here. These short discussion starters can be found in pages 29-35 of *The Ethical GPS: Navigating Everyday Dilemmas*.



“If it is not right do not do it;  
if it is not true do not say it.”

- Marcus Aurelius

# Commit

## *Ethics Assessments Pitfalls & Obstacles*

**N**ow that you have completed the ethical assessment and determined an appropriate course of action, be aware of the following potential obstacles.

First – is this really important? Do I really need to do anything at all? Yes! To maintain the public trust. Citizens must believe that the actions of governments and government officials are taken in the best interests of the public. Without public trust, governments that derive their power from the consent of the governed will cease to function efficiently and the essential mechanisms of a free society will begin to break down.(GMU) Further, failure to adhere to relevant regulations and laws could lead to legal sanctions.

How do I make difficult decisions? Sometimes, becoming a more ethical organization requires managers to make difficult decisions, such as terminating an employee or severing a relationship with a trusted vendor. However, it is critical that “organizations...commit to follow-through, or else the effort to conduct the ethics audit will be reduced to useless window dressing.” (Delaney)

What if the results are unfavorable? Having a clearer understanding of your organization’s ethical baseline provides a roadmap for change. Without identifying areas that are deficient, an organization cannot develop strategies for improvement.

What if there is resistance to change? The ethical assessment may illustrate the need to revise or implement various policies, procedures, and processes. People are more likely to resist change if it is perceived as a threat to their position, power or authority. Successfully changing an organization’s culture requires the “integration of new goals, values, beliefs, systems, leadership styles, and practices.” (Applebaum)



### The Leadership Responsibility

- ⌚ Everyone watches you
- ⌚ You set the tone for the organization
- ⌚ Champion ethical behavior
- ⌚ Accept responsibility for mistakes
- ⌚ Encourage people to ask for advice when they are unsure
- ⌚ Acknowledge that you seek advice, too (ICMA)

A transparent, well-planned process may help to reduce resistance. For example:

- Step 1: Leaders commit to change and set a clear direction.
- Step 2: Align changes with operational context; ensure that members of the organization understand the reasons for change and how those changes will affect them.
- Step 3: Create a process to plan, communicate, manage, and implement change. Include employees from all levels of the organization.
- Step 4: Develop a mechanism to review the effect of various changes on the organization (e.g., repeating the ethical assessment).(Oakland)

## Commit

This brief manual was designed to set leaders on the path to managing their personal ethics and the ethics of their organization effectively. The study of ethical behavior is a vast undertaking – this work just scratches the surface. Managing an organization’s ethics is an important undertaking and the utilization of this manual and the toolkit is a strong first step. Below are some additional resources that may assist you in your continued endeavor to manage and lead a culture of strong ethics. The authors hope you have found this tool useful and wish you continued ethical success. 🌍

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Individual

Cooper, T. (2006). *The responsible administrator: An approach to ethics for the administrative role* (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kidder, R. (1995). *How good people make tough choices: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

Lennick, D., & Kiel, F. (2005). *Moral intelligence: Enhancing business performance & leadership success*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

#### Organization

Covey, S. M. (2006). *The speed of trust: The one thing that changes everything*. New York: Free Press.

Marchicha, J. (2004). *The accountable organization: Reclaiming integrity, restoring trust*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.

Menzel, D. (2007). *Ethics management for public administrators: Building organizations of integrity*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

#### Compliance

Singer, B. (2004). *The ABC’s of building a business team that wins: The invisible code of honor that takes ordinary people and turns them into a championship team*. New York: Warner Books.

#### Systems

Menzel, D. (2007). *Ethics management for public administrators: Building organizations of integrity*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.



“That you may retain your self-respect, it is better to displease the people by doing what you know is right, than to temporarily please them by doing what you know is wrong.”

- W. Boetcker



# APPENDIX



"Exactly how badly do we want to reach our projections?"



## Appendix

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- "World Ethics Forum." Conference Report. 09 Apr 2006. Oxford University. 7 Oct 2008 <[http://www.iipe.org/conference\\_report.pdf](http://www.iipe.org/conference_report.pdf)>.

