

Practical Implementation Tips

Selecting a Focus

Select an Outcome Aligned with Anticipated Implementation

Ask yourself, the assessment sponsor, and/or the core team membership:

1. Are there specific issues you'd like to address through this effort?
2. Are there initiatives (e.g., new IT projects) you want this effort to support?
3. Do you want a general idea of your gaps or a specific action plan to follow?
4. Do you have resources and support to implement assessment outcomes?

Then, consider and select an appropriate assessment outcome:

Assessment Outcome	Anticipated Implementation
<p>Detailed Action Plan</p> <p>Establish a prioritized improvement action plan, with clear responsibilities and anticipated timelines for action.</p>	<p>Use this approach if you want to identify and carry out specific actions to advance maturity – and key decision-makers are willing to commit resources and take immediate actions to advance priority recommendations.</p>
<p>General Action Plan</p> <p>Establish a prioritized improvement action plan, without delegating responsibilities and timelines for action.</p>	<p>Use this approach to provide clear improvement recommendations for decision-makers – this is recommended when dedicated resources are not yet available, but there is a desire to motivate investment and action in the near term.</p>
<p>Detailed Improvement List</p> <p>Identify and evaluate specific improvement activities to produce a detailed list of needs.</p>	<p>Use this approach if your goal is to produce a very specific set of improvement actions necessary to advance specific data and information system capabilities.</p> <p>This will follow the base NCHRP Report 956 assessment approach and is recommended when a specific set of working actions is intended for implementation within a narrow focus area (e.g., a specific system, data capability, or business area).</p>
<p>Gap Analysis</p> <p>Identify and summarize general gap areas and potential improvement actions.</p>	<p>Use this approach if your main goal is to benchmark current program performance and identify areas for possible advancement. This approach can be used to raise awareness and create discussion even if you are not ready or able to commit to taking immediate action.</p>

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Limit the Assessments to Selected Elements

- **Be mindful of participant time and avoid participant burnout** by targeting the assessment on a limited set of key assessment elements.
- **Use the TAM Data Assessment Element Selection Matrix spreadsheet tool** to help select elements to include.
- **Share the targeted assessment elements** - selections you make in the spreadsheet tool are can easily be copied to the assessment kickoff presentation materials and assessment results summary presentation and tools.

Get a Common Understanding of the Scope

- **Be clear about what should be considered in the assessment and improvement planning conversations.** Clarify:
 - Which specific assets are we talking about?
 - Which business processes?
 - Which systems/tools?
 - What time frame?
- **Interpret the assessment elements with the scope in mind** – for example, for the purposes of the assessment, how should participants differentiate:
 - Area A & B: “Projects” from “Maintenance”
 - Area C: “Project Planning”, “Project Development”, and “Project Delivery”
 - Note: consider highlighting specific business processes, products, systems, or data to help bring home these concepts.
- **Understand current processes, data and tools** – have subject matter experts share basic information as background to future group assessment discussion.