

IMPLEMENTING CITIZEN REPORT CARDS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

A RESOURCE KIT



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OBJECTIVES OF THE RESOURCE KIT

This “model field handbook” has been developed from an earlier product designed by Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore for the Asian Development Bank, Manila.

The document is divided into 10 modules. Each module discusses a particular stage in the CRC methodology and emphasizes both theoretical and practical aspects. Each module begins with a list of learning objectives and concludes with a summary of key concepts and tools learned.

Module 1: Introduction to the Citizen Report Card

Objectives of Module 1

This module introduces the rationale, concept and features of the Citizen Report Card (CRC). On completing this module, the reader should be able to

- Understand what a CRC is and
- Appreciate why CRCs are useful

1.1 What is a Citizen Report Card?

Evolved from the pioneering experience of Bangalore in India and disseminated in many countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Ethiopia and Tanzania, the Citizen Report Card (CRC)¹ is an international best practice tool for improving service delivery. CRCs collect feedback through sample surveys on aspects of service quality that users know best, and enable public agencies to identify strengths and weaknesses in their work. CRCs entail a randomized sample survey of the users of different public services (utilities), and the aggregation of the users' experiences as a basis for rating the services. CRCs facilitate prioritization of reforms and corrective actions by drawing attention to the problems highlighted. By means of collecting citizen feedback on the quality and adequacy of public services from actual users, CRC provides a rigorous basis and a proactive agenda for communities and local governments to engage in a dialogue to improve the delivery of public services.

The term "Report Card" comes from the school progress report cards that students receive. A simple school progress card shows how a student is performing in a particular subject as well as his or her overall performance and rank (position) in the class. For example, consider the following school report card of Arti:

Subject	Maximum marks	Actual Marks	Highest Mark in the Class
Languages	100	78	78
Mathematics	100	47	98
Sciences	100	58	92
History	100	73	75
Geography	100	63	81
Total	500	319	420 – overall score of the top performer
Rank in the class	15 out of 35 students		

¹ The Citizen Report Card was developed in Bangalore, India. Frustrated with the poor condition of public services, a group of private citizens undertook a one-time effort to collect feedback from the users of services.

The success of the initial effort in Bangalore led to the creation of the Public Affairs Centre, a non-governmental organization committed to improving the quality of governance in India. Since 1995, the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) has independently and in partnerships carried out numerous Citizen Report Cards in Bangalore and in various locations within India and around the world.

This simple school report card provides a number of valuable information to Arti:

- She is doing extremely well in languages
- She needs to improve a lot in Mathematics and Sciences
- Her overall marks and rank in the class show that she is an average student
- By knowing the top marks and comparing that with her own marks, Arti now knows her strengths and weaknesses
- By having an objective and useful data before her, Arti can now plan on how to improve her marks and rank

Citizen Report Card uses the same concepts of “measurement” and “comparison” as used in a school progress report card. By organizing user feedback, a CRC can measure and rank the performance of public service agencies. The CRC methodology envisages the following objectives:

- ***Generate citizen feedback on the degree of satisfaction with the services provided by various public service agencies and also, provide reliable estimates of corruption and other hidden costs***
- ***Catalyze citizens and civil society organizations to demand more accountability, accessibility and responsiveness from the service providers***
- ***Serve as a diagnostic tool for service providers, external consultants and analysts/researchers to facilitate effective prognosis and solutions***
- ***Encourage public agencies to adopt and promote citizen friendly practices, design performance standards and facilitate transparency in operations.***

In more practical terms, Citizen Report Cards give the following strategic inputs:

- a. Provide benchmarks on access, adequacy and quality of public services as experienced by citizens: Citizen Report Cards go beyond the specific problems that individual citizens face and place each issue in the perspective of other elements of service design and delivery, as well as a comparison with other services, so that a strategic set of actions can be initiated.
- a. Provide measures of citizen satisfaction to prioritise corrective actions: Citizen Report Cards capture citizens’ feedback in clear, simple and unambiguous fashion by indicating their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When this measure of citizen satisfaction or dissatisfaction is viewed from a comparative perspective, it gives very valuable information to prioritise corrective actions. For example, the most basic feedback a citizen may give about power supply is total dissatisfaction. To appreciate this feedback, it must be related to the ratings given to other services by the same person. For example, water supply may be rated worse than power supply. When these two pieces of information are compared, one can conclude that power supply may be a cause of dissatisfaction, but the priority for corrective action may be on water supply.
- b. Provide indicators of problem areas in the delivery of public services: Citizen Report Cards enquire into specific aspects of interaction between the service agency and the citizens, and seek to identify issues experienced by citizens in interfacing with the services. In more simple terms, Citizen Report Cards suggest that dissatisfaction has causes, which may be related to the quality of services enjoyed by citizens (like reliability of power supply, or availability of

medicines in a public hospital); difficulties encountered while dealing with the agency to solve service related issues like excess billing or complaints of power supply breakdown.

- c. Provide reliable estimates on corruption and other hidden costs: Corruption, though widespread and rampant, often exists in the realm of anecdotes without any quantitative base. This 'subjectivity' of corruption has severely undermined both corrective and collective responses. ***CRCs give very objective information on the nature and spread of corruption and other hidden costs.***
- d. Provides a mechanism to explore citizens' alternatives for improving public services: Citizen Report Cards go beyond collecting feedback on existing situations from citizens. They are also a means of testing out different options that citizens wish to exercise, individually or collectively, to tackle various problems. For example, Citizen Report Cards can provide information on whether citizens are willing to pay more for better quality of services or be part of citizens' bodies made responsible for managing garbage clearance in the locality.

1.2 Why use a Citizen Report Card?

CRCs are a powerful tool when used as part of a local or regional plan to improve services. Institutions undertaking a program to improve services could use CRCs to determine whether the changes taking place are necessary and to evaluate the impact of these changes.

As a diagnostic tool:

The CRC can provide citizens and governments with qualitative and quantitative information about prevailing standards and gaps in service delivery. It also measures the level of public awareness about citizens' rights and responsibilities². Thus, the CRC is a powerful tool when the monitoring of services is weak provides a comparative picture about the quality of services and compares feedback across locations/demographic groups to identify segments where service provision is significantly weak.

As an accountability tool:

The CRC reveals areas where the institutions responsible for service provision have not achieved mandated or expected service standards. Findings can be used to identify and demand specific improvements in services. Officials can be stimulated to work towards addressing specific issues.

As a benchmarking tool:

The CRC, if conducted periodically, can track changes in service quality over time. Comparison of findings across CRCs will reveal improvements or worsening in service delivery. Similarly, conducting CRCs before and after introducing a new program/policy to measure its impact is extremely effective.

² Even when used as a diagnostic tool, it is important to inform the public about the findings.

To reveal hidden costs:

Citizen feedback can expose extra costs beyond mandated fees while using public services. The CRC, thus conveys information regarding the proportion of the population who pay bribes (either demanded or freely given) and the size of these payments and estimates the amount of private resources spent to compensate for poor service provision.

1.3 Who can use CRCs?

Various types of organizations have acted as lead institutions to carry out a CRC. The lead institution manages and drives the CRC process. The lead institution could be a Civil Society Organization (CSO), government body or an independent consortium. Since a variety of skill sets are required to carry out a CRC, the lead institution should be willing to seek help from others.

There are three common types of lead institutions:

- civil society organization (CSO)
- government body, whether it is an elected body, independent committee or a government department and
- independent consortium (group), consisting of government officials, civil society representatives, academicians and the media.

In each case, the organization should consider whether it has the skills, resources, independence and motivation/ commitment to carry out a CRC.

1.4 What qualities should a lead institution have?

To conduct a CRC, the lead institution should be

- a credible part of the city or sector where the effort is started
- politically neutral
- committed to improvements in public services, over the long-term
- able to oversee survey-related fieldwork (though not necessarily able to carry it out) and interpret collected feedback
- willing to disseminate both the positive and negative findings and
- experienced or at least agreeable to work with multiple stakeholders (media, CSOs, government, etc.).

Many of the other skills involved in carrying out a CRC can be brought together externally, if not available within the lead institution. Through informal networks or formal partnerships, organizations or individuals can be brought into the group to fill in gaps where skills are lacking.

(See box below for a checklist to carry out an assessment of the lead institution):

Box 1: Assessing a Potential Lead Institution

For a proposed Civil Society Organization:

- a) Is the organization a credible part of the city/sector where the CRC is being launched?
 YES NO
- b) Is the organization politically non-partisan?
 YES NO
- c) Is the organization committed over the long-term to improvements in public services?
 YES NO
- d) Would your organization be able to oversee survey-related fieldwork (though not necessarily carry out) and interpret findings?
 YES NO
- e) Is the organization experienced in working with government, media and other NGOs/CSOs?
 YES NO

☞ If the answer is “no” to any of the questions: To compensate for areas where the proposed lead institution lacks skills/experience, consider partnering with another organization or setting up an independent consortium that includes locally-based individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

For a proposed Government institution:

- a) Are you a recognized actor in the locality where the CRC is being conducted?
 YES NO
- b) Are you considered politically non-partisan? Would local citizens believe in the credibility of the CRC findings?
 YES NO
- c) Are you committed to facilitate improvements in public service delivery?
 YES NO
- d) Would you willingly disseminate findings (both the positive and negative)?
 YES NO
- e) Do you have the skills to oversee survey-related fieldwork (though not necessarily carry out) and interpret findings?
 YES NO
- f) Are you open to working with service providers, media and CSOs?
 YES NO
- g) Are you empowered at the local level with decision-making related to service delivery?
 YES NO

☞ If answered “no” to any of the questions. Consider partnering with another organization, seeking a well-qualified CSO to spearhead the effort or setting up a consortium of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who are well-grounded in local happenings.

For a proposed Independent Consortium:

- a) Would the members of the Independent Consortium be recognized as credible actors in the locality where the CRC is being conducted?
 YES NO
- b) Would the Consortium be viewed as politically non-partisan?
 YES NO
- c) Could the Consortium effectively disseminate findings (both the positive and negative)? Would local citizens believe in the credibility of CRC findings?
 YES NO
- d) Would there be members on the Consortium who could oversee survey-related fieldwork (though not necessarily carry it out) and interpret findings?
 YES NO
- e) Would the Consortium members include a spectrum of representatives (government, media, CSO)?
 YES NO

☞ If answered “no” to any of the questions. Consider changing the composition of the independent consortium; seek well-qualified individuals from a variety of backgrounds who are well grounded in local happenings. Individuals from outside the locality could also serve as advisors to the consortium in areas where skills are lacking.

Summary of Module 1

- The CRC methodology should not be seen as a social science survey that ends with a written report; findings need to be publicly distributed and followed up!
- CRC surveys are not opinion polls. The findings only include feedback from individuals who have used a particular service, not from any member of the general public.
- CRCs can serve as diagnostic, accountability and/or benchmarking tools to improve services.
- The CRC methodology includes several stages, each with its own skill requirements. A reliable, independent, and local institution is required to lead the effort; it will need to partner with different organizations to carry out a CRC.

Module 2: Defining the Scope of the Citizen Report Card

Objectives of Module 2

This module discusses how to define the scope of the CRC. On completing this module, the reader should be able to:

- draft a statement of purpose for the CRC
- conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to identify the services and aspects of service delivery to include in the CRC and
- finalize the scope of the CRC based on feedback from the FGDs.

2.1 Drafting a Statement of Purpose

Defining the scope of the CRC requires identification of the services and aspects of service delivery to examine. It is important to draft a statement of purpose in this regard. A **statement of purpose** describes the reason and scope of a Citizen Report Card³. The statement of purpose should start out by answering the following types of questions.

- What service(s) or sectors do you wish to cover?
- Do you want to focus on a single service provider or multiple services?
- Is there a government policy or program that you wish to assess?
- Which population can give you the required information?

The statement of purpose should also list the more specific objectives of the CRC. **Specific objectives** describe the aspects of service delivery, or of a policy, to be examined. Specific objectives answer the following type of questions.

- What type of information do we need to gather?
- What aspects of service delivery (availability, access, quality of service, incidence and resolution of problems, interaction with staff, corruption) are important?

Drafting the Statement of Purpose

The lead institution should draft a preliminary statement of purpose. As part of this process, the lead institution should identify the population of interest. Answer the following questions to help clarify the population and the sub-populations of the CRC.

- What is your population/community of interest?
- Will the Citizen Report Card survey be carried out in your own city / town / rural community?
- Do you also want to analyze service delivery by zone, ward or some other regional or administrative division?
- Are there subgroups in the population that are of particular interest to your study (poor households, females, elderly, etc.)?

³ The statement of purpose directly shapes the type of questions that are asked in the questionnaire, as well as the analysis and the interpretation of collected feedback.

The second essential step is to map out how services are delivered to the population of interest. Mapping out service delivery for the CRC population provides useful information to finalize the statement of purpose and for later stages of the CRC - from questionnaire design to dissemination and advocacy efforts.

Example:

- Is the central, regional or local government the main service provider?
- Are services provided by a combination of providers from various levels of the government?
- Or has some portion of service delivery been contracted out to a private company?

An Example of a Statement of Purpose

Measuring the Quality of Health Services in Jakarta

This Citizen Report Card will evaluate the quality of health services in Jakarta with regard to a three-year old municipal policy that guarantees basic health services to the poor.

In particular, the following aspects will be covered:

- Examine the availability, accessibility and usage of public health services for the poor in Jakarta
- Determine the quality of care provided, behavior of staff (doctors, nurses and others), quality of medicines, and overall satisfaction - separately for in and out patients.
- Using the above-mentioned indicators, also determine the quality of health services for poor women, children and elderly residents.

Thus, the above statement of the purpose identifies the scope and population of the CRC

- Service of interest: health care (public hospitals in Jakarta)
- Population: the poor

The specific objectives clarify the important aspects of service delivery and identify key sub-groups in the population

- Service aspects: availability, accessibility, usage, service quality, staff behavior, corruption, quality of medicines and overall satisfaction.
- Sub-groups of interest: in-patients and outpatients; women, children and elderly residents.

2.2 Gathering Local Feedback: Focus Groups Discussions

The CRC approach is based on the premise that feedback on service quality, collected from communities with the help of a sample survey, provides a reliable basis for communities and local governments to engage in a dialogue and partnership action to improve the delivery of public services. A key step in this process is to hold Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with different groups of people to gather key issues and themes for designing the larger survey instrument. FGDs are envisaged to provide informed feedback on research questions.

Steps involved in the FGD process:

- Preparing for the FGD
- Conducting the FGD
- Combining and assessing the feedback

Preparing for the FGD

The preparatory phase for the FGDs includes identifying what questions to ask, whom to ask these questions, where to conduct the FGDs and who should facilitate the discussions.

What Questions to Ask?

The Citizen Report Card is expected to give credible and objective feedback on the experiences people have when accessing and using public services. REMEMBER! The objective of the FGD is to find out key issues that affect users of services and not to find solutions.

FGD questions should probe the following general CRC indicators (this is an indicative set for issues in Water):

FGD Indicators & Questions for a CRC on Water Services

CRC Indicator	Examples of Questions
Availability of water sources	➤ Can you please tell us the different sources of water available to your community? Are these sources available throughout the year? Do you know who own these sources (document responses carefully, indicating different sources and who owns them)? In general, do you use different sources for drinking and domestic purposes (like washing utensils, clothes etc.)? If yes, what are the different sources used? Are there any particular months/seasons when you face extreme difficulty in getting water? How do you manage during these times of extreme stress?
Quality & Reliability of Service	➤ Do you encounter frequent problems while accessing and using water from the different sources? How frequently do these problems come up?(List and document the responses)? Are there frequent breakdowns in service? How frequent are these breakdowns? For those using metered services, do face any issue when it comes to billing? What are the issues?
Grievance Redress	➤ When you face problems in water supply, whom do you complain to? What type of response do you get? Were there any instances during the last 1 year when community members got together and made a collective complaint on any water issue?
Costs	➤ On an average, how much do you spend every month on water – take a few random examples (if there are big variations, find

	<p>out why these variations exist)? During the last 6 months, were there any instances when you had to pay a bribe or extra money to get a problem sorted? If yes, for what purpose did you make the payment? In general, do you think that people are regular in making payments? Do you think there are very valid reasons for not being able to pay regularly?</p>
Transparency of information provided by the service provider	<p>➡ Do you know the timing of the supply, duration of the supply and charges for the water being provided to you? If “No”, have you tried finding out these? When did you last receive a communication from the provider? What was this about?</p>
Priorities	<p>➡ Now that we talked about a lot of issues concerning water supply provision, can you tell us which among the following are of utmost importance to this locality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - availability of good sources of water - easy access to water sources - round the clock reliable and predictable water supply - information on whom to contact in case of problems - good maintenance of water facilities - more transparency on costs
Knowledge of Reforms & Information Needs	<p>➡ Are you aware of any recent initiatives by the government to improve water services? Can you quickly tell us what new steps are carried out in this regard?</p>
Suggestions for improvement	

Whom to Ask?

Separate FGDs should be carried out if subgroups in the CRC population have vastly different experiences delivery – for e.g., women, elderly, children and men could be the different demographic groups; poor and non-poor could be different economic groups and rural and urban could be different spatial groups. The size of the group should be ideally around 8-12

Who should Facilitate?

An individual with good facilitation skills must be identified to guide the discussions.

A facilitator should be able to

- understand the overall CRC methodology and the general purpose of this CRC
- relate to and connect with participants and
- facilitate a discussion that does not lead to conflicts or get stuck on irrelevant topics.

Where to conduct the FGD?

FGDs are best conducted within the geographical context in which the community is located.

Conducting the FGDs

Some key points to observe are:

- It's always good to limit the number of interviewers to about 3 per group – one person to be the lead facilitator, one person to supplement additional questions or pick up any interesting link and the third person to act as a scribe and also to be the timekeeper! Ideally an FGD should not be more than 2 hours.
- Questions and discussions should be phrased in the language comfortable to the community
- It is very important to state the purpose of the FGD right at the beginning. Unrealistic expectations should not be set in.
- If you are using a tape-recorder or camera to record proceedings, it's always advisable to take the permission of the group beforehand.

Analyzing focus group data

The information collected from a focus group discussion is raw data. The next task is to analyse the content of the discussion. The first step is to transcribe the entire interview (if the proceedings are recorded) or review the key issues noted during the discussion. This will provide a complete record of the discussion and will facilitate analysis of the data. The next step is to analyse the content of the discussion. The aim of this analysis is to look for trends and patterns that reappear within either a single focus group or among various focus groups. The key issues can then be presented in the form of a simple matrix to help the design of the questionnaire. An example is given below:

CRC Indicator	Themes Identified	Relevance to Questionnaire
Availability of water sources	Poor availability of public sources; high incidence of scarcity etc.	Close ending the options under sources, validity of the questions on scarcity
Accessibility to water sources	Access not a major issue for those in center of the town, but seen as a major issue for those in the peripheries	Close-ending the options for the question on distance covered to access water; close ending options under number of trips made & member of family who normally collects
Quality & Reliability of Service	Profile & frequency of problems faced;	Validating the issue; Close ending options on types of problems & frequency of occurrence
Transparency of information provided by the service provider	Lack of proper information; low extent of communications between the provider and consumer	Validity of the issue.
Grievance Redress	Quality of responses differ between poor and other areas; in the poor areas, people prefer using non formal channels to solve issues	Close ending the options on types of grievance mechanisms used
Costs	Connection costs very high; poorer households forced on alternatives to cope with unreliable services; incidence of bribes high to fix problems with shared connections	Validity of the issue. Close ending options on cost components

Summary of Module 2

- Consider examining one or two services in your first CRC. This strategy gives you the opportunity to build expertise and confidence in the methodology. It also allows you to target available resources to produce a high quality CRC.
- Don't hold on too tightly to your preliminary statement of purpose. Use the information generated during FGDs to revise the objectives and/or population.
- If you discover very differing views within the same FGD, consider if there is a variation in service delivery (i.e. service delivery in urban versus rural areas) that you need to capture through separate FGDs.
- In some locations, holding separate FGDs for women and men can greatly increase the participation of women.
- Make sure there is clarity regarding the level of data analysis; this will have an effect on the sampling design. For example, do you want to present the findings at the state, city or ward level?

Module 3: Preparing for a Citizen Report Card Project

Objectives of Module 3

In undertaking a Citizen Report Card, several project management decisions require early attention. Enough resources, both human and financial, must be brought together. A team with a range of technical and advocacy skills is very important to carry out the CRC; this may require hiring staff or partnering with new organizations. Depending on the financial resources available, it may be necessary to redirect existing resources or raise additional funds. A realistic time frame to complete the project should be agreed upon.

This module will help the reader to:

- decide and plan on the staff required to carry out the CRC
- identify the key items to cost in the budget and
- prepare a schedule for the CRC process.

3.1 Staffing Requirements

A range of skills and competencies is required to carry out a CRC. These include:

- knowledge of local public service delivery processes
- experience in social science survey methodology
- skills in the management of fieldwork and data
- ability to disseminate findings both orally and in written format and
- capability to work with a broad stakeholder community (CSOs, media and service providers).

An initial assessment of the available resources will help identify the knowledge and expertise areas where additional resources should be organized. Key people involved in carrying out the CRC include:

Technical team within the lead institution: Within the lead institution, a core technical team is required to manage the design of the survey instrument, the fieldwork, the data entry and analysis, and the completion of the written Citizen Report Card. A One-point person within the lead institution should be responsible for heading the CRC project. He/she should be familiar with local service delivery, experienced in social science survey methodology (comfortable overseeing the survey design, sampling, fieldwork, data management and the written report) and able to coordinate and manage relationships among key stakeholders. A minimum of one assistant, and for the busiest periods of work, two assistants, will prove useful for planning and running FGDs, collecting background information during survey design, supporting data collection and analysis and preparing drafts of the presentations and written reports.

Other Members within the Lead Institution: Along with the core technical team, the other members of the lead institution will need to assist in administrative tasks: managing budgets, quality management during survey-related work building networks and creating buy-in among CRC stakeholders - CSOs, government, service providers, and other organizations interested in public service provision preparing targeted dissemination materials and organizing follow-up advocacy and reform activities.

Partners for the Survey: A large number of people are required to carry out the survey. There are at least three ways to gather together the additional staffing requirement. Depending on the level of financial resources and technical skills available, the lead institution can decide on the appropriate method. Three possibilities are discussed below:

- a. *Lead Institution Staff.* If there is enough staff in the lead institution to conduct the survey, use internal human resources.
- b. *Volunteers.* Form a group of volunteer investigators who are managed by staff from the lead institution. Although these individuals would require additional training on conducting interviews and probing respondents, the expenses incurred would be small.
- c. *Professional survey agency.* Outsource the fieldwork and data entry to a professional survey agency.

In all of these options, the project leader will remain a central part of the process. He/ she will closely check every step of the field survey to ensure the accuracy and relevance of results.

Professional Survey Agency

If the decision is made to hire a professional survey agency, care should be taken to select a well-qualified institution. It should have experience in conducting social science surveys, a local presence and quality control measures in place.

Qualities to look for when hiring a Professional Survey Agency

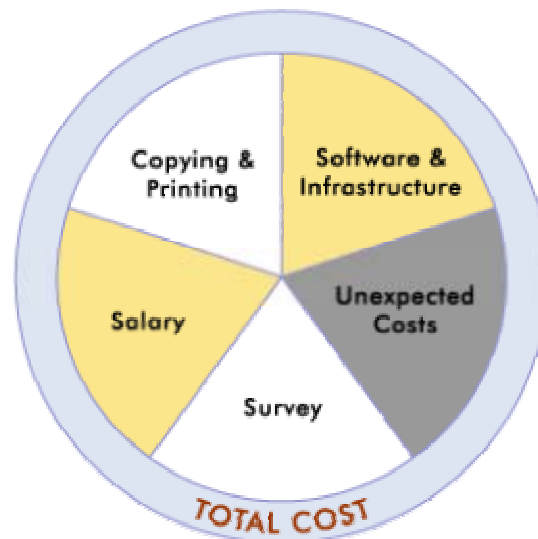
- Does the agency have experience conducting social science surveys (as opposed to market surveys)?
- Does the leadership team — the researchers and the field coordinator — have sound knowledge of sampling design?
- Are there organized field processes in place to ensure that the quality of data is being checked?
- Does the agency take from a group of skilled investigators, who have good probing skill and will be able to connect with the local population?
- Does the agency have a local presence? Are the field investigators local residents?
- Is the agency politically neutral?

3.2 Planning Budgets

Costing in the CRC methodology includes both overhead and additional expenses.

Key items to cost in the budget include:

1. Survey (field work) related costs⁴. This cost depends on the location of the CRC; local survey agencies may be able to indicate the cost per interview.
2. Salaries (lead institution staff, technical consultants).
3. Copying and printing (material for dissemination and advocacy work).
4. Computing infrastructure and software (depends on how much of the data entry and analysis occurs within the lead institution).
5. Unexpected costs (i.e. the need to increase number of investigators or expand the number of households surveyed; unexpected delays; increased monitoring).



Even if financial resources are limited, productive partnerships with CSOs, concerned businesses, or local civic groups can help minimize costs. Some examples include:

- A local university statistics department could assist with the data collection and analysis.
- An associate CSO could provide volunteer investigators for the fieldwork.
- A business might provide printing and copying facilities.

⁴ Survey (fieldwork) related costs include: (1) Translation, retranslation and printing of questionnaire; (2) Training of investigator and piloting; (3) Investigator and supervisor fees; (4) Travel: local conveyance and (if required) outstation travel; (5) Others: equipment, gifts, renting venues (if required); (6) Data entry and generation of basic tables.

3.3 Schedule

The entire CRC process, from the initial focus group discussions to post-survey follow up activities, takes 6 months to 1 year. To plan for a CRC schedule, consider your target date for the dissemination of findings. Then, work backwards from this date to develop a time plan for each stage of the process. When preparing the CRC schedule, give some thought to possible external timing delays or biases (elections, extreme weather) and internal timing considerations (staff leave, funding cycle).

Below is a general time guideline for a typical CRC; this may be modified, keeping in mind the scope and local schedules.



To assist planning, a sample CRC Operational Plan is available to identify timeframes and staffing requirements for each step in the process.

TASKS	TIMELINE (days, weeks, months)	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS
1. Defining the scope of the CRC		
2. Focus Group Discussions		
3. Meetings with service providers		
4. Drafting the questionnaire		
5. Pre-testing the questionnaire		
6. Finalizing the questionnaire		
7. Developing the sample design		
8. Identifying survey agency & training of enumerators		
9. Conduct of survey		
10. Coding & Data entry		
11. Generation of basic tables		
12. Data Analysis		
13. Report writing		
14. Dissemination of findings		
15. Advocacy & Reforms		

Summary of Module 3

- The project leader should have necessary technical and management skills to oversee the design and implementation of a social science survey, the interpretation of collected feedback, and the writing of a formal report.
- If a professional survey agency is being hired, make sure that it has an experienced fieldwork coordinator, a local presence, good fieldwork procedures, and skilled investigators.
- When finalizing the CRC schedule, make sure that various external factors are taken into consideration like elections, extreme weather etc.

Module 4: Designing the Survey Instrument (Questionnaire)

Objectives of Module 4

This module discusses the key components and design of the survey instrument. Designing the survey instrument is carried out in many stages. The overall test is to develop a survey instrument that gets correct feedback on the areas given in the statement of purpose. The people drafting the survey instrument should understand local service delivery issues and the technical components of a schedule/ questionnaire. On completion of this module, the reader will be able to

- Find out how to gather useful information for questionnaire design
- Understand the key components of the survey instrument
- Frame questions for the questionnaire and
- Code and sequence the questionnaire.

4.1 Preparatory Work - Review the Statement of Purpose

The process of writing a survey questionnaire involves translating the statement of purpose into questions. Before you start designing the survey instrument, you should do some thinking and research about the subject of questions⁵.

Some suggestions to start the process include

1. Study the statement of purpose for the CRC (identified in Module 3).
2. Check whether the areas that need feedback have been listed. Common areas of feedback include: access, usage, problem incidence, problem resolution, staff behavior, service quality, corruption, and overall satisfaction.
3. Those items that require feedback should be written in order of importance to the CRC. If the questionnaire becomes too long, items that are not very important may be left out. Use the feedback from the FGDs to help in this process.
4. While writing the question, think about the type of information you want:
 - qualitative information (e.g. whether drinking water tastes good/bad) and/or
 - quantitative information (e.g. distance traveled to water source).
5. Go through the question(s) that you have written.
Will you be able to collect the feedback from this question and present interesting results?

⁵ In many instances, to write precise questions and/or answer options, additional information is required. Spending time to research the details of service provision during the early stages of the questionnaire design is likely to improve the quality of the survey instrument. The information gathered during focus group discussions can also provide useful details and raise overlooked issues-though not all of the information collected during the FGDs will convert into questions.

4.2 Meet with Service Providers

Meetings with service providers will help you to collect more details on service provision. It is also advisable to involve the service providers in the CRC process right from the start. This will increase their buy-in to the process. You should plan meetings with them early in the process. During each meeting, inform agencies on the Citizen Report Card process and review their first reactions. Meet with the head of the agencies; if they are not available, the public relations officer is usually another good option.

Provide service providers with information on the CRC. Service providers usually do not initially see the value of the CRC. Providing them with basic information like an overview of the CRC process may help to mitigate their fears.

During the meeting, be sure to collect the information useful for designing the questionnaire.

Types of information to be collected:

1. Subjects of particular interest to service provider: New Programs, new services or features of service delivery for which they would be interested in getting independent feedback.
2. Service delivery details: Detailed information regarding service delivery that may help writing questions or answers options. Example: How often does the water board provide water to the city residents?
3. Standards and norms: If the service has publicized norms and standards, be sure to capture that. For example, number of days to process an application or consulting charges at a hospital.

4.3 Components of the Survey Instrument

Along with knowledge about local service provision, understanding the components of a survey instrument will help to design a good CRC questionnaire.

The survey instrument has five key parts: 1) investigator information, 2) lead-in/ introduction, 3) filters/ qualifiers, 4) demographics & 5) main body.

Part 1: Investigator Information

The first section of the survey instrument collects basic information about the investigator and the interview. Examples of the information gathered in this part include

- name of investigator
- date of interview
- interview start time and
- interview end time.

Part 2: Lead-in/ Introduction

The introduction provides the main information regarding the survey to the person answering the questions (respondent) at the start of the interview. The investigator introduces himself/herself, explains the purpose of the interview and begins to create a relationship with the respondent.

Example

“Hello, I am Ari from Indonesia Coalition Front. We are currently trying to understand the quality of water and sanitation services in Thrissur. Could I please speak with an adult member of this household?” REMEMBER! The introduction is the most important part of the survey because it conveys the purpose and nature of the interview.

What not to do during an introduction!

In a previous CRC, an investigator introduced himself by saying, “We are here to find out how bad public services are.”

This introduction immediately communicates a biased tone to the interview. Let the respondent tell you about their experience with service delivery—not the reverse!

Part 3: Filter/ qualifier

Qualifier or filter questions help to decide the respondent’s suitability to answer a set of questions and/or the entire survey. The first qualifier decides if the respondent meets the basic conditions to complete the survey instrument (the condition is usually whether anyone in the household has used the service(s) of interest in the past one year). Qualifiers or filters at the start of a section or sub-schedule help decide whether the respondent should answer further questions in that section of the questionnaire.

Example of a Qualifier or filter for a CRC on public hospitals:

“Have you, or anyone in your family, visited a public hospital in the past one year?”

Yes [continue with interview]

No [terminate interview]



Qualifiers

Part 4: Demographics

Demographic questions gather basic information about the respondent and/or the respondent’s household.

Example: “What is your household annual income?”

Other types of demographic questions collect feedback on age, education level, size of household, gender, etc.

For CRCs, households are a common unit of analysis. Gather the household information (head of household, household income, address, etc) at the beginning of the questionnaire. Before asking questions on a particular service, gather additional demographic information on the respondent.

If there are multiple services being covered in the CRC survey, it is best to have the person who knows the most about a particular service answer that portion of the survey. For example, in a particular family, the female adult may answer a section on drinking water while a male adult may answer the section on public health facilities (or vice versa). A child may help her parent answer questions on a section regarding primary education.

Part 5: Body of the Survey Instrument

The body of the survey instrument captures the key feedback related to the Citizen Report Card objectives. Multiple types of questions are included in the body of the survey instrument.

Warm up questions help activate the respondent's memory on a certain topic. These questions are very helpful at the beginning of a sequence of probing questions.

Example

"For what reason did you visit the maternity home?"

- 1- For a regular prenatal checkup.
- 2- For delivery.
- 3- For a post-natal check up.
- 4- Other (specify_____).

Specific questions capture the respondent's experience for detailed information sought in the CRC.

Example

"Did you have to make any payments related to the delivery?"

- 1- Yes (go to next question)
- 2- No (skip next question)

"How much did you pay?" _____

Common categories of specific questions include: ease of access, usage, reliability, quality, corruption, and satisfaction.

4.4 Writing Questions and Answers

The CRC questionnaire differs from internal government surveys; feedback should focus on areas of service delivery as experienced by users, instead of internal or technical processes. Listed below are some tips to keep in mind when writing questions and answers for the different parts of the questionnaire.

1. Consider if an open or closed-ended question is more suitable.
2. Decide on the most suitable way to evaluate each aspect of service delivery.
3. Where necessary, include time frames to collect relevant responses.
4. Specify units.
5. Select an appropriate scale.

1. Closed-ended or open-ended questions

When framing questions consider if an open or closed-ended question is more suitable.

■ What are closed-ended questions?

In this type of question, answer-options are provided to the respondent. These questions are pre-coded in the questionnaire, which makes data collection and data entry easier.

There are many types of closed-ended questions.

yes/no

scales (very satisfied, partly satisfied, dissatisfied)

ranges (less than 1 km, 1-5km, greater than 5 km) and so on

Research is required to ensure that relevant answer-options are provided for closed-ended questions.

■ Open-ended questions

In this type of question, the respondent is left to answer the question as he or she wishes. When the scope of answers is uncertain, open-ended questions are very useful. For example, "What are the reasons for your dissatisfaction with the service?"

However, open-ended questions have their own drawbacks. Ambiguous responses may make it difficult to aggregate the responses for open-ended questions, and make it difficult to compare across users. Another drawback is that open-ended questions must be coded after the data is collected — increasing the time for data entry.

2. Suitable Way of Evaluation - Considering standards

Give some thought to the most suitable type of question for evaluating each part of service delivery. Where standards for service exist, ask specific questions to check whether standards are being met.

Example

If the service provider of drinking water has committed to provide water once a day, then include a specific question to test whether service is provided as required.

How often do you get drinking water?

1- More than once a day

2- Once in a day

3- Less than once a day

Create Standards

When standards do not exist (the case in many countries), decide a suitable way to evaluate the quality of service delivery.

Example

If you want feedback on the accessibility of the health centers, what is the best way to evaluate accessibility?

Option1: How long does it take to travel to the health center that you most regularly visit? Follow-up question: And what is your mode of transportation?

The answer to this question may be difficult to compare across households, if different modes of transportation are used.

Option 2: What is the distance (in kms) to the health center that you most regularly visit?

When the respondent answers this question, he/she needs to have a somewhat accurate sense of distances.

Both options provide useful information, but also create difficulties during the collection of feedback. Try to decide the type of feedback that would be more useful given the purpose of the CRC and the local setting.

Remember! The best questions provide you with feedback that can be easily collected and from which you can draw interesting conclusions.

3. Include time frames to collect relevant responses.

To avoid collecting outdated information, include a time frame when necessary.

For example, do you only want feedback from households that have used a service in the last one year? Or, do you only want feedback on satisfaction with staff behavior, if a household has interacted with staff in the past 1 year?

Make sure to specify the time frame in these types of questions.

Example

Have you or anyone in your household interacted with police in the past 1 year?

Yes

No

4. Specify units

If you are asking a distance-related question or any other question where the unit of information (e.g. distance in kms, weight in kgs, time in mins, etc.) affects the respondent's answer, make sure it is included in the question.

For open-ended questions, ask investigators to note down the unit of measurement for the answer provided (even when the unit is specified in the question). This provides a double check and allows for conversions when a respondent's answer is in a different unit of measurement.

Example

On an average, how many minutes do you wait to see a member of the hospital staff?
_____ (note to investigator: write down the unit of time for the respondent's answer)

4.5 Designing Appropriate Scales

There are multiple types of answer scales that are commonly used to collect feedback.

The type of answer scale used in a question affects the type of interpretation and presentation of findings that may follow. Large scales allow for more ranges of opinion, while simple scales provide findings that are easy to convey.

Example 1

Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of health services provided at the hospital facility?

- 1- Satisfied (Ask next question below)
 - 2- Dissatisfied (skip next question below)
 - 3- Cannot Comment (skip next question below)
- How satisfied were you?
- 1- Partly satisfied
 - 2- Fully satisfied

Example 2

How do you rate the reliability of public road transport service in your area/village?

- 1- Good
- 2- Average
- 3- Poor
- 4- Cannot comment

4.6 Coding and Organizing the Questionnaire

The coding of questions, the internal organization of sections, and the investigator commands are critical components of an easy to administer survey instrument.

To design an easy-to-administer survey instrument:

- make sure each question and answer option is *uniquely coded* (e.g. numbering two different questions #1, even if they are located in different sections of the questionnaire, can lead to confusion during data entry and analysis)
- use sections, sub-schedules and grids to organize a lengthy questionnaire and
- ensure “skips,” “go to” instructions, and other investigator commands are correctly placed.

Uniquely coded questions

- Make sure each question and answer option is uniquely coded.
- The object of coding is to give each question and answer option a unique number to allow for easy and accurate processing.
- For open-ended questions, during data entry, responses must be analyzed, grouped and post-coded.

Sections, sub-schedules & grids

Use sections, sub-schedules and grids to organize a lengthy questionnaire. Within a particular service, sections, with headings, can be used to group types of questions that fall under a similar group. In addition, if there are multiple services to cover in the survey, it is often helpful to have sub-schedules for each service.

If the same type of question is being repeated, a grid format can be used to save space in the questionnaire.

Fine-tuning the Questionnaire

Bias is said to exist whenever some feature of the survey instrument or a particular interview process leads to a response that does not match the respondent's true opinion.

Write the investigator's instructions specifically, clearly word the questions and put them in logical order. Include relevant response choices to reduce opportunities for bias. In addition, CRC interviews usually take 30 minutes to 1 hour per household. Make sure to limit the number of questions to fit this time period. A longer interview time will likely frustrate the respondent!

After drafting the questionnaire, please revise it with the following thoughts in mind

- Cover all the stated objectives of the CRC.
- Have the questionnaire the shortest length possible. Resist the temptation to "pad" the questionnaire; only include those questions that will be analyzed!
- Use simple and explicit language.
- Include clear instructions for investigators; make sure "skip" commands are located where necessary.
- Make sure the flow or order of questions makes sense.
- Do you have too many open-ended questions? (Too many open-ended questions will make the data entry and analysis stages difficult!)
- Are users of services capable of answering the type of questions that are asked?
- Avoid double barrel questions, or questions that make an assumption about the respondent.

Example (of double barrel question)

"If the water is of poor quality, what do you do?"

- 1- Go to a well
- 2- Ask a neighbor

- 3- Buy from a shop
- 4- Other (Please specify_____)

This question incorrectly assumes that the water quality is poor! Instead use a filter question like the one below:

"In the past one year, have there been instances when the quality of water has been poor?"

1- Yes (ask next question)

2- No (skip next question)

What did you do in these instances?_____

Summary of Module 4

- Spend enough time researching the details of service provision to ensure questions and answer-options are precise and accurate.
- The statement of purpose is quite important. Make sure the survey instrument includes all of the services and aspects of service delivery that are listed in the statement.
- Check to see if the questionnaire is too long. Only include necessary questions; otherwise respondents may get frustrated during the interview.
- Clear investigator instructions are necessary throughout the survey instrument to collect accurate feedback.
- Don't bias feedback from respondents. Check to see if answer-options are appropriate and ensure that questions are not worded in a leading manner.

Module 5: Developing a Sampling Plan & Preparing for the Field Survey

Objectives of Module 5

Knowledge of sampling techniques and experience in conducting surveys is very important while implementing a CRC. If the lead institution does not have necessary in-house skills on this, it must seek external help from a skilled social scientist. This module helps the reader to appreciate the following critical steps before launching the field survey:

- *Sampling design*: How to decide on the sample size and the sampling method.
- *Fieldwork procedures*: How to decide upon the staffing requirements and the organization of field units to carry out a field survey.
- *Finalizing questionnaire*: Pilot, revise, and (if needed) translate questionnaire.

5.1 Sampling Design

Why do we need a sample survey?

A fundamental goal of Research is to say something or find some information about a wider group. This “something” can be percentage of people living in slums, average income of these people and so on. In order to achieve this one method is to examine each and every individual of that group and collect the necessary information and then consolidate the findings. This method is called **Complete Enumeration or Census**. The group is referred as the **Population**. Another way of extracting information is to select a subset from the wider population and collect the information from that subset. This method is called **Sampling** and the selected subset is known as the **Sample**. The need for sampling survey is to reduce time money and labour. Following a complete enumeration procedure becomes too expensive and time consuming which research does not permit. Thus sampling survey is one of the crucial requirements of any research process.

How can a subset of the population provide us the same information without examining all the members?

Statistical theory allows us to select the subset (sample) in such a way that the patterns observed in the smaller group – the sample – will hold in the larger group – the population. Statistical theory enables us to say, with a specific degree of confidence or guarantee, how likely the patterns in a sample are to reflect those in a population. Thus we can prefix this degree of guarantee at a very high level and work out the sample. Hence a subset of the population will also provide almost the same information without examining all the members.

How to draft a preliminary sampling design

- Define the population.
- Select the unit of analysis.
- Identify subgroups in the population (or the desired level of analysis).
- Select the sample size.
- Determine the sampling frame.
- Select proper sampling method.

Step 1: Defining the population.

The population is the group being studied. While defining the scope of the CRC, you identify the population for the CRC.

Example

For a CRC on maternity homes, women who have recently delivered a baby or who are pregnant are the *population*.

Step 2: Selecting the unit of analysis.

Depending on the purpose of the study, the units of analysis may be

- households
- individuals and
- organizations or groups

For most CRC studies, households are the unit of analysis. Most public services (drinking water, electricity, sanitation, etc) are delivered at the household level. In the case of households, decide who within the household can provide feedback (i.e. usually any adult member of the family).

Step 3: Identifying subgroups in the population.

The usefulness of CRC findings to some extent depends on getting the experience of important subgroups in the population (e.g. rural & urban). These subgroups were initially identified in the statement of purpose. To create a sufficient sample size, the subgroups must be clearly identified and kept in mind during the sampling design.

Step 4: Selecting the sample size.

Deciding on the number of households to include in the survey depends on the level of statistical precision that you require for the findings. Any survey can give only approximate results; to calculate the best sample size for your CRC, choose the desired level of confidence or degree of accuracy required for your results. Most surveys desire a confidence level of either 90 or 95%.

- There is no simple rule regarding sample size that can be used for all surveys.
 - Up to a certain point, increasing the sample size improves the quality of your findings.
 - Beyond a certain sample size, increasing the number of respondents will not improve the accuracy of the findings to a great extent.
 - Use of the Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) method ensures that the sample is self-weighting. For example, if authorized slums account for 25% of the total slum population, authorized slum households should make up 25% of the sample size for slum households.
- Based on global experiences with Citizen Report Cards, a sample size of 300-350 households is ideal for each service.
- Consult an experienced social scientist to calculate an ideal sample size for your survey.

Step 5: Determine the sampling frame.

The *sampling frame* is created to help identify all the members of the population, such that they have a chance of being sampled. For most CRCs, the sample frame is a listing of the households in the geographical area that includes the population of interest.

The sampling frame can be determined using one of the following methods:

- Use the data from a recent census.
- Conduct a listing exercise (if the census data is not available). The geographic areas to be sampled can be identified and field investigators can study the areas to develop a list.
- If developing a list is too difficult, plan for random selection of households upon arrival in a location. This option requires additional training of the survey staff.

Step 6: Select a proper sampling method – Probability sampling.

- Probability sampling ensures that each unit of analysis in the population has an equal chance of being selected.
- The advantage of probability sampling is that sampling error can be calculated. Sampling error is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population.
- The common probability sampling methods include random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified sampling.

Probability Sampling Methods

Random sampling

- In this method, a sample from the population is randomly selected.
- Each unit of analysis in the population has an equal and known chance of being selected.
- To select the sample, each unit of analysis is assigned a number. Then numbers are randomly selected using
 - a table of random numbers
 - a computer random number generator
 - or some other device.
- This method is easy to carry out and explain to others.
- Representation from important subgroups may be missing.

Systematic sampling

- After calculating the required sample size, every Nth unit of analysis is selected from the listing of the population.
- As long as the list does not contain a hidden order, this sampling method has a similar sampling error to random sampling.
- The advantage of this method is simplicity.

Stratified sampling

- This method is used when the population of interest has subgroups or strata that have a low occurrence or that require separate analysis.
 - Examples of strata are slum/non-slum households, males/females, households living above/below the poverty line, etc.
- The relevant strata and their proportion in the population must be identified.
- Within each stratum, the sample is drawn using random sampling.

5.2 Staffing for Field Work

Regardless of who carries out the survey, there is a need to mobilize a field staff. Before beginning fieldwork, some initial fieldwork decisions can be made. Devote time to decide the number and organization of field staff.

Number of field staff

The staff resources required for carrying out the survey links directly to

- sample size
- time taken to complete a single questionnaire and
- available time to complete all the fieldwork.

The team size is calculated by dividing the sample size by number of available days and the productivity per investigator (the average number of questionnaires that can be completed by one investigator in one day).

Example

If a CRC has a sample size of 2000, a 20 day timeline for data collection, and questionnaire that allows each investigator to complete 5 interviews per day, then 20 investigators are required ($2000/20/5= 20$).

For a strict time frame, more investigators can be hired to survey multiple areas within the locality at the same time.

Organization of field staff

The key members of the field staff include a field coordinator, field supervisors and interviewers/investigators.

The field coordinator

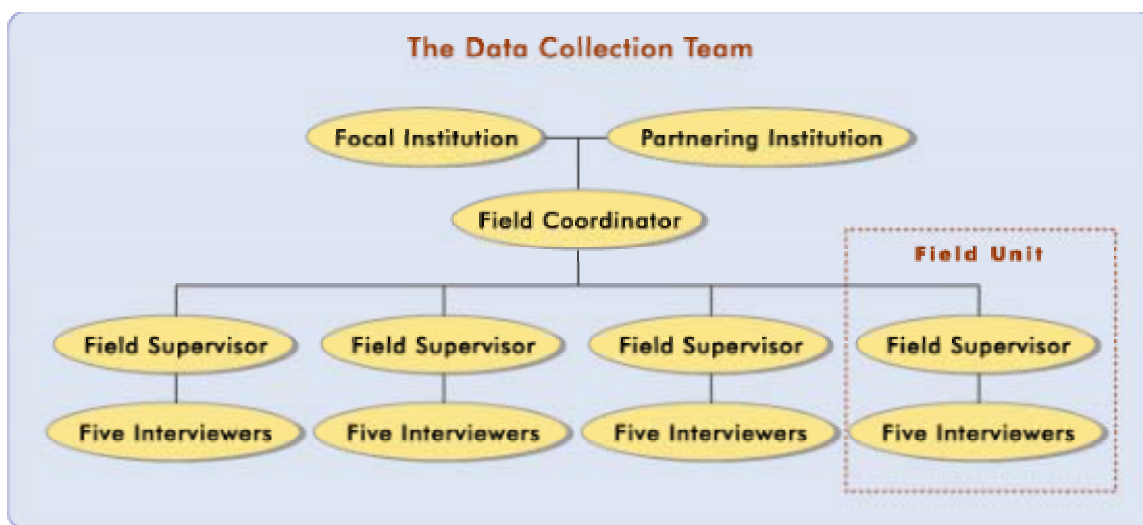
- manages all aspects of the survey
- has strong managerial skills
- understands the entire fieldwork process and
- regularly reports to the staff of the lead institution.

The supervisor

- leads a team of 4-5 investigators and accompanies them on their initial interviews
- performs necessary quality checks during the fieldwork process and
- keeps in regular contact with the field coordinator.

The investigators/ interviewers conduct the survey. An individual field unit or groups of field units can be distributed as necessary throughout the survey area, depending on the sampling design.

The Data Collection Team – An Example:



5.3 Finalizing the Questionnaire: Translation

Before finalizing the questionnaire, translate the survey instrument into the local language and conduct a pilot survey.

- Depending on the language(s) spoken by the CRC population, the original survey instrument may need to be translated into a secondary language.
- To ensure that the meaning of each question is accurately captured in the translation, the translated questionnaire should be retranslated into the primary language (by someone other than the initial translator).
- The retranslated questionnaire should be compared to the original questionnaire to ensure the quality of translation.

5.4 Finalizing the Questionnaire: Pilot Survey

Pre-testing the questionnaire in the form of a 'pilot survey' is a very important quality check. Piloting reveals problems related to:

- The respondent's ability to understand the questions (the wording of questions and answers)
- Flow and internal arrangement of questions
- The length of the questionnaire and
- Weaknesses in the investigator instructions (e.g. missing skip commands, unclear grids/formatting).

The time spent on piloting and revising the questionnaire can significantly improve the quality of the survey instrument. The pilot exercise should include 10 to 15 interviews within the area where the actual survey is to be carried out.

Pilot Team

An ideal pilot team consists of 2 or 3 individuals.

- One person to conduct the questionnaire and
- The other two individuals to observe the interview and note down observations.

Pilot Exercise

A simple "problem/ no problem" rating can be used to assess the quality of each question. Points to keep in mind include

- Can the respondent easily understand the question?
- Can the respondent answer the question with the response options provided? Or should more answer options be provided?
- Are there open-ended questions that should be changed to closed-ended questions (or vice versa)?
- Are more questions required to collect the desired information?

- Are there questions that can be deleted? Are there questions that are insensitive, unnecessary (fail to provide useful information for analysis)?

Post –Pilot Debrief

- Following the pilot, feedback should be collected from the interviewers on the questionnaire.
- Each question should be reviewed to determine whether it should be **revised, relocated** or **removed**.
- More questions should be added if required. Include only those questions that will provide data that is important to the analysis and interpretation of findings.

Summary of Module 5

- The sampling design should be decided by an expert who understands the requirements of the study and also, the level of analysis that is required.
- The field team should be carefully organized with good supervisory controls
- Conduct a thorough pilot to make sure that the survey instrument is easy to manage and is able to collect the desired type of feedback.

Module 6: Carrying out the Field Survey

Objectives of Module 6

With a piloted questionnaire and a preliminary sample design in hand, the next step is to plan for the conduct of the actual survey. This requires good management and coordination of the field processes. The content of this module will assist the reader to:

- manage the survey process
- train survey enumerators
- carry out the sampling design
- collect survey data and
- perform quality checks.

The following key stages are essential to carry out a good quality field survey operation:

- training of investigators
- implementation of sampling design and
- quality checks during interviews.

6.1 Training of Investigators

Prior to the launch of a field survey, it is essential to carry out a training event for the enumerators. However experienced the field enumerators are in conducting surveys, this training event should be carried out. Spread over 3 to 4 days, the key stages of the training include:

- introductory briefing
- mock interviews and selection of enumerators
- training of selected investigators.

Introductory Briefing

It is crucial that investigators understand the larger purpose of the survey and become familiar with every question in the survey instrument. The following topics are covered in the briefing section:

- an overview of CRC methodology
- purpose of this specific CRC and the investigators' role in the project and
- the details of the survey instrument.

A conceptual understanding of the CRC methodology is important. Investigators should understand the purpose of the lead institution and the larger goal to help improve public service delivery. In addition, the purpose of this CRC and the important role of the investigator should be explained. Discussing the purpose of this CRC will provide investigators with important background information to accurately carry out interviews.

Someone familiar with the questionnaire should lead the group through the detailed review of each question. He/she should ensure that the investigators are comfortable with the flow and content of questions. Time should be given to explain any doubts regarding the survey instrument.

Mock Interviews

After the introductory briefing, each potential interviewer is asked to complete a mock interview – this involves pairing participants and asking them to interview each other. Mock interviews serve two purposes. They identify good enumerators and further familiarize the enumerators with the details and flow of the questionnaire. Depending on the investigator’s performance during the mock interview, he/she is given a rating. A sample rating format is illustrated below:

ENUMERATOR RATING FORMAT

No	NAME	UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS (0-5)	COMMUNICATION SKILLS (0-5)	ATTENTIVENESS (0-5)	ABILITY TO EXPALIN QUESTIONS (0-5)	TOTAL SCORE (0-20)	REMARKS
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

The top rated investigators are selected to take part in the CRC survey⁶. **REMEMBER!** If during the course of the survey additional enumerators are inducted, they should also be evaluated and then trained accordingly.

⁶ If the pool of investigators are of poor quality, and the required number of investigators do not pass a minimal threshold score, additional investigators may need to be trained and tested.

Training of Selected Investigators

A more detailed training occurs with the selected investigators. The selected investigators should understand the different actions that can bias data collection. An overview of the sampling design should be shared with the investigators; the agreed process for household selection should be clearly communicated to supervisors and investigators. Some points to be highlighted during this session include:

- reminding the investigators that inaccurate data will be collected if:
 - the questionnaire is not accurately administered
 - the respondent's answers are not correctly recorded and
 - the sampling design is not being carried out
- discussing the process of building a relationship with respondents and mention that a complete investigation of respondents may be necessary to get feedback on a question
- explaining how the investigator can use his/her knowledge of the questionnaire to provide respondents with explanations or examples if they have difficulty understanding a question and
- stressing that proper carrying out of the sampling design is necessary to ensure that the collected sample is representative of the population.

After the formal training, the field units (1 supervisor and 4-6 investigators) should be formed and given time to discuss the daily fieldwork procedures.

6.2 Carrying out the Survey – Executing the Sampling Design

With a selected and trained field staff and a preliminary sampling design in hand, the surveying process can begin. To carry out the sampling design

- the field units should be taken to the correct location
- the supervisor should know the number of households to interview in a location and
- the households to be interviewed should be either pre-selected using a sound sampling method or, if specified in the sampling design, systematic sampling with a random start should be carried out.

When a listing of households is available

- the households to be interviewed are usually pre-selected
- the field supervisor ensures that the investigators follow the sampling design and
- a standard procedure is followed when a questionnaire cannot be administered to a household (i.e. the investigator is told to continue to the very next house as a replacement, and then to continue with the original sampling pattern).

When a listing exercise is not possible

- the first activity on arrival in a location is to study the area and decide on a plan to select households.

For example, if it is decided that there are 250 houses in the sampling area and 10 houses are to be sampled, as per probability proportionate to size (PPS), then systematic sampling can be carried out to interview every 25th house from a random starting point (e.g. the post office or polling booth or elementary school).

Rotation and Boosters

Rotation of Services

When several services are covered in a CRC (making the interview too long), devise a method to rotate the services such that households do not respond to every service.

- It is best to only rotate those services that are commonly used (for example, drinking water).
- Rotation of less frequently used services (for example, police) may lead to inadequate sample sizes for these services.

Booster Surveys

The field coordinator should regularly check on the number of respondents for each service and other pre-specified subgroups of interest (different categories of people, geographical representation) to ensure that the target sample size is being reached. When a service lacks the minimum number of respondents, booster surveys are required.

- Booster surveys involve the intentional (non-random) sampling of households to reach a minimum sample size.
- Depending on the service, decide on an appropriate method to identify respondents for the booster surveys.
- Going to the offices of service providers and approaching customers is one way to complete booster interviews.
- Sometimes a respondent will not feel comfortable providing feedback on a service at/near the office of the service provider. In that case, ask the respondent if it is possible to interview him/her at home.

6.3 Quality Checks

During the interviews, each team supervisor and the field coordinator should perform quality checks to ensure reliable and accurate data collection. Ideally, the data entry operator should enter collected data at the same time as an additional chance to check for quality. There are four major types of quality checks:

- Accompanied interviews
- Spot checks
- Back checks
- Final scrutiny of schedules

Accompanied Interviews

To ensure that the survey process is unbiased and carried out properly, the supervisor should accompany each enumerator and observe several interviews in progress.

A good rule of thumb is to have at least 10% of the interviews observed through *accompaniment*.

Spot Checks

Surprise visits during an interview that is in progress, or spot checks, by the field coordinator also serve as a good quality control measure.

Back Checks

- The field coordinator should randomly select 30% of the completed questionnaires and perform *back checks*.
- Back checks involve selecting a few key questions and confirming the respondent's response for these questions.
- The purpose is to ensure that the information marked in the schedule reflects the true opinion of the respondent. This can be done through a house visit or phone call.
- Usually 25%-30% of the interviews are back checked.

Final Scrutiny of Schedules

Field supervisors should check questionnaires before leaving an area, and at the end of each day by a pre-selected scrutiny team.

Scrutiny in the field

- Once an interview has been completed further scrutiny is required to ensure that the information marked in the questionnaires is correct.
- The field supervisor should carefully check through every completed questionnaire to ensure that the questionnaires are filled in accurately. This should occur daily before leaving a field area.
- If gaps are found or answers appear inconsistent, the supervisor should request the investigator to go back to the household and correct the mistake.

End-of-day Scrutiny

After the questionnaires have been checked for quality in the field, a trained team should complete *100% scrutiny* of the questionnaires. The same group of individuals should complete this second level of scrutiny for every questionnaire to ensure uniformity and accuracy of the process. They should pay particular attention to make sure that

- all required questions are answered
- "skips" and other investigator instructions are followed and
- responses make sense and are not internally inconsistent with each other.

Simultaneous Data Entry

Simultaneous data entry during the survey period creates a final opportunity to notice unreasonable answers or missed questions in time to correct an error.

Questionnaires collected one day can be entered the next day.

- If mistakes are found during data entry, ask for an explanation from the investigator.
- If required, send the investigator back to the household to correct the error.

Summary of Module 6

- Training of enumerators should be seen as an important exercise and the final pool of enumerators should be carefully selected.
- Make sure the interviewers understand the Citizen Report Card objectives and clearly communicate them to respondents. This will help to avoid misrepresentation of the result of the project.
- When conducting a Citizen Report Card that includes numerous services, rotate questionnaires for commonly used services (i.e. drinking water) to shorten the total interview length. For less frequently used services (i.e. police), interview all respondents who have used the service.
- Quality checks should be effectively done because any wrong or biased information collected will undermine the entire legitimacy and credibility of the CRC

Module 7: Data Entry, Analysis & Writing the Report

Objectives of Module 7

Starting the data entry process soon after the survey begins, creates an opportunity to identify irregularities and to correct them while the fieldwork is in progress. The data entry, analysis and interpretation process transforms the raw primary information collected from users into the official CRC findings. This module discusses how to manage and analyze the collected survey responses and convert the same into a narrative report. On completing this module, the reader will be able to

- Understand and oversee data entry processes
- Generate the basic data tables
- Interpret the findings and
- Write the main CRC report.

7.1 Data Entry

The answers and responses collected through the questionnaire have to be entered into a database. **REMEMBER!**

- The pre-coded questions can be directly entered.
- For open-ended questions, similar answers should be grouped into categories and manually coded.

Data can be entered and analyzed using one of a variety of data management software that is available. A basic spreadsheet program like Microsoft Excel can generate cross tabulations and basic linear regression models. The results from commonly available programs often provide enough statistical understanding for the CRC findings.

Computer programs dealing specifically with statistical analysis are also available. Although these packages are more expensive, they are often easier to use when managing large sets of data⁷. A few examples

- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)
- Statistical Analysis System (SAS)

Accuracy Check

The data that has been entered into the central database should be checked for accuracy. This step is very important, anyway, whether data entry takes place in-house or if it is outsourced.

⁷ The drawback of using computer programs dealing specifically with statistical analysis is that most of these packages are very costly. Before investing in one, compare the capability of the software package with the level of analysis that is required.

- Randomly select a set of questionnaires and crosscheck the written responses with those entered in the database.
- Run frequencies and means on specific questions to confirm the accuracy of entered data.

Once the data is entered and crosschecked, it is ready for analysis. Depending on the sample size and length of the questionnaire, the data entry stage can take two to four weeks.

7.2 Generating the Findings

With the creation of a database of citizen responses, it is time to generate the findings. To generate the findings

- Analyze the collected data
 - Produce the basic analysis tables.
 - Create relevant cross tabs to make further conclusions.
 - Perform any additional levels of analysis.
- Interpret the findings

Categories of CRC Findings

There are several categories of findings that are common across Citizen Report Cards. They include

- Estimates on aspects of service delivery
 - The average number of hours that water is supplied.
 - The average number of times that a service provider is contacted to fix a problem.
- Comparisons across services
 - Comparing the overall level of satisfaction across service providers (water, electricity, health, sanitation) in a city.
 - Comparing the incidence of corruption across service providers in a locality.
- Comparisons across localities
 - Evaluating the percentage of residents who have door-to-door garbage clearance in the East zone of a city in comparison to the West zone.
 - Comparing the incidence of flooding between two types of slums (i.e. authorized and unauthorized) in a city.
- Comparisons over time
 - Tracking the change in satisfaction with the quality of drinking water in a town over a five-year period using data from two CRCs — one at the beginning of the five-year period and one at the end.



Tips for Analysis of Data

- Have one person complete the basic analysis. It is best if one person is given the job of analyzing data to keep continuity and accuracy of the process. In case there is doubt regarding the type of tables to generate, it is useful to review the original objectives of the Citizen Report Card.
- Use booster data correctly. If booster data was collected for a service, only a subset of the initial survey questions is applicable. Making conclusions about usage or the incidence of problems will produce incorrect findings. Since the collection of booster data was not part of the random sampling, this data should not be used to make conclusions on proportions in the population.
- Have an adequate “N” (sample size). Make sure that you have a sufficient number of responses for each question. Don’t waste time carrying out an analysis strategy unless there is a sufficient number of responses.
- Check to see if weighting is required. Before generating the basic data tables, it is useful to run basic demographic tables.
 - If the generated tables are in line with the population or sub-population(s) of interest, then proceed with further analysis.
 - If the demographic data of the sample varies from the demographics of the population, then some weighting will be required.

Basic Analysis Tables

The basic analysis tables consist of collected responses for each question for the population or for subgroups of interest (e.g. by zone, gender, slum-type etc.).

Methods to analyze data

Simple techniques are used to analyze data.

- Averages (e.g. average amount paid as a bribe)
- Data ranges (e.g. income)
- Frequencies (e.g. percentage of users who are satisfied with a service)

Data can also be analyzed using more technical analytical tools. The techniques that are used should match the objectives of the Citizen Report Card – some of the techniques that have been tried include averages, weighted averages, frequencies, projections (cost) and econometric models to measure relationships between satisfaction and factors influencing satisfaction.

Cross Tabulations

After producing the initial tables, it is useful to spend time making cross tabulations for areas of special interest.

Cross tabs examine the relationship between two or more variables in order to better understand a phenomenon. Cross tabulations are easy to do using any basic database package, and create a powerful tool for further analysis of citizen feedback.

Example

Typical Cross tab output			
	Had a problem-- piped water	No problem-- piped water	Total
Satisfied with overall quality of service	16.7% (41)	92.7% (306)	60.3% (347)
Dissatisfied with overall quality of service	83.3% (204)	7.3% (24)	39.7% (228)
Total	100% (245)	100% (330)	100% (575)

The numbers in parenthesis is the number of respondents. This simple cross tab shows that satisfaction is closely related to the extent users of piped water face a problem.

7.3 Interpretation

Interpretation requires the ability to translate aggregated data into interesting and relevant measures of service delivery. Interpretation is the process of translating the findings into diagnostic statements. Interpreting the data tables can be undertaken by any number of people who have a good understanding of the purpose of the CRC.

Consider both the audience and purpose of the CRC to help direct the interpretation process.

- In some instances, recommendations, or suggestions for improvement, are made based on the interpretation of findings.

Example

In one citizen report card study, it was found out that among the poor households who visited the city water supply agency, 71% were completely satisfied with the behavior of staff.

This is an objective statement of findings based on a direct question in the survey. At the interpretation stage, this percentage is further examined. Is 71% high, medium or low? A conclusion is made: A high percentage of non-slum respondents who interacted with the water supply board staff were completely satisfied with the behavior of staff (71%).

7.4 The Citizen Report Card

As part of the interpretation process, a report or extensive summary of the findings should be written. The major output from the interpretation stage is the main CRC report. The process of interpreting data and writing the main report is critical to collect important findings from the aggregated data.

- During this stage, a decision is made regarding which findings should be highlighted and emphasized.
- As will be discussed in module 9, relevant information can be extracted from the main report and organized into different formats for the various target audiences (i.e. service providers, civil society organizations and residents welfare groups).

Ensure that the main report includes both the positive and negative findings (especially if your local partner is a government body, there may be a desire to suppress negative findings). Urge the local lead institution to present a holistic picture of the findings in the main report and in the subsequent dissemination efforts.

Sections of the CRC Main Report

An effective CRC report is well organized, clearly written, and concise. The Citizen Report Card main report should include:

- Executive Summary
- Survey Objectives
- Methodology and
- Major Findings
- Conclusions & Policy Recommendations

The Executive Summary

The executive summary is the start of the report.

- It presents a brief version of the purpose, methodology, and major findings of the CRC.
- It should contain a list of recommended actions suggested by the findings.
- It is usually one or two pages in length.

This section should be able to stand alone and serve as a summary document for media, citizens and other interested parties.

Survey Objectives

This section conveys the reason for doing the survey and how the findings are expected to inform follow-up planning, decisions, or actions by various actors. The statement of purpose for the CRC provides a good starting point for this section.

Methodology

This section explains the following questions

- How was information gathered?
- When was the information collected?
- What was the response rate?
- What is the confidence level of the findings?
- What is the margin of error?

The objective of this section is to present a complete, accurate, and honest description of research methods employed.

Major Findings

This section summarizes the results and presents them in order of importance and interest to the audience.

- Tables should be used to summarize the key findings.
- The most interesting results should be highlighted with appropriate graphics.
- The findings should include areas of good and poor performance⁸.

Conclusions & Policy Recommendations

This section answers the question “so what?” and discusses the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings.

- The conclusions that are made should be based on the facts obtained, moderated by an understanding of the limits of survey research.
- This section can suggest how changes in processes or how the introduction of training or new procedures could improve service delivery.

Limit the desire to give recommendations beyond what the findings suggest. Remember that service providers have considerable expertise and knowledge about services; they may be better suited to make extrapolations based on the findings.

⁸ Include both the good and poor aspects of service delivery. Let the findings speak for themselves. Resist the temptation to give a positive slant due to internal political pressure!

Summary of Module 7

- Be careful in your analysis of booster data; otherwise your findings will be biased.
- Don't waste time carrying out an analysis plan unless you have ensured that there is a sufficient number of responses for the questions of interest.
- The main report serves as an important complete document of the CRC findings.

Module 9: Dissemination of Findings

Objectives

This module outlines the key considerations to disseminate the CRC findings. On successful completion of this module you will be able to:

- Plan and carry out a dissemination strategy

Overview

The dissemination of the findings of the pilot Citizen Report Card is extremely critical to derive the maximum benefits from the effort. The usefulness of the Citizen Report Card will be quite limited if findings are not shared and used to bring about improvements in public service delivery. The scope of dissemination relates directly to the objectives of the CRC. The target audience should be informed of the findings within a time frame meaningful for follow up action. The design of an effective and focused strategy depends on a series of important steps:

Planning a Dissemination Strategy

Setting aside a few hours to develop a dissemination strategy will help to ensure that findings reach the intended audience.

Four basic tasks are pursued:

- Identifying the target audience/stakeholders;
- Deciding the channels/network and specific activities to reach the audience;
- Focusing on project management considerations;
- Understanding the role of strategic communication.

Please see *Appendix 13: Dissemination Plan* to help guide the process.

a. Identifying a Target Audience

The key question to consider here is: “with who should we share the findings to satisfy the objectives of this CRC study?”

The following could be the key audience:

- Public service providers
- Civil Society Organizations (regional, national & international)
- Media- print, radio & TV (regional & national)
- General Population
- Government (at higher levels and regional levels)
- Donors / Supporters

Public Service Providers/Concerned Ministries: Findings are shared with each service provider covered in the CRC. Experience suggests that a face-to-face meeting with service providers creates an opportunity to get direct feedback on the findings and generates buy-in to the overall process (useful for follow-up activities). The sector specific reports are relevant here. The emphasis in these meetings is not one of fault finding or finger pointing but underlining key diagnostic pointers which will help the agency/department/ministry to come out with specific reform measures.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Findings are shared with CSOs, particularly those working in areas related to public service delivery, to create an informed network of local organizations. These organizations are good partners to work with during advocacy and follow-up activities.

Media: During and after the main release of the CRC, the media is targeted to further disseminate the findings. Over the long term, the media is seen as means to increase general coverage and understanding of public service provision. Usually an attempt is made to push for more regular coverage of service delivery to create additional pressure on providers. One effective strategy from experience is to get a leading newspaper to cover the findings with a detailed write-up on one sector at a time; if this is carried out on a weekly basis, the CRC will be in the media light for 4-5 weeks at a stretch.

General Population: The public should be aware of the findings; an informed general public generates demand for reforms. PAC has been using the concept of “Open Houses” as effective conduits to reach out to the public. Open Houses are public events, usually organized in town halls, where agency heads are invited to respond to the report card findings and answer questions from the public. The distinctive contribution of these open forums was to engage the service providers in active public dialogues as opposed to the closed personal meetings with officials that were customary in all agencies. In Bangalore, for instance, some of the service providers began to take a cue from this and organized their own forums where the civil society groups were invited to dialogue on the problems being faced by them. The electricity board, the Water and sanitation board and even the police have worked with such forums. The interactions between organized civic groups and the service providers have grown significantly in the past decade.

Government: State level governing bodies, commissions or other higher-level bodies can be important allies in improving public services. These government entities have direct or indirect influence over financing and decision-making related to service delivery at the local level. At the same time, sharing the relevant findings with regional or local level authorities may be extremely useful for making on-the-ground improvements in service provision. In many city report card studies, separate presentations are made to zonal officials to highlight particular problems of the zones.

Others: Much of the financial resources to support an effort like the CRC are privately donated. The individuals and organizations that support the CRC effort—both financially and intellectually—are usually very interested in a formal presentation of the findings.

Methods of Dissemination

After identifying the target audiences, the next question to address is, "What is the best method to share the findings?" The decision of how to disseminate the findings depends on the purpose and scope of the Citizen Report Card.

The answer usually includes:

- Pre-launch presentations,
- Media conference,
- Press Note

- Post-launch presentations,
- Creative opportunities

Pre-launch Presentations: Hold a meeting with the leadership of the sectors selected for the study to discuss the findings before the public release. This will give providers an opportunity to discuss the findings. Experience suggests that sharing the findings through individualized presentations customized to each service provider generates useful feedback. Following the presentation, service providers can clarify parts of the findings and provide explanations to interpret results more accurately. In addition, the leadership may independently decide to disseminate CRC findings within the organization and use the information for internal decision-making.

Providing a customized written document of the findings often help to facilitate an internal dissemination and use of CRC findings.

Media Conference: The media is very important to the wide-scale dissemination of findings. The first step towards working with the media is to hold a formal press conference to release the CRC findings. Regional and local newspapers, along with the major newspapers, TV and radio stations, are invited to help increase the reach of dissemination. As a practice, PAC does not encourage giving any particular paper an exclusive “scoop” – all are intimated at the same time. Formal presentation are kept short; the methodology is explained briefly, a major emphasis is on highlighting the key findings, and discussing relevant policy pointers.

Press Note: The press note is usually a brief document, ideally not more than 1-3 pages and highlights the following points:

- Who was surveyed, when they were surveyed, the method of contact, and the size of the sample
- The services and aspects of service delivery that were covered
- The key findings
- Problem areas of particular importance
- Suggestions for improvements
- Basic information about the organization that carried out CRC

Post-launch Presentations: Following the major release of findings, presentations are often made to interested groups like the planning commissions, oversight bodies, regulatory agencies etc.

Creative Opportunities: Creative techniques can enhance traditional dissemination methods. Theatre, artwork, songs, puppet shows, film and other creative methods can often capture the attention of a broad cross-section of the population. A group in Bangladesh used street-theatre to communicate major findings from a report study to the public!

Project Management Considerations

At this stage in the CRC methodology, a team with public relations skills is very useful.

- Presentations to service providers, press and other stakeholders are best made by senior staff who have been involved in the CRC design and have a good understanding of the methodology.
- Presenters should have strong communication skills and be able to connect the findings to the interests of the audience.
- Often a two-person team is necessary to ensure that the presenters have the required experience and knowledge.

Before dissemination, staff with good data interpretation, presentation design and written skills must be available to put together the presentations and associated written documents. Depending on the number of public services covered in the CRC, this step could take the time of 1-2 staff members for at least 1-2 weeks.

Communication interventions at each stage of the CRC:

Stage of CRC	Communication Activity	Objectives	Target audience / stakeholders
Planning a CRC	Workshops	Sensitizing stakeholders who are part of the CRC implementing team to create a shared understanding of the CRC concepts and applications	Peer CSOs (who are part of the implementing team), survey groups & Expert Panels
Pre- launch phase	Workshops	Sharing and vetting the findings with the peer CSOs & Expert Panels	Peer CSOs (who are part of the implementing team), & Expert Panels
Dissemination	Press conferences, press releases	Disseminate the findings from the CRC	General Public
Post- launch presentations	Targeted presentations	Explore policy advocacy and wider implications of the findings with specialized groups	CSO networks, professional bodies etc.

How communication can multiply the effect of CRC findings:

CRC Stage	Impact of Sharing of Information
Planning	Created a shared understanding of the rationale, objectives and potency of CRCs. Underscored the transparency of the entire effort. Assisted stakeholders to understand and unbundled the tasks involved.
Pre-launch phase	Ensured quality checks and endorsed the veracity of findings. Enabled stakeholders to plan in advance media strategies.
Dissemination	Raised awareness on critical issues in public services. Credible and objective findings created a shift in public information from the anecdotal to the evidential Issues like corruption that hitherto existed in the realm of the abstract became an objective benchmark
Post launch	Customized information packages enabled focused advocacy efforts with critical and influential groups

Some Tips for effective dissemination & follow up!

Throughout the dissemination process, attention should be given to present the findings in an unbiased manner. Based on past experience with Citizen Report Cards, listed below are a few pointers:

- *Presenting information in a holistic manner.* It is important to highlight the good and bad areas of performance. A complete picture--both the successes and failures--must be shared! Effective communication in a CRC is both a “pat” and a “slap”!
- *Allowing for shades of gray.* Descriptions, such as waiting time and proportion of users who are completely satisfied, make it possible to present feedback in different shades of gray—instead of a simple good/bad or yes/no. Remember that the Citizen Report Card captures the subjective experience of users in an objective manner.
- *Conveying findings in a value-neutral manner.* Let the findings speak for themselves instead of using descriptive adjectives or value-laden or biased language.
- *Selectively comparing across services.* Although there are major differences between services, a comparison across providers on comparable criteria puts pressure on poor performers. This comparison creates peer pressure and develops into a substitute for the market.
- *Using a question-answer format to present findings.* Past experience has shown that using a question-answer format during presentations is an easy way for the audience to digest information. For example, during a presentation, instead of listing statistics about various aspects of drinking water services, ask the question: “In what areas do drinking water services need to improve?” A set of bulleted comments for service aspects where citizens gave poor ratings could follow. In addition, if the questionnaire included any direct questions about areas for improvement, these findings could be included.

Examples of how the Media has Reacted

The print media in Bangalore played an unusual role by adding their weight to the pressure for better services. In 1994, all that the newspapers had done was to publicise the negative findings of the report card or other similar critical assessments. Investigative reports on civic issues were few and far between. But the scene changed since then as some of the newspapers decided to devote more space to public service problems and related civic issues. Some of the newspapers sought PAC’s advice and technical inputs for their new initiatives. One newspaper began a series of reports on the different wards of the city, highlighting their problems and focusing on their elected corporators. Another leading newspaper began a series of investigative reports on corruption in maternity homes in Bangalore, taking a lead from a report card finding.

This was followed by another innovative campaign that newspapers seldom undertake. A leading newspaper organised interactive meetings in different parts of the city where citizens were invited to voice their specific area related problems in the presence of senior officials from a selected group of public agencies. A large number of public officials were thus exposed to the issues of the localities and stimulated to respond with answers. These meetings, of course, received much publicity in the newspaper. The remedial actions taken were also subsequently reported in the press. This public process clearly put increased pressure on the agencies to be more transparent and accountable and to deliver on their promises.

In a recent case in Sri Lanka, an awareness creation workshop on report cards was broadcast live to various rural communities through community radio and within hours, people started calling back asking for more details and also pointing to the need to have such independent assessments.

The “glare effect” created by the media using the report card findings have put the performance of public agencies under a public scanner. This certainly created an impetus for change and also, to a certain extent, brought in an element of strong public opinion for reforms.

Summary

- Meeting with service providers prior to the major public release is a good opportunity to create buy-in and get feedback.
- Impress upon the service providers the usefulness of the findings; the positive and negative findings provide useful information for policy-making.
- Along with identifying organizations, thought should be given about whom to target within an organization.
- During dissemination it is important to provide a balanced picture of service provision--both the good and the bad should be shared.
- The media is a very powerful actor during dissemination. It can increase coverage of service provision and ensure that the findings reach the general public.

Module 10: Advocacy for Improving Services

Objectives

This module discusses ways to use the CRC findings to improve services. On successful completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Plan a strategy to improve services, based on the CRC findings

Overview

Citizen Report Cards differ from other “user feedback surveys” in that the process is incomplete without a planned and strategic dissemination and advocacy effort. In many ways, a CRC is blending the science of surveys with the art of advocacy. CRC-related advocacy falls into two categories:

- Strengthening the “**voice**” of citizens. “Voice” refers to the needs and opinions of citizens. Voice speaks of the demand side—citizen groups, civil society, media and other external groups that use, or desire to use, public services.
- Increasing government “**responsiveness**” to citizen needs. “Responsiveness” refers to the receptivity of service providers to external feedback, as demonstrated through changes to internal structures, procedures and processes.

The key is to connect these two enabling concepts.

Planning an advocacy strategy

An effective advocacy strategy should have the following components:

- **Understanding & Influencing stakeholders:**

Effective advocacy requires a good and clear understanding of who the critical stakeholders are and what would be their influence and importance. Two tools that can assist in this regard are

- The Stakeholder Matrix
- The Impact Matrix

Previous lead institutions that have used one or both of the tools have found them useful for clarity on whom to target and to understand the potential impact of advocacy activities.

What is Advocacy

- **Effecting** changes in policy & practice
- **By** organizing public opinion & participation
- **Through** influencing policy makers & implementers
- **In** favor of larger public interests
- **Using** democratic means

Stakeholder Matrix

- This tool requires you to identify CRC stakeholders, their interests, and assess whether the proposed actions are likely to support or challenge stakeholder interests.
- The blank template and an example of a Stakeholder Matrix (please see Appendix 22: Stakeholder Matrix) is available.

A major step in strategizing the use of the CRC survey findings is to conduct a stakeholder analysis. As a first step, a stakeholder matrix is constructed to identify CRC stakeholders, their interests, and assess whether the proposed actions are likely to support or challenge stakeholder interests. An example adapted from a previous CRC exercise is illustrated below - (a plus sign (+) indicates that proposed actions will support an interest, a minus sign (-) indicates if proposed actions will challenge an interest and a (?) indicates uncertainty of response).

A SAMPLE STAKEHOLDER MATRIX

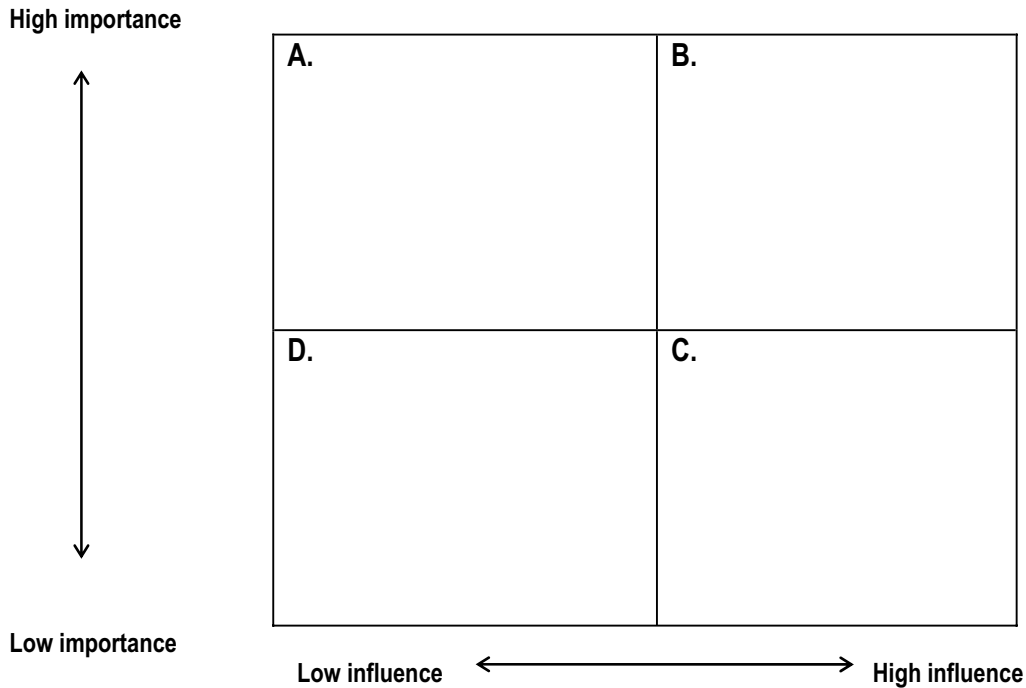
Stakeholder group	Interest	How project affects particular interest
1. The urban poor	Better access to services	(+)
3. Women	Better social inclusion & security	(+)
4. Agency officials	More accountability	(?)
5. Political leaders	Better relations with community	(+)
6. Local Elites	Maintaining power base and patronage	(-)

Impact Matrix

- This tool involves the classification of stakeholders by their level of importance and influence in order to clarify who you should target to make the most impact.
- The blank template of an Impact Matrix

A blank format to plot the impact relations is discussed below:

A SAMPLE IMPACT MATRIX



Explanatory Notes: Boxes A, B and C contain key stakeholders of the project – those who can significantly influence the project, or who are most important if the project objectives are to be met.

Box A: Stakeholders of high importance to the project, but with low influence. This implies that they will require special initiatives if their interests are to be identified and protected.

Box B. Stakeholders appearing to have a high degree of influence on the project, who are also of high importance for its success. This implies that the Lead Agency will need to construct good working relationships with these stakeholders in order to ensure an effective coalition of support for the project.

Box C. Stakeholders with high influence, who can therefore affect project outcomes but whose interests are not the target of the project. These stakeholders may be a source of significant risk and they will need to be consulted during project monitoring and management.

Box D. Stakeholders in this box, with low influence on, or importance to project objectives may require limited monitoring or evaluation, but are of low priority. They are unlikely to be the subject of project activities or management.

- **Identifying Critical Incentives:** There are number of incentives that could provide entry points for key players related to service delivery (service providers, higher level government authorities, and civil society) to utilize CRC findings to bring about improvements in services:

Service Providers

As the institution accountable for service provision, the service provider is the key player in any plan to improve services. Whether the required improvements involve improving the quality of a product (i.e. providing more stable voltage or cleaner water) or redesigning the system of billing, the service provider must change processes and procedures.

Service providers can utilize the CRC findings to:

- Redesign service delivery processes.
- Respond to the unique needs of various segments of the population.
- Design back-end improvements (computerization, training of staff, etc.)
- Support the creation of local venues and opportunities for increased consultation and participation from citizens
- Ask for additional resources to change policies or improve implementation.

Higher-Level Authorities

CRC findings provide higher-levels of government with reliable performance information that can be used to put pressure on service providers. Government institutions involved in budgetary distribution or that are senior in the line-of-command (including policymakers) can use the finding to

- Design incentives to reward well performing service providers.
- Monitor the usage of public funds and compliance to existing standards; link financial support to performance indicators.
- Reallocate resources to remedy shortcomings in service provision.

CSOs, Consortiums & Citizens

CSOs and Consortiums can use CRC findings to prioritize and *advocate* for specific improvements in service delivery. Advocacy is the mobilization of public opinion and citizen participation to effect changes in policies and practices for the larger public good. The CRC provides considerable details on the public's opinion!

Development Agencies/Donors

Although not a local actor, development agencies can use the findings to

- Provide policy advice to policymakers and push for relevant improvements in services.
- Shape the evaluation processes for projects and programs supported by development agencies.
- Prioritize capacity-building support that may be required locally.
- Benchmark the quality of service provision before and after a new policy or scheme is introduced.

Planning for Service Improvements: A Template

A key challenge before any public service agency following the CRC survey is how to take the path from “symptoms” to “reforms”. The following steps describe a tested way of ensuring institutional ownership and commitment to examine the findings from the CRC as diagnostic pointers and use them to create an institutional consensus to identify reforms and responses.

Step 1. From symptoms to diagnosis

A good starting point in designing reform measures is to have a collective introspection within organizations to examine key findings and pointers provided by the CRC as symptoms for diagnosis. To use a medical analogy, when a physician conducts checks the temperature and blood pressure of a patient, she is looking for the symptoms of the illness. She then uses the test results to do an expert diagnosis of the patient’s condition. The remedies she prescribes are guided by the findings of her diagnosis. She will consider different options and dosages before deciding on her prescriptions. Similarly, information provided by a report card can be a useful aid to diagnosis and a springboard for further probes into the problems identified in the service ratings. For example, the ratings of the different dimensions of a service are very similar to the symptoms that a doctor is able to read from her test results. If an agency gets a low rating on “the time to attend to a user with a problem”, it means that people are made to wait long at a counter or in an office. A low rating implies that many who seek assistance or advice are not getting it within a reasonable time period.

List out all the major findings from the CRC and brainstorm within the agency (a small representative group will be ideal) to identify possible root causes. Make sure that you get the participation from all levels of the organization.

Round 1.From Symptoms to Diagnosis	
Key finding (Symptoms)	Possible reasons (Diagnosis)

Step 2. From Diagnosis to Reforms

The next step could involve generating doable measures to address the symptoms (and the underlying causes). At this point, it may be useful to identify institutional constraints to give the reform options a reality check. Timelines may also be drawn to prioritize the reform measures and ensure compliance.

Round 2. From Diagnosis to Reforms				
Key finding (Symptoms)	Possible reasons (Diagnosis)	Suggested measures	Expected risks / barriers	Timeline

Step 3. Creating a Consensus on the Reforms

The third and last stage involves creating a broader organizational consensus on the institutional responses identified. This would involve presenting the response mechanisms to a wider audience within the agency to garner support and commitment. At this stage, be open and receptive to new ideas also!

Round 3: Generating a Consensus on the Reforms				
Key finding	Suggested measures	Comments on the suggested measures	Other doable ideas	Required resources

Improving Services – A long-term commitment

Although the CRC survey and follow-up consultations can be completed within several months, a three to five year commitment is necessary to bring about real improvements in service delivery. CRCs rarely result in immediate improvements in services.

The institutionalization of CRCs creates a basis to build up organized external pressure on agencies to improve services. However, institutionalization requires the long-term commitment of a local supporter. Regular CRCs offer a current opinion of the people with regards to service provision and identify areas for improvement and measures that can lead to greater cost-efficiency.

A wide range of activities can be initiated following a CRC to stimulate public participation and encourage public agencies to respond proactively.

- Building awareness on collective issues of importance.

The CRC findings can be used to shift the focus from individual issues of concern to collective issues of importance. Publicly sharing this information—that is, disseminating specific findings to increase the awareness of widespread service related problems—is a natural extension of the initial, more comprehensive dissemination of CRC findings. During these efforts local champions – individuals both inside and outside of government supportive of reform – can be identified. Some examples of measures to improve awareness include: media campaigns, community radio shows, open houses, inter agency workshops and campaigns/ efforts to promote good citizenship.

- Lobbying to influence policy and planning

CRC findings provide a credible database of information from which citizens can lobby for changes in policy and planning. For effective lobbying, the identification of civil society critics or constituencies of service users that have the skills and connections to generate external pressure is extremely important. Examples of lobbying efforts include: meetings between citizen groups and

the leadership of service providers and pressuring elected representatives through letters, meetings and other organizing efforts to work on specific areas of reform.

■ Monitoring and evaluating

CRC findings can be used to monitor a range of service aspects (usage, reliability, corruption), staff quality and overall service delivery. In addition, CRCs can help evaluate specific programs and track changes in service quality over time. These uses of the CRC should be identified at the outset while defining the scope of the CRC and shape the subsequent steps in the survey methodology.

In addition, there are several types of measures that can work to increase the impartiality, magnitude and responsiveness of service providers.

■ Participatory Planning

CRC findings create a natural mechanism to bring a variety of stakeholders together to increase citizen participation in local level planning and decision-making. Several types of forums are conducive for increasing citizen participation in planning. For example, citizens have participated in budgetary analysis, as well as in a planning committee for budgetary allocations.

■ Consultations on Citizen Needs

Public meetings and other one-time consultations offer an interface for citizens, service providers and other stakeholders to discuss citizen needs. The consultation may be the first time that local residents and government officials involved with service provision are jointly discussing key problems and generating solutions. The challenge during these meetings is to keep the focus on collective issues of concern. A strong facilitator can prove useful to steer the conversation. Meetings can focus on one service or bring together related services, with overlapping concerns.

■ Setting Public Standards

Many service agencies do not have quality standards to which they agree to adhere to; by taking citizens' needs and expectations into consideration, agencies can develop a citizen's charter or another public expression of the minimal service quality to which they will adhere.

■ Creating Incentives, Sanctions and Controls within Service Provision

Behind the backdrop of service delivery is a system of incentives, sanction and procedures that shape the front-end operations. Offering incentives –such as linking citizen satisfaction to performance indicators for public servants—increases the likelihood that staff will respond to citizen needs. With incentives the goal is to link the client or citizens' perspective to the performance assessment of those involved in service delivery. In particular, efforts should be made to identify and support champions of reform through trainings, awards and leadership programs.

At the same time sanctions or reprimanding poor performers—those caught collecting bribes or performing poorly in other regards—creates a culture where good performance is valued and

detractors are punished. In the Indian state of Maharashtra, a CRC is being carried out at the panchayat level. Based on the user feedback of public service delivery, the panchayats will be ranked and given an allocation of state funding.

■ Changing Service Ethos and Organizational Culture

At the core of any existing pattern of service provision is the ethos and culture of the service agency. Working to alter this culture to better serve citizens is a major challenge. Staff trainings, awards, leadership programs and changes in incentives and punishments (as mentioned in the previous item) can help to change the pattern of service provider responsiveness. Keep in mind that coordinated change is required at all levels of the organization- both vertically and horizontally.

■ Increasing Accessibility

Along with venues for participatory planning and other venues for citizens to influence government, citizens often require a reliable venue to ask service delivery and billing related questions. Creating avenues by which citizens have continued and reliable access to service providers—to complete routine transactions and clear up basic inquiries—greatly increases the accessibility between the provider and user of services.

■ Establishing new rights

The CRC provide citizens with a new right—the right to information related to the quality of public service delivery --and arms them with the ability to use the information to work towards improvements in service provision.