ITAV Analysis: Phase Analysis Checklist

Goal

1. Assess a program's progress against the Moving Forward Objectives for each Phase in a given ITAV Facet (Governance, Technology, Resources, or Community Engagement)

2. Determine which phase a program is in for each facet

Prerequisites

None

Who Should Participate?

Program leadership (strategic thinkers) Program management (tactical thinkers)

Length

60 minutes

Used For

Any program getting started with an It Takes a Village (ITAV) analysis. The phase analysis checklists can be used by programs who are new to ITAV, or to update the baseline for those who engage with ITAV on a regular basis.

Activity Instructions

1. For each facet in the ITAV Framework, fill out the provided checklist.

   a. Governance Checklist and Phase Determination, pp. 2-4

   b. Technology Checklist and Phase Determination, pp. 5-7

   c. Resources Checklist and Phase Determination, pp. 8-10

   d. Community Engagement Checklist and Phase Determination, pp. 11-13

2. Use the checklist and the phase definitions to determine which phase of each facet your program is currently in.

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Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Governance Checklist

Definition: A governance model describes the roles that project participants can take on and the process for strategic and tactical decision making within the project. In addition, it describes the ground rules for participation in the project and the processes for communicating and sharing within the project team and community.

	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 1: Define a need for governance *Has your program's staff and community determined what type of governance structures are needed based on existing issues?*					
Phase 1: Review existing governance models *Has your program looked at examples of governance models from other programs to understand the options available?*					
Phase 1: Select the governance model that works best now for the program *Has your program drafted a governance model and put it to the test with use cases from your work?*					
Phase 1: Communicate changes to stakeholders *Has your program shared the draft governance model with stakeholders and uses? Is it easily findable and understood by the people it affects?*					
Phase 2: Document existing governance policies *Are your program's existing policies for code contribution, technical road mapping, strategic planning, policy decision making, etc., documented and available for the community to access?*					
Phase 2: Evaluate each element of existing governance *Has your program worked with staff and the community to evaluate if the structure and policies that are in place are actually working?*					

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Governance Checklist, cont.	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 2: Increase level of community engagement *Has your program worked to increase community engagement by adding formal volunteer positions, advisory groups, or other methods of bringing new contributors into the fold?*					
Phase 2: Evaluate long-term home organization options *Has your program explored engaging a fiscal sponsor or nonprofit to serve as a home or sponsoring organization?*					
Phase 3: Create and support consistent structures *Does the community feel like it has a trusted place for making contributions of time, effort, and resources? Is there a succession plan?*					
Phase 3: Evaluate and evolve governance practices *Has your program evaluated and evolved its governance practices as priorities, funding streams, and technologies have changed?*					
Phase 3: Expand community participation in governance *Has your program worked to ensure that governance representation matches the makeup of the community and key stakeholders?*					

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Governance Phase Determination

If you have one or two checkmarks in the "yes" column, your program is likely in Phase One. If you have five or six checkmarks in the "yes" column, your program is likely in Phase Two. If you have plenty of checkmarks in the "yes" and "in progress" columns, your program is likely in Phase Three.

Phase Determination (circle one):   1   2   3

Still not sure? These definitions may also help identify where your program is:

Governance Phase I programs are generally still working with their original software engineers, project staff, funder, or sponsoring organization. The application may not have end users yet, leading to a "good faith over governance" approach. Although it may be unclear what type of governance model a community wants or needs, making plans early in a lifecycle can contribute positively to a program's overall sustainability.

Governance Phase II program governance can best be described as functional but limited in one or more aspects. Documented policies and procedures for community contributions, technical oversight, and budgeting exist, but often still exhibit a strong influence from program founders, funders, and/or specific staff or community members. Moving a program forward requires succession planning to ensure program continuity.

Governance Phase III programs benefit from strong management structures, although not all have formal governance. Many are part of umbrella organizations that provide the structures needed to move initiatives forward, such as marketing and communications, fiscal stewardship, and grant writing. Phase III programs generally have tried-and-tested business models, which lead to more predictability and a better ability to plan ahead.

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Technology

Definition: The core of each of these programs is open-source software or systems serving cultural and scientific heritage organizations. There are parallels with proprietary software development processes but working within the open source world brings its own challenges around community, resources, and governance that affect the software development process.

	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 1: Work to understand core community needs *Has your program evolved from working within a single organization to gathering input and feedback on program priorities from the broader community?*					
Phase 1: Continue to gather data after moving from design to development *Has your program continued to analyze community needs as the project moves from design to development? Are community members being engaged early with testing and documentation?*					
Phase 1: Communicate progress and process with stakeholders *Has your program inspired confidence and engaged stakeholders by being transparent during the design and development process with open code repositories, public bug trackers, and regular releases?*					
Phase 2: Engage the community *Has your program worked with the user community to understand what is working, what features/functionality are most heavily used, and how the application could be improved?*					
Phase 2: Grow thoughtfully *Has your program worked to balance new features and functionality with maintaining a stable infrastructure and up-to-date documentation?*					
Phase 2: Consider integration over new development *Has your program integrated or considered integrating with existing OSS rather than adding new features directly to the core platform?*					

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Technology Checklist, cont.	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 3: Reassess community needs *Has your program carried out a core community needs assessment to understand how core community needs have evolved since the program began?*					
Phase 3: Plan for evolution *If your program's community needs still align with functionality provided by the platform, is there a plan to evolve the technology to keep it stable and sustainable?*					
Phase 3: Document an exit strategy *If community needs no longer align with the platform, are there any plans to retire it?*					

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Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

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Technology Phase Determination

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Phase Determination (circle one):   1   2   3

Still not sure? These definitions may also help identify where your program is:

Programs in **Technology Phase I** are in the design, pre-release, or early beta-testing phase of software development. These programs may have no users yet, or a core of committed early adopters or beta testers. New development may also be based on newer or unproven technology, require staff training, and may exhibit considerable technical or resource challenges.

Technology Phase II programs have had more than one public release, developed a formal release process that includes a numbering system or other method for identifying major and maintenance releases, and the application is being used in production outside of the founding organizations.

Technology Phase III applications are in production, well-adopted, and well-supported. Design and development of the core technology stack is stable, with few changes to the application's architecture with each release. Programs typically have a stable supply of developers and committers, and a published and predictable release schedule. The existing application may be nearing the end of its useful life due to changing market circumstances or require a technology overhaul to bring the code up to date with new technology or community needs.

ALL FACETS, ALL PHASES

Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

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Resources

Definition: In order to launch, grow, and thrive, OSS programs need resources both human and fiscal. Human resources encompass engineers writing code, community members providing use cases, colleagues or consultants providing assistance with strategic planning, or organizational homes with fiscal stewardship. Financial resources come in and go out in a wide variety of ways – in via contributions, grants, dues, sponsorships, etc., and out via salaries, servers, telecommunications, and overhead.

	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 1: Undertake business and financial sustainability planning *Has your program made an effort to understand the application's market, end users, and options for attracting long-term dedicated resources?*					
Phase 1: Determine human resources needed to move forward *Has your program determined the core set of people and skills required to support program priorities?*					
Phase 1: Explore partnerships and collaborations *Has your program explored partnerships with similar communities or engaged with potential fiscal sponsors or nonprofit organizational homes?*					
Phase 2: Expand the community of funders and contributors *Has your program sought to expand the community of funders and contributors or explored adding new revenue streams?*					
Phase 2: Work with vendors to support development needs *Has your program explored creating or expanding a network of registered service providers?*					
Phase 2: Cultivate expectations around contributions *Has your program established structure and clear expectations around contributions for its stakeholders?*					

ALL FACETS, ALL PHASES

Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Resources Checklist cont.	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 3: Focus on alliances and partnerships with leading institutions *Has your program explored partnerships with leading organizations that can provide steady sources of income and in-kind contributions?*					
Phase 3: Shift business model in response to external events *Has your program evaluated its revenue mix against current trends in OSS and cultural heritage? These can be positive trends, like a shift to open, or negative like decreased funding for higher ed.*					
Phase 3: Calibrate revenue streams to a global economy *Has your program adjusted its financial expectations to improve participation from users in developing economies?*					

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Resources Phase Determination

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Phase Determination (circle one):   1   2   3

Still not sure? These definitions may also help identify where your program is:

Resources Phase I programs are typically funded by a single organization, grant-funded or volunteer operated, and may not have a long-term plan for ongoing support. There is often a single program owner or champion writing grants and obtaining necessary internal support. Software development staff may not be permanent members of the team. A small number of contributors generally means that a loss of one person has an outsized impact.

Resources Phase II programs have generally moved to distributed resourcing. They are able to meet day-to-day expenses but may still be reliant on a small number of organizations and revenue streams and have difficulty funding out-of-the-norm expenses. On the personnel side, Phase II programs have a strong core team and are usually able to recruit diverse team members, but retention can be difficult without long-term funding assurances.

Resources Phase III programs generally have diverse staff support and income streams covering daily operations and can focus on long-range strategy and even endowment formation. Money is available for R&D and infrastructure programs, and the loss of or change to one income stream does not spell disaster. On the human side, Phase III programs have paid staff and a strong contributor model with many skill sets and roles represented.

ALL FACETS, ALL PHASES

Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

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Community Engagement

Definition: The Community Engagement facet reflects efforts to facilitate and foster involvement within a community. It is focused on encouraging users to become stakeholders. Those who have a sense of investment and ownership become champions who want the program to grow and succeed. A component of this facet also includes communication and outreach efforts to the community itself as well as the wider world of decision makers, potential users, funding agencies, and others.

	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 1: Identify and involve a wider group of stakeholders *Has your program worked to expand the community involved in the program, and to involve new users in program growth and development?*					
Phase 1: Form an outreach committee *Does your program have a group responsible for carrying out community engagement activities?*					
Phase 1: Formulate and implement a communications and engagement strategy / plan *Does your program have a formal strategy for engaging its community and has that strategy been implemented?*					
Phase 2: Set up processes and infrastructure to facilitate engagement *Does your program have a cohesive overall message, and policies that guide and foster engagement such as contributor guidelines, codes of conduct, onboarding policies, etc.?*					
Phase 2: Increase non-directed community activities *Has your program empowered stakeholders to be ambassadors for the program? Encouraged informal community-led activities?*					
Phase 2: Increase transparency *Does your program's community understand how decisions are made and what program priorities are?*					

Activity: ITAV Analysis Kickoff

Community Engagement Checklist, cont.	Yes	No	In Progress	Not Sure	N/A
Phase 2: Provide dedicated staffing for engagement *Does your program have staff with time dedicated to community engagement?*					
Phase 3: Engage a more diverse set of engaged participants and communities *Do participants of all backgrounds and skill sets feel comfortable engaging with and contributing to your program?*					
Phase 3: Empower the community to support each other *Does your program have mechanisms and processes that enable community members to help each other out, things like blogs, easy to update documentation, forums, or arenas for active community discussion?*					
Phase 3: Establish ways to continually evaluate community engagement *Does your program have a formal way to evaluate the efficacy of its engagement strategies and adapt them as necessary?*					

ALL FACETS, ALL PHASES

Getting Started, Growing, Assessing and Evolving

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Community Engagement Phase Determination

If you have one or two checkmarks in the "yes" column, your program is likely in Phase One. If you have five or six checkmarks in the "yes" column, your program is likely in Phase Two. If you have plenty of checkmarks in the "yes" and "in progress" columns, your program is likely in Phase Three.

Phase Determination (circle one):   1   2   3

Still not sure? These definitions may also help identify where your program is:

Community Engagement Phase I programs are generally focused on their primary stakeholders. There is frequently lack of engagement with the broader cultural and scientific heritage and OSS communities, and lack of an externally focused communications strategy, either from limited experience or a feeling that outreach is not a priority at this point. In this stage, the core stakeholders may still be developing their product strategy and doing a competitive environmental scan. In this early stage, staffing resources are limited and can be dependent on one organization, with a focus on doing core set-up work rather than engaging with a larger audience or establishing communications practices to a wider community.

Community Engagement Phase II is when program participants determine how to best facilitate engagement that works for the specific community. At this stage, the community may be small and unsure of how to contribute. For example, individuals may be contributing code, but the processes aren't very clear, streamlined or efficient. People may want to help in a variety of ways, but aren't sure how, or they may wait until they are specifically asked to contribute.

Community Engagement Phase III programs tend to have a well-established infrastructure to enable participation. They provide a variety of opportunities to engage – such as conferences, user groups, and awards. They have representation from diverse geographic regions and different skill sets represented (technical, documentation, training, etc.).