Users' Guide to Community Scorecards: A Toolkit for Companies and their Partners in the Infrastructure and Natural Resources Sectors

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Acknowledgements

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSC	Community scorecard
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
IFC	International Finance Corporation
E&S	Environmental and social
ESG	Environment, social, and governance
INR	Infrastructure and natural resources sector
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization

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Overview

The community scorecard (CSC) is a simple, effective, and adaptable tool for companies to establish constructive and on-going engagement with communities. It introduces a continual process of sharing information, obtaining feedback, and making adjustments to policies, programs, and practices that are beneficial to both the company and local stakeholders.[1]

Given its versatility, the community scorecard can be used to assess and improve almost any aspect of company operations and community relations. At the same time, it can enhance dialogue and improve relationships with stakeholder groups on the issue in question. Often, stakeholder feedback also helps to ensure better and more sustainable results on the ground. Areas in which the CSC process has proven helpful include:

- Understanding and monitoring community perceptions of the company.
- Strengthening company performance on issues such as environmental protection, corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, safety and security, and job creation, among others.
- Assessing specific community investments, such as local infrastructure and public services provision, and livelihood-building programs.
- Assessing company's internal operations/workplace environment.

This guide walks users through the six-step, in-person and virtual CSC process:

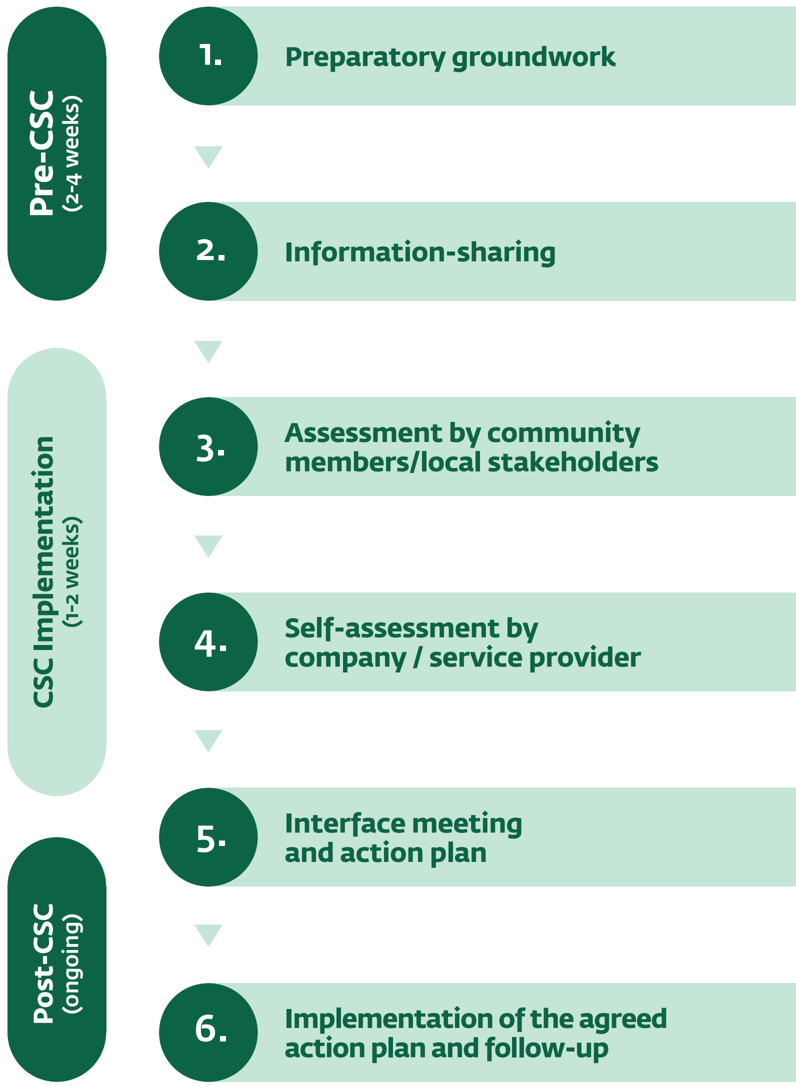

Figure 1. The six-step community scorecard process

1 See, for example: Björkman, M. and J. Svensson, 2009; Edward A. et al., 2019; Wild L. and J. Wales, 2015; World Bank, 2012

Users' Guide to In-Person Community Scorecards

Effective implementation of the CSC process requires at least a minimal level of willingness on the part of both the company and local communities to engage and seek common solutions.

Depending on the nature of community relations, this may require a shift in mindset and a leap of faith on the part of all concerned stakeholders. Whether the idea of implementing a CSC is introduced by the company's senior management, community relations staff, a partner NGO or a community-based organization, the initiating party may need to invest some upfront time and effort in explaining the potential benefits of the CSC process and cultivating the support and buy-in of all key stakeholders. The good news is that even when stakeholders are initially reluctant, a single CSC experience is often sufficient to convince all parties of the value of the process.

A growing number of companies, including those in the infrastructure and natural resources (INR) sectors, have used the CSC methodology already. Among the early private sector adopters was Eagle Mine in Michigan, USA. With support from IFC, more companies engaged in mining, and thermal and hydropower generation in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Uganda have implemented CSC.

The first two steps of the six-step CSC process—pre-implementation—typically take 2–4 weeks. The next three steps—covering the implementation of the CSC—typically take place over a 1–2 week period. The final step—post-implementation follow-up—continues on an ongoing basis until the CSC process is repeated, typically in 6 to 12 months' time.[2]

2 Sample agendas and tables in this section are adapted from: Malena, Carmen. 2015. "Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework Demand-Side Operational Guidelines." Phnom Penh: I-SAF.

Step 1. Preparation and planning

Preparing and planning for CSC implementation involves several tasks. These sub-steps include:

- Defining the focus and scope of the CSC assessment
- Identifying implementing partners
- Identifying and analyzing stakeholders
- Conducting community outreach
- Organizing logistics

1a. Define focus and scope | **1b.** Identify implementing partners | **1c.** Identify and analyze stakeholders | **1d.** Conduct community outreach | **1e.** Organize logistics

1a. Define the focus and scope of the CSC

This step begins with identifying the operation, project, program, service, activity, or area of practice that the CSC will assess, such as E&S performance, environmental protection, or a specific community investment project. It also involves determining the communities and groups of individuals that will participate in the CSC process and the frequency of implementation—for example, on a yearly basis. In addition, at least one team of two facilitators will be needed and several teams may be needed if multiple assessment meetings are planned. This is the time to determine these requirements. It is also the time to calculate and budget for the necessary financial resources.

1b. Identify implementing partners and build their capacity as needed

A successful CSC implementation depends on the ability to mobilize community members/local actors and facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue. Options here include:

- Using the company's in-house community relations staff who can act as mobilizers and facilitators to coordinate and implement the CSC.
- Partnering with a local NGO or consulting firm that has facilitation expertise.
- Supporting the training of community mobilizers/facilitators by the implementing partner or a qualified trainer.
- Using a combination of all three.

Box 1. Training community scorecard facilitators in West Africa

Since early 2018, IFC's Sustainable Infrastructure Advisory team has helped train CSC facilitators in several West African countries. Typically co-sponsored by an infrastructure company, the 3–4 day sessions attract a mix of participants from the sponsor company, partner organizations, the local community, local government and local NGOs.

Programs feature a classroom component, in which participants learn basic facilitation skills and how to implement the steps of the CSC process. They also include experiential learning, in which participants practice their new knowledge and skills by implementing a pilot CSC in their community.

For example, the company might coordinate the overall process, but partner with an NGO that organizes and facilitates the community meetings or trains and mentors community facilitators.

Tip: An implementing partner with a track record of working with the community can add real value, especially if this partner has already built relationships and bonds of trust with local stakeholders.

1c. Identify and analyze stakeholders

The implementing team likely will have prior knowledge of the local community, stakeholders, demographics, and social realities, from their earlier or ongoing research, consultations, and engagement. If this is not the case, plan to conduct a simple stakeholder analysis to identify all relevant groups—those that either influence or are influenced by the specific company operation. In situations where the CSC process involves host or affected communities, inclusivity is critical. Depending on the circumstances, the team might need to arrange separate focus groups so they can gather the various perspectives and understand all interests and needs. As part of this outreach, pay special attention to:

- Identifying and reaching out to local associations and community-based organizations.
- Analyzing social stratification based on gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, among other criteria.
- Understanding relationships and power dynamics between different groups.
- Engaging with less powerful and marginalized groups.

1d. Conduct community outreach

The implementing team should be reaching out to the community from the very start of the process, to inform people about the goals and potential benefits of the CSC process and to build support for the initiative. Outreach activities should target all segments of the community that will be involved in the CSC process. In situations in which the CSC will assess overall performance of the company, this means the entire community. In situations in which the assessment focuses on a specific service or program that impacts particular groups, the activities should target only the relevant groups.

Broad participation is essential for ensuring that the results of the CSC are robust and that the inputs of marginalized, vulnerable, or negatively affected groups are taken into account during the process. Identifying community champions—those in a position to share information with other community members and mobilize participation and support—can help. Examples include traditional chiefs, elected local officials, religious leaders, community leaders, members of local associations and community-based organizations, and volunteers.

Taking an incremental approach to gaining support can be an effective outreach strategy. Start by arranging individual conversations with local officials to secure their endorsement. Next, convene a meeting with community leaders and other key players, including the local officials, to share information about the upcoming initiative and gain their buy-in. Finally, ask for the assistance of these champions in informing and mobilizing the wider community.

Tip: When conducting community outreach, aim to extend your contacts beyond just official leaders and existing partners. Make explicit efforts to reach out to representatives of social groups whose voices are sometimes excluded, such women, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, economically disadvantaged households.

1e. Organize logistics

Use the initial meeting with community representatives to plan and schedule when and where CSC assessment and interface meetings will take place. To maximize participation, the timing of the meetings should take into account the seasonal and daily schedules of community members. Arrange for an easily accessible venue and create an environment that puts participants at ease.

Tip: A neutral location, such as a community hall or public meeting place, is a better choice for assessment meetings than a space that is owned or controlled by the company.

Tip: In selecting the place and time of CSC meetings, consider the needs of different stakeholder groups. For example, ensure physical accessibility for people with disabilities. Arrange for locations near participants' workplaces or homes. Schedule meetings at convenient times for participants.

Step 2. Information-sharing on company commitments and performance

Ineffective communications and a failure to share information often contribute to poor company-community relations and mistrust. When communities lack information, they may become suspicious and assume that the company has something to hide. In preparing for the CSC assessment process, the goal of Step 2 is to provide community members with accurate, honest, and up-to-date information about the company's own standards, commitments or targets, and how its performance measures up. The aim is to raise community awareness about established standards,commitments and company compliance, and to enhance trust and mutual understanding. Another goal is to lay the groundwork so that community members will be able to participate in subsequent steps of the CSC process in an informed and productive manner.

2a. Identify priority information needs

2b. Collect and analyze data

2c. Share information in a user-friendly manner

2a. Identify priority information needs

Consult community members about their specific information needs related to the focus of CSC engagement. What specific issues are they most interested in? What do they think is most important for them to know? They also should have a say in determining the type of data and information to be shared. Gather this input during the initial organizing meeting with community leaders and key players or as part of separately organized focus group discussions. For example, when Eagle Mine wanted to understand community perceptions about the mine's performance on social and environmental matters, they asked community members about their priorities. Issues of most concern to communities indicated that they were most concerned about environmental protection, local job creation, safety, transparency andcommunication, and community development. As a result, the company compiled data and reported annually on their established standards and performance in all these areas.[3]

3 Dixon and Zandvliet. 2015.

What are some typical areas of interest for communities? It depends on the focus of the CSC. Here are some examples:

- For a CSC that seeks to assess the company's overall performance and behavior, priority information might include: established social/environmental/safety standards, local hire targets, labor standards, procurement rules, standards regarding project infrastructure, compensation programs and the company's performance on these indicators, as well as budget allocations and actual expenditures for community investments and/or compensation.
- For a CSC focused on the company's management of a specific environmental or social impact, the information provided would be specific to that area, such as how the company is performing against international/national/company environmental standards, and the amount of resources allocated and disbursed for the specific purpose.
- For a CSC focused on community investments, the company could provide details on the specific project and how it is performing against established standards. For example, a CSC that looks at the performance of a company-sponsored healthcare facility would include data on how the facility measures up on staff qualification standards, availability of equipment and medicines, working hours, and availability of emergency services, among others, as well as information about the health center's budget and expenditures.

2b. Collect and analyze data

In many cases, the information needs expressed by the community will correspond to monitoring and reporting already undertaken by the company. Given this, most of the relevant data on standards, performance, and commitments should be readily available for sharing with the community. If there are gaps, make the effort to collect any additional information needed—or to support the CSC implementing partner in undertaking this step.

Community members or local civil society organizations also can play an active role in gathering and/or validating data, as appropriate. If other participatory practices are in place, use the information gathered as part of these processes to inform the CSC. The types of data needed for reporting on commitments might include:

- Financial records: budget allocations, revenue, expenditure or payment statements, procurement records, and audit reports among others.
- Inventories of goods or physical assets related to the infrastructure projects or community investments being evaluated: for example, actual new construction of roads or power lines compared with what was originally promised; school buildings, latrines and furniture; health care facilities, staff, equipment, and medicine.

2c. Use simple language and reader-friendly formats to share information

A basic table or matrix that compares performance data and established standards/targets, what was actually provided, and promised allocations is a simple, clear, and effective way to display the information gathered. (See Table 1 for an example.)

When sharing the information on standards, commitments, and performance with the community, use diagrams, posters, and other aids to maintain interest and enhance understanding. A company representative, the CSC implementing partner or a community facilitator can present the information—either at the start of the CSC assessment meetings, or at a separate public meeting, convened prior to the assessment exercise. It's also a good idea to share this information more broadly by posting it on the company website, providing a press release for news outlets, or using social media, public bulletin boards, and other communications mechanisms, such as market kiosks to get the word out.

Tip: Include subject matter experts as part of the team that presents information on standards, company commitments, and performance. They should be prepared to respond to questions, clear up areas of confusion, and explain in further detail, as needed.

Tip: Remember that information-sharing in the context of a CSC is for purposes of transparency and accountability. It's not a public relations exercise. When undertaking a CSC process, share what you want people to know along with what stakeholders need to accurately understand and assess the issue at hand, even if this means revealing company challenges, shortcomings, or unmet targets.

Table 1. Example of information-sharing table: Company performance on its gender-equity commitments

	Commitments	Target/Standard	Actual	Notes
⚥	**Promote gender diversity of staff**	20% women by 2023	Women currently represent 12% of workforce	Challenges include supply & demand issues
⚖	**Adopt policies to promote gender equity**	Adopt a gender equity policy & gender action plan	Gender policy adopted Action plan being finalized	Annual reporting on implementation of action plan included
	Take action against sexual harassment	Investigate & resolve 100% of reported violations	34 complaints received last year 100% investigated 92% resolved	Research suggests that violations remain under-reported
	Deliver respectful & safe workplace training	Train 100% of staff by 2022	No staff trained as yet	Training expected to begin next quarter
	Extend parental leave	Extend maternity leave to 6 months & introduce paternity leave	3 months maternity leave	Current practice meets national requirements
♀	**Create an enabling environment for women**	75% of women report improvements	Data not yet available	Employee survey to be conducted later this year

Step 3. Assessment by community members/ local stakeholders

Step 3 of the CSC process involves preparing, conducting, and following up on community members' assessment meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Provide community members/local stakeholders with relevant background information about standards, commitments, and performance (if this has not already been done).
- Allow participants to voice their opinions on the company's performance or the operation, project, program, service, or activity being assessed.
- Invite participants to identify and prioritize actions for improvement, including actions the community can take themselves, along with what the company and other relevant players can do.

3a. Prepare for the assessment meeting(s) **3b.** Conduct the meeting(s) **3c.** Follow up after the meeting(s)

3a. Prepare for the assessment meeting(s)

Implementing a CSC typically involves conducting multiple assessment meetings with different categories of stakeholders. Depending on the nature of the CSC, these might involve separate meetings with employees, community members, local authorities, clients, partners, and others. When relevant, consider factors such as gender and age in forming groups. he idea is that assessment meetings should take place among peers, so participants feel comfortable about speaking freely. For example, when Sierra Rutile company -a natural rutile producer in Sierra Leone- conducted a CSC to assess its performance as a gender-equitable and women-friendly employer, six separate assessment meetings were held with female and male general staff, female and male professional staff, and female and male managers. After determining participant categories and number of assessment meetings to take place, the facilitation team can consult with local leaders, community-based organizations, or other key informants to help identify representatives from each group. Between 10 and 20 participants is an ideal size for these meetings.

For the meeting itself, the facilitation team will need:

- A quiet and accessible venue with sufficient seating
- Visually attractive and reader-friendly diagrams and other graphics depicting standards, commitments, and performance
- Flipchart-sized scorecard table (see example in Table 2)
- Extra flipchart sheets
- Voting materials (see the Appendix for more detail)
- Refreshments

Tip: Consider bringing in third-party facilitators to conduct the assessment meeting (see Box 2 for rationale).

Tip: Ideally, each group should be accompanied by two facilitators—a lead to manage the group and an assistant to take notes, write suggestions on the flipchart, and observe group dynamics. If only one team of facilitators is available, schedule individual group assessment meetings at different times.

Box 2. The value of third-party facilitators at community assessment meetings

Third party facilitators—such as staff of an implementing partner, local consultants, or trained community members with no direct stake in the outcome of the CSC process—are well-positioned to conduct an unbiased multi-stakeholder dialogue. The use of such third parties can increase community trust in the integrity of the process, which is critical to its success. Participants must feel safe before they are willing to provide the open and honest feedback needed to achieve useful results. A neutral facilitation team can help create this environment, since community members are more likely to speak up and share their true feelings, criticisms or concerns in a group of peers, rather than in the presence of company representatives.

In particular, the third-party approach is highly recommended when company/community relations are characterized by mistrust, tension, or conflict.

Training local consultants, residents or NGO staff as community mobilizers or facilitators can help build capacity, thereby increasing the number of available, qualified facilitators. It also contributes to the sustainability of the process by developing local skills to carry out future CSCs. Care should be taken to select trustworthy and respected individuals for such training. They should not be affiliated with a particular group or viewpoint, but they should have an active profile in the community and a reputation for fairness and independence. Candidates fitting this profile include retired school teachers and other professionals, well-regarded community volunteers, and high-potential young people.

Table 2. Sample scorecard

Location: ____________________ **Group:** ____________________ **Date:** ____________________

Criteria	Very Good 5 ☺☺	Good 4 ☺	OK 3 😐	Poor 2 ☹	Very Poor 1 ☹☹	Strengths/Weaknesses What is working well? What is not working well?	Proposed actions for improvement
Criterion 1							
Criterion 2							
Criterion 3							
Criterion 4							
Criterion 5							

3b. Conduct the meeting(s)

Prepare an agenda beforehand and make it available for all participants as they arrive. (See Box 3 for a sample agenda.) Count on the meeting lasting 2–2.5 hours. The main elements of an assessment meeting are briefly described below.

Box 3. Sample agenda for a 2.5 hour community assessment meeting

- **Welcome, introductions and icebreaker (5 minutes)**
- **Explain the purpose and overall process of the community scorecard (5 minutes)**
- **Share information on standards, company commitments, and performance (20 minutes)**
- **Brainstorm assessment criteria (15 minutes)**
- **Explain the scoring process, conduct scoring, and calculate median scores (15 minutes)**
- **Ask participants to describe current strengths/ weaknesses and propose actions for improvement for each criterion, and record the suggestions on the scorecard (60 minutes)**
- **Prioritize proposed actions (10 minutes)**
- **Select representatives to participate in the subsequent interface meeting (10 minutes)**
- **Thank participants and conclude meeting (5 minutes)**

Welcome, introductions and ice breaker

As the facilitator, open the meeting by welcoming participants, introducing yourself, and briefly explaining the scorecard purpose, process, and potential benefits. Set a relaxed, friendly, and positive tone for the meeting. Explain that the goal of the process is not to lay blame or point fingers, but to provide constructive feedback and propose actions for improvement.

Tip: Start the community meeting with music, introductions, a funny story, and/or an ice-breaker exercise to help establish a positive and friendly atmosphere.

Share and discuss standards, commitments, and performance data

After the introductions, spend the next few minutes sharing the data on standards, commitments, and performance. Invite questions and discussion unless, this step occurred prior to the assessment meeting.

Tip: Subject matter experts and qualified resource staff should plan to attend and make themselves available to answer questions and provide clarifications.

Brainstorm assessment criteria

To generate assessment criteria, invite participants to engage in "positive visioning." Here's how it works:

- Pose a clear guiding question, such as:
  - What are the characteristics of a good….
    (for example: school, business support program, engagement process)?
  - What is most important to you regarding the performance of a…?
  - What specifically do you look for in a good…?
- Take note of participants' responses on a flipchart making sure to record them in the form of a positive criterion, such as "transparency," rather than "lack of information."
- Aim to identify five assessment criteria. If the group generates more than this, guide the group in identifying the most important criteria among those identified. (See the Appendix for how to help the group prioritize). For example, participants in the Eagle Mine CSC identified five priority criteria: environmental performance, local hires, safety, communication and engagement, and community development. And, in assessing Sierra Rutile company's performance as a gender-equitable employer, criteria proposed by employees included: gender-equitable recruitment practices, women-friendly policies and regulations, training opportunities for women, women's workplace safety, and healthy work-life balance.
- Transcribe the five assessment criteria onto the (pre-prepared) community scorecard table, as shown in Table 2.

Tip: Provide guidance throughout the process, keeping in mind that as a facilitator your role is to remain neutral. Refrain from influencing the identification or prioritization of criteria.

Instruct participants on how to score the criteria and conduct the voting

Explain to participants that they will now be asked to assign a score to each of the agreed criteria, based on their own individual assessment of the company current performance. Participants vote using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest—very good or very satisfied—and 1 being the lowest—very weak or very unsatisfied—as shown in Table 1.

The scoring/voting process should be conducted as simply and quickly as possible. Ideally, this should take no more than 5 minutes. Once the scoring is complete, quickly calculate the results and show median scores. For additional guidance on the scoring process and calculating the median score, see the Appendix.

Tip: To maximize understanding (including among participants with limited literacy) use a visual cue (such as smiling or frowning faces) to represent each score.

Tip: Make it clear that there are no correct or incorrect criteria or scores. These reflect the experiences and opinions of individual community members. It is perfectly normal for scores to vary among individuals.

Discuss scores and identify actions for improvement

Invite participants to explain the rationale for their scoring on each of the criteria based on their perceptions of current strengths and weaknesses. What is working well? What is not working well? Remind the group that an important feature of the community scorecard process is to identify both the positives and the negatives, leading to a balanced assessment that provides the basis for a constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue. Record identified strengths and weaknesses on the scorecard flipchart and take notes.

Next, ask the group to share ideas on how to improve the situation. Pose open-ended questions such as:

- What actions for improvements can community members take?
- What actions for improvements can the company take?
- What actions for improvements can other stakeholders take?

Encourage the group to start by identifying what they can do, before considering ways in which others might contribute to making improvements or solving problems. Remind the group to consider ways to leverage existing arrangements or how different stakeholders might work together to solve problems and address current weaknesses. If the group comes up with a long list of proposed actions, conduct a vote to identify the top five priorities. (See Appendix V for how to guide the group in a prioritizing exercise). Finally, let the group know that their action recommendations will form the basis of discussion at the upcoming interface meeting.

Tip: Guide and facilitate the process without seeking to influence the results. Ensure open and equitable participation.

Tip: Actions for improvement are the most important output of the meeting! Move through the other steps of the meeting as swiftly and efficiently as possible to allow adequate time for discussion of actions.

Tip: It's best to fully complete discussion of the first criterion, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions for improvement, before moving on to the second and third.

Select representatives

Before thanking participants and closing the meeting, invite the group to select or elect a spokesperson to present their findings at the interface meeting that will follow. The interface meeting involves presenting group findings, learning the results of other groups' assessment meetings, and collectively agreeing on a set of joint actions.

Tip: Depending on the overall number of participants and the size of the interface meeting venue, it may not be possible for all participants to attend the interface meeting. In this case, before closing the meeting, invite the group to select or elect representatives who will attend on behalf of the group. Typically, interface meetings should not exceed a total of 40-60 people, but they could be much smaller, depending on the subject and nature of the CSC.

3c. Follow up after the meeting

After the meeting, record the findings and document the scorecard results, including identified criteria, scores, strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions. Supplement this information with your notes and observations on group dynamics, along with specific issues raised and remarks made during the meeting. To prepare in advance for the upcoming interface meeting, copy each of the top five priority proposed actions onto separate cards.

Tip: Allow community members to keep the scorecard if they so desire—it belongs to them! Remember to snap a photo of the scorecard before turning it over to them so that you will have a record of the findings. Also make sure that they bring the original scorecard to the interface meeting for presentation.

Step 4. Self-assessment by company/service providers

Step 4 of the CSC process gives the company (and/or relevant service provider) the opportunity to assess how well they are performing based on their own criteria and suggest their own proposed actions for improvement. You might be tempted to skip this step. But keep in mind that a balanced, multi-stakeholder assessment, leading to a two-way dialogue, is an important feature of the CSC methodology. An honest and open company/service provider self-assessment will help build community trust and mutual understanding. This step follows the same process as Step 3.

4a. Prepare for the self-assessment meeting(s)

4b. Conduct the meeting(s)

4c. Follow up after the meeting(s)

4a. Prepare for the self-assessment meeting(s)

As facilitators, prepare for the self-assessment meeting(s) by:

- Identifying company and/or service provider managers and staff to participate.
- Sending an invitation to participants that includes an explanation of the meeting's purpose and benefits.
- Setting a time and place for the meeting, based on participants' schedules and preferences.
- Readying all necessary equipment and materials, including standards/company commitments/performance monitoring data.

Tip: It's likely that the most convenient place for the meeting will be a company venue or the service facility.

Tip: Even though the number of participants at self-assessment meetings will probably be smaller than the number at community meetings, it is still important to be as inclusive as possible. This means a balanced mix of managers and different categories of staff, men and women, and older and younger employees. If needed and appropriate, consider organizing several self-assessment meetings, each with a different company demographic represented. This might work better in situations where staff do not feel comfortable speaking out in the presence of managers.

4b. Conduct the meeting(s)

The company self-assessment meetings typically involve a more limited number of participants and take less time, between 1.5 and 2 hours. (See Box 4 for a sample agenda.) As with the community assessment meetings, company self-assessment meetings involve several agenda items:

- Welcome and introductions.
- Review information on standards, company commitments, and performance.
- Divide into separate groups, as needed, such as for managers, staff, or different staff roles.
- Guide the groups in brainstorming assessment criteria based on the priorities/viewpoints of each group.
- Score the criteria using the same 1–5 scale as for the community assessment meetings.
- Explain and discuss scores, including perceived strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions for improvement.
- If the group comes up with a long list of actions, hold a vote to identify the top five priorities. (See Appendix for a suggested approach).
- Select a spokesperson to present each group's findings at the interface meeting.

Box 4. Sample agenda for company/service provider self-assessment meeting (Suggested time: 1.5 to 2 hours)

- **Welcome, introductions and icebreaker (10 minutes)**
- **Explain the purpose and overall process of the community scorecard (10 minutes)**
- **Review relevant information on standards, company commitments, and performance (15 minutes)**
- **Brainstorm and prioritize assessment criteria (15 minutes)**
- **Explain the scoring process, conduct scoring of criteria, and identify median scores (15 minutes)**
- **Ask participants to describe current strengths/ weaknesses and propose actions for improvement for each criterion (while noting these on the scorecard table) (45 minutes)**
- **Prioritize identified actions (5 minutes)**
- **Select representatives to participate in the subsequent interface meeting (5 minutes)**
- **Thank participants and conclude meeting (5 minutes)**

Tip: Criteria identified by service providers may be similar or different from those identified by the community. That's OK! Overlap in criteria indicates mutual understanding and shared interest. A divergence in identified criteria is the starting point for dialogue, improved mutual learning, and relationship- building.

Tip: In brainstorming actions for improvement, encourage the group to consider actions they can take as well as what other stakeholders can do.

Tip: In selecting participants for the interface meeting, ensure equitable representation among all demographics, such as women and younger staff.

4c. Follow up after the meeting(s)

As you did after the community assessment meeting, record the findings and document the scorecard results, including identified criteria, scores, strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions, supplemented by the facilitation team's notes and observations. Snap a photo of the scorecard results. Allow the meeting participants to keep the original scorecard if they wish, but make sure they bring it to the interface meeting. Write down each of the proposed priority actions on separate cards, for use at the interface meeting.

Step 5. Interface meeting and action plan

In this important step, representatives from all stakeholder groups come together face-to-face as they share their assessments and recommendations, including company/service provider representatives and community members. This opportunity for direct interaction and facilitated dialogue contributes to enhanced mutual understanding and helps each group of stakeholders to better comprehend and appreciate the views, priorities, and concerns of the others. The interface meeting also enables discussion and resolution of specific problems or complaints, and collective agreement on and planning of actions for improvement.

5a. Prepare for the interface meeting
5b. Conduct the meeting
5c. Follow up after the meeting

5a. Prepare for the interface meeting

Careful advance preparation can help ensure productive interactions among the various stakeholder groups at the meeting. Before the meeting:

- Set the date, time, and place. If possible, arrange this prior to the assessment meetings.
- Invite all participants well in advance. If possible, announce date, time, and location at the end of the assessment meetings.
- Prepare equipment and resources, including the completed scorecards from each individual assessment meeting, the set of cards with groups' priority actions, and an action plan matrix.
- Share the assessment findings with company representatives prior to the interface meeting, so they have time to process the feedback. This is especially important if the assessment flagged sensitive or particularly problematic issues.

Tip: Choose a convenient and neutral location, where all stakeholders will feel comfortable.

Tip: Post the completed scorecards (along with the accompanying priority action cards) at the front of the room prior to the meeting, so participants can see the scorecards as they arrive and so cards are ready when groups present their findings.

5b. Conduct the interface meeting

The facilitator's primary role at the interface meeting is to encourage constructive dialogue among the different stakeholder groups and help them to reach consensus on a final list of priority actions for improvement. Plan on 1.5–2 hours for the meeting. Key meeting activities are briefly described below. For a sample interface meeting agenda, see Box 5.

Box 5. Sample interface meeting agenda (Suggested time: 1.5–2 hours)

- Welcome, introductions, ice breaker (10 minutes)
- Review the purpose of the CSC process and the interface meeting (5 minutes)
- Collectively agree on ground rules for the interface meeting (10 minutes)
- Invite group presentations on their scorecard findings and proposed priority actions, with time for questions following each presentation (20–30 minutes)
- Review the overall list of proposed actions for improvement. Consolidate similar suggestions. Remove or modify actions that the group deems unfeasible or unnecessary. (10 minutes)
- Vote on the top 4–6 priority actions (10 minutes)
- Complete the action plan table: identify leadership and support needed for each action and an implementation timeline for each (15 minutes)
- Explain the purpose and role of the follow-up committee; identify representatives from each stakeholder group to participate (10 minutes)
- Thank yous and conclusion (5 minutes)

Welcome, introductions, ice breaker, purpose, and ground rules

After a brief welcome, introduction, and ice breaker, begin the meeting by reminding participants about the purpose of the scorecard process. Note that the goal is to collaborate for positive change—not to lay blame. Collectively agree on ground rules for the meeting, such as only one speaker at a time, no accusatory comments, phones off or on silent mode.

Present and discuss scorecard results and proposed actions

Starting with community members, invite the spokesperson from each stakeholder group to present and explain their group's scorecard findings and proposed actions. Allow time for clarifying questions and answers, encouraging a focus on proposed actions.

Tip: Emphasize that consensus on assessment criteria or scores is not required. Since these are based on personal perceptions and experiences, it's normal and acceptable that they're not the same. The goal here is to promote dialogue and mutual understanding.

Tip: Focus time and attention on proposed actions for improvement, rather than on current problems.

Tip: Encourage constructive dialogue and discourage questions or comments designed to criticize or question the perspectives expressed by the different groups.

Present and discuss the full list of identified priority actions

This list will include the top five priorities from each group, for a total of 15-25 actions (depending on the number of assessment groups). Review the list with participants, identifying areas of overlap and consolidating actions that are the same or similar. Use the prepared cards to regroup actions as needed. The group also can remove or modify actions that are deemed inappropriate or unfeasible for technical or legal reasons. If any actions are modified, make sure that participants understand and agree.

Identify priorities from the combined list

After consolidating the list, give each participant three stickers to place next to three actions they consider most important, following the methodology as described in the Appendix. Next, identify the five actions that have received the most votes. List these in order of priority in the first column of the action plan, as shown in Table 3. Finally, guide the group in identifying roles and responsibilities for each of the identified actions, including who will lead and support them and a target date for starting and completing the action. Encourage participants to consider potential roles for all stakeholder groups. Record this information in the appropriate action plan column.

Tip: Use facilitation techniques to ensure that higher status or more influential participants do not dominate the discussion or decision-making during the interface meeting.

Tip: Interface meetings can sometimes uncover sensitive issues. Be prepared to intervene as needed, using conflict management and constructive dialogue techniques.

Table 3. Sample action plan

Priority actions	Who will implement this action?		By when do we aim to start/complete this action?
	Lead	Support	
Priority action 1			
Priority action 2			
Priority action 3			
Priority action 4			
Priority action 5			

Create a follow-up committee

First, explain the purpose of this committee: a voluntary, multi-stakeholder group responsible for supporting, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation of the agreed action plan. Invite the group to elect (or select) members to serve on the committee, which should include a mix of company and community representatives along with those from other relevant stakeholder groups. Take care to ensure inclusive and diverse committee composition, including women and young people.

Conclude the meeting by congratulating stakeholders for their efforts, thanking them for their participation and explaining next steps, including updates from the follow-up committee about implementation of the agreed actions.

Tip: Implementation of identified actions typically requires the support of various stakeholder groups. To mobilize multi-stakeholder support and ensure coordination and collaboration, the follow-up committee should include representatives from all groups.

5c. Follow up after the meeting

After the meeting, document the outcomes, including the list of agreed priority actions and selected/elected members of the follow-up committee. Share these notes with all relevant stakeholders. Arrange for a first meeting of the follow-up committee, which can take place immediately after the interface meeting or at a later date. The purpose of this first committee meeting is to ensure that members understand all aspects of the action plan and their roles.

Step 6. Implementation of the agreed action plan and follow-up

The final step in the CSC process is to support, monitor, and report on the implementation of the agreed action plan. Note that this should be considered an on-going effort. The three sub-steps are briefly described below.

6a. Share the results | **6b.** Support follow-up committee & implementation of agreed actions | **6c.** Repeat the CSC process

6a. Share the results

When relevant, sharing CSC findings beyond those who directly participated in the process can help to raise awareness and gain broader buy-in and support for the implementation of agreed priority actions. A variety of communications approaches can be used, including internal memos, staff meetings, community meetings, social media, press releases, billboards, and brochures.

6b. Support the follow-up committee and the implementation of agreed actions

The responsibilities of the follow-up committee can include:

- Preparing a detailed implementation plan for each agreed priority action (Table 4): Taking place over the course of the committee's first few meetings, this process involves:
    - Breaking down each action into sub-actions and individual tasks as appropriate: For example, the proposed action to "Provide gender-sensitivity training to staff" could require several steps/sub-actions such as identifying trainers, developing and approving training materials, making logistical arrangements for trainings, delivering training sessions, and evaluating impacts.
    - Identifying the parties with lead and support responsibility for each task.
    - Outlining the implementation schedule.
    - Specifying resources needed for each task.
- Supporting the implementation of each action: To maximize efficiency, the committee can assign two members to oversee implementation of each action, representing the company and the community. Depending on the action, this role might involve:
    - Mobilizing funds
    - Coordinating with company managers/decision-makers
    - Implementing/managing actions at community level
    - Attracting community participants
- Monitoring implementation and reporting publicly on progress: The committee can devise its own simple system for monitoring the progress of action plan implementation and reporting back to the community. During committee meetings, members with lead responsibility for each action should provide an update on implementation status, share issues or obstacles, and propose solutions to address the difficulties. Public updates should occur at least once every six months. This reporting can be as simple as an online posting or convening a community meeting to share news about recent progress.

Table 4. Sample detailed implementation plan for priority actions

Action: ____________________________ **Lead committee members: ____________________**

Sub-actions	Individual tasks	*Task lead / support	Month-by-month implementation schedule (by month)												Resources needed
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Sub-action	a. Task b. Task		X	X											
	a. b.				X										
	a. b.					X									
	a. b.						X	X							
	a. b.						X	X							
	a. b.								X	X					

Bringing in a facilitator to lead the committee's first three or four meetings can help it meet its mandate. The facilitator can keep things on track and sustain the CSC momentum by ensuring that meetings are conducted on a regular basis. A trained facilitator also can propose initial terms of reference for the follow-up committee, guide the detailed planning process, enable effective communication among committee members, and manage conflicts or misunderstandings should they arise.

Tip: While the follow-up committee doesn't need to be formal or permanent, many companies find that such a committee represents a valuable and useful platform for regular, on-going dialogue with communities and local stakeholders.

Tip: Regardless of whether the committee is temporary or permanent, it is a good idea to start the first meeting by clarifying its mandate and working arrangements and agreeing on a simple terms of reference.

6c. Repeat the CSC process

The CSC should not be a one-time activity. **For maximum effectiveness, it should be a continuous, cyclical process that starts over again upon conclusion of the previous round.** Subsequent rounds, conducted on an annual or semi-annual basis, should always begin with reporting on implementation status of priority actions identified from previous rounds.

Users’ Guide to Virtual Community Scorecards

While community scorecards are typically implemented through a series of in-person meetings, it is possible, if necessary, to conduct the process virtually.

This section describes how each stage of the six-step community scorecard process can be adapted for online implementation, while enabling the same level of interaction as with an in-person CSC. This approach can be used under a variety of circumstances, such as when participants are in different locations or when public health guidelines advise against in-person gatherings. As outlined below, the approach requires connectivity for all participants, either by computer, tablet, or phone. It also requires facilitators who are comfortable using digital communication platforms.

1a. Define focus and scope | 1b. Identify implementing partners | 1c. Identify and analyze stakeholders | 1d. Conduct community outreach | 1e. Organize logistics

Step 1: Preparation and planning

Preparing and planning a virtual CSC requires all the same sub-steps as a traditional CSC. If the organizing team is working remotely, then defining the focus and scope of the CSC, identifying implementing partners and analyzing stakeholders (sub-steps 1a–c) can be conducted through a series of phone calls or online meetings.

Community outreach (sub-step 1d) can also be conducted remotely, through social media or email communications with identified stakeholders. Sub-step 1e requires an alteration. Instead of identifying and preparing a physical venue, the virtual process involves:

- Ensuring that identified participants have adequate connectivity/bandwidth.
- Confirming the types of devices participants will use, such as computer, tablet or phone.
- Selecting an appropriate app/platform to use for communication and online meetings, such as email, SMS or WhatsApp to communicate with participants, and Zoom, Microsoft Teams or another videoconferencing platform for online meetings.

Tip: Plan for a minimum of two facilitators for online meetings and be sure to arrange for technical support as needed.

2a. Identify priority information needs | 2b. Collect and analyze data | 2c. Share information in a user-friendly manner

Step 2: Information-sharing on company commitments and performance

Step 2 is essentially the same for in-person and virtual CSCs. For an online process, plan to conduct sub-steps 2a and 2b remotely, by way of phone calls or virtual meetings, scheduling them as needed. Sub-step 2c should happen prior to the online assessment meeting (steps 3 and 4). Consider creating a user-friendly table or brief informational video to share via social media, traditional media or in direct email or WhatsApp communications with identified stakeholders. Alternatively, this information-sharing can take place at the start of each online assessment meeting. In either case, be sure to allow for questions and a way to respond, for example, through an online discussion forum or by arranging for the presence of relevant subject matter experts/resource personnel at the live session.

Tip: Even if you have shared the information prior to the assessment, it might be helpful to begin assessment meetings (steps 3 and 4) with a brief information overview.

Step 3: Assessment by community members/local stakeholders

As is the case for an in-person CSC, sub-step 3a is an important part of the process. This involves dividing stakeholders into relevant groups, for example, by community, profession, gender, or age, and scheduling separate meetings for each. Schedule these online meetings over the course of several days or a longer period, depending on the availability of participants and facilitators. Another aspect of the preparation involves adapting visual materials for a virtual format, including the blank sheet for brainstorming assessment criteria and the scorecard template.

Prior to the online meetings, help participants prepare by recording and sending an explanatory video about the process and platform. Invite participants to visit and test out the chosen platform ahead of time to familiarize themselves with its functions. If possible, run a quick technical check with each participant to ensure that everyone can connect to the platform and that their microphones and webcams are working properly.

Although the format is virtual, the process of conducting the assessment meeting (sub-step 3b) is the same. After presenting the information overview, invite participants to identify assessment criteria as a group. The lead facilitator can manage this by suggesting that participants either turn on their microphone or use the chat function in the platform to propose criteria. Meantime, a second facilitator can note all of the suggestions on shared screen.

The process of prioritizing criteria can be handled in a couple of different ways: Ask participants to use the annotation function to place virtual "stickers" or "stamps" next to their top choices, or number each of the proposed criteria and invite participants to write the numbers of their top choices in the chat.

After recording the top five criteria in the CSC template, participants will score them. Again, there are several options on how to handle this:

- Use an annotation function to place a virtual "sticker" or "stamp" directly into the appropriate cell of the scorecard
- Use the chat function to indicate scores
- Conduct an in-meeting poll, with the facilitator posting the results in the scorecard

To conduct the ensuing discussion on strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions, invite participants to open their microphones or share their views in the chat, while the second facilitator takes notes on screen. At the end of the process, participants can once again vote (by annotation or in the chat) to prioritize their top 3–5 proposed actions for improvement.

After the meeting (sub-step 3c), share the findings by email, text, or online post. Also remember that you can share scorecard results directly in the chat before the meeting ends, and you can suggest that participants take their own screenshots of the completed scorecard.

Tip: At the beginning of the meeting (or even prior to the meeting) remind participants of effective online meeting good practices—for example, use the "rename" function to indicate how you want to be addressed during the meeting, keep your microphone turned off when not speaking, turn your camera on if possible, try to connect from a quiet and well-lit space, and turn off other devices during the meeting.

Tip: As for in-person meetings, make use of ice-breaker activities, energizers, music and breaks to put people at ease and establish a positive, friendly, and informal online atmosphere.

Tip: If the annotation function is used for voting purposes, make sure to take a screenshot immediately to ensure that results are saved.

Tip: Options for making voting confidential include:

- *using the poll function*
- *using the annotation function in "anonymous" mode*
- *if using the chat function, invite participants to submit their votes as a personal message to the facilitator rather than as a message to the group as a whole*

Tip: For larger groups (10 or more people), after scoring, consider using breakout rooms to allow participants to discuss a single criterion. Divide into groups of 2–3 people and allow for 10–15 minutes of discussion. At the conclusion of the breakouts, reconvene the entire group, and call on each breakout in turn to share the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and proposed actions on their specific criterion. This approach can enrich the plenary discussion and encourage active engagement from all participants.

Tip: The methodology described above presumes that participants connect to the meeting from their own individual devices. If all or some participants are physically together in a group and connecting to an online meeting via a shared device or video-conferencing system, then the process can be adjusted accordingly. In such situations, ask one of the participants (or another local person) to "facilitate" the group, by passing the microphone to those who wish to speak, collecting votes and feedback, and transmitting these to the remote facilitators.

4a. Prepare for the self-assessment meeting(s)

4b. Conduct the meeting(s)

4c. Follow up after the meeting(s)

Step 4: Self-assessment by the company or service provider

Follow the same process for the company's or service provider's online self-assessment meetings as for the community members' assessment (Step 3).

5a. Prepare for the interface meeting

5b. Conduct the meeting

5c. Follow up after the meeting

Step 5: Interface meeting and collective action plan

In some ways, preparing for an online interface meeting (sub-step 5a) is simpler than for an in-person meeting. In a single communication—email, WhatsApp, or SMS—invite all participants to the interface meeting and provide details on how to connect. Since you will already have scorecard results from assessment meetings formatted for screens, copy and paste them into a single document or slide deck, for ease of presentation during the meeting. To this material, add a final page or slide with a list of the top 3–5 priority actions proposed by each group. For ease of viewing, the lists can be color-coded, to identify the group that generated each list. It also could be helpful to cluster together same or similar proposed actions. As with in-person CSCs, share the assessment findings with the responsible service providers/authorities prior to the meeting, so they are aware of the results and prepared for the dialogue process. This information sharing can take place by email, phone call or online meeting.

Sub-step 5b, conducting the meeting, is the same as for in-person meetings. Start with a friendly welcome and ice-breaker activity to set a positive tone and put participants at ease. A review online meeting etiquette can be helpful before moving into the heart of the agenda, with tips such as showing preferred name, keeping microphones off when not speaking, and turning off other devices—as noted above. Next, remind participants about purpose of the interface meeting. Starting with community members/local stakeholders, invite each group in turn to present their findings. During this process, the facilitator shows the group's findings on screen, while the selected spokesperson speaks.

Following each presentation, participants can ask questions by turning on their microphone or writing in the chat. Once all groups have presented, the facilitator shows the consolidated list of priority actions and guides the group in finalizing the list by grouping together any actions that are the same/similar and removing any that the group agrees are unfeasible. Next, participants vote (by annotation or in the chat) for the three actions they consider most important. Facilitators count the votes, indicate on screen the number of votes for each action, and post the top five actions on the action plan template, which is also shared for all to see. This is followed by a group discussion to complete the table, filling in lead/support actors and a proposed timeline for each priority action. After the discussion,, all groups designate a representative to the multi-stakeholder follow-up committee. Close the meeting by thanking participants and inviting the highest-ranking service provider/local authority to share some final thoughts.

In sub-step 5c, facilitators follow up by sharing the final agreed action plan with participants by email, text or on social media. Reach out to the designated group representatives to coordinate timing and set a date for the first (virtual or in-person) meeting of the follow-up committee.

6a. Share the results **6b.** Support follow-up committee & implementation of agreed actions **6c.** Repeat the CSC process

Step 6: Implementation of the agreed action plan and follow up

In sub-step 6a, sharing the results can be accomplished using a variety of communication platforms: traditional media, such as radio and public notice boards, or social media, such as posting to the company website or Facebook page, electronic newsletter, or blog. The goal is to raise awareness about the agreed action plan and gain the buy-in and support of the local and/or broader community. For sub-step 6b, follow-up committee meetings can be conducted either online or in-person, depending on the situation, with or without the ongoing support of a facilitator, according to need.

Make use of traditional and social media to report on progress. Progress reports also can take place in the context of an (online or in-person) community meeting. Sub-step 6c, future CSC rounds, can take place either in the virtual format as outlined here or in the traditional, face-to-face manner as detailed earlier.

Tip: The methodology outlined above recreates the CSC process by conducting a series of "live" online meetings. In situations where it is impossible or difficult to conduct group meetings online due to limited bandwidth, multiple time zones, or conflicting schedules, an alternative is to conduct the entire process asynchronously through an online app. Various platforms, software and apps are available to facilitate online engagement and consultation processes. Some are publicly accessible, such as those developed by the Citizens Foundation of Iceland.[4] Since participants do not engage with one another directly, this approach reduces opportunities for dialogue and relationship-building. Because it relies on writing instead speaking, it is also less appropriate for participants with limited literacy. On the other hand, an asynchronous online approach provides for greater flexibility. The process can take place over a longer period (for example, 2–4 weeks) during which time participants can contribute to each step of the online process, including identifying and scoring assessment criteria, sharing comments, proposing actions, and voting on priorities, as their schedules permit.

4 See Citizens Foundation homepage: https://www.citizens.is/

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