



Policy Officials Peer Learning Lab

2012 NADO ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

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Policy Officials Peer Learning Lab

Strategies for Effective Board Leadership In a Changing World

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Overview

- About NADO & Regional Development Organizations
- Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils
- Board Member Evaluation/Group Exercise No. 1
- Best Practices Evaluation/Group Exercise No. 2
- Roles and Functions of Governing Body
- Board Member Resource Checklist
- Tips for Effective Policy Boards
- Due Diligence for New Board Members
- Summary

About NADO

- Strengthen local governments, communities and economies through the **regional strategies, partnerships and solutions** of the nation's regional development organizations



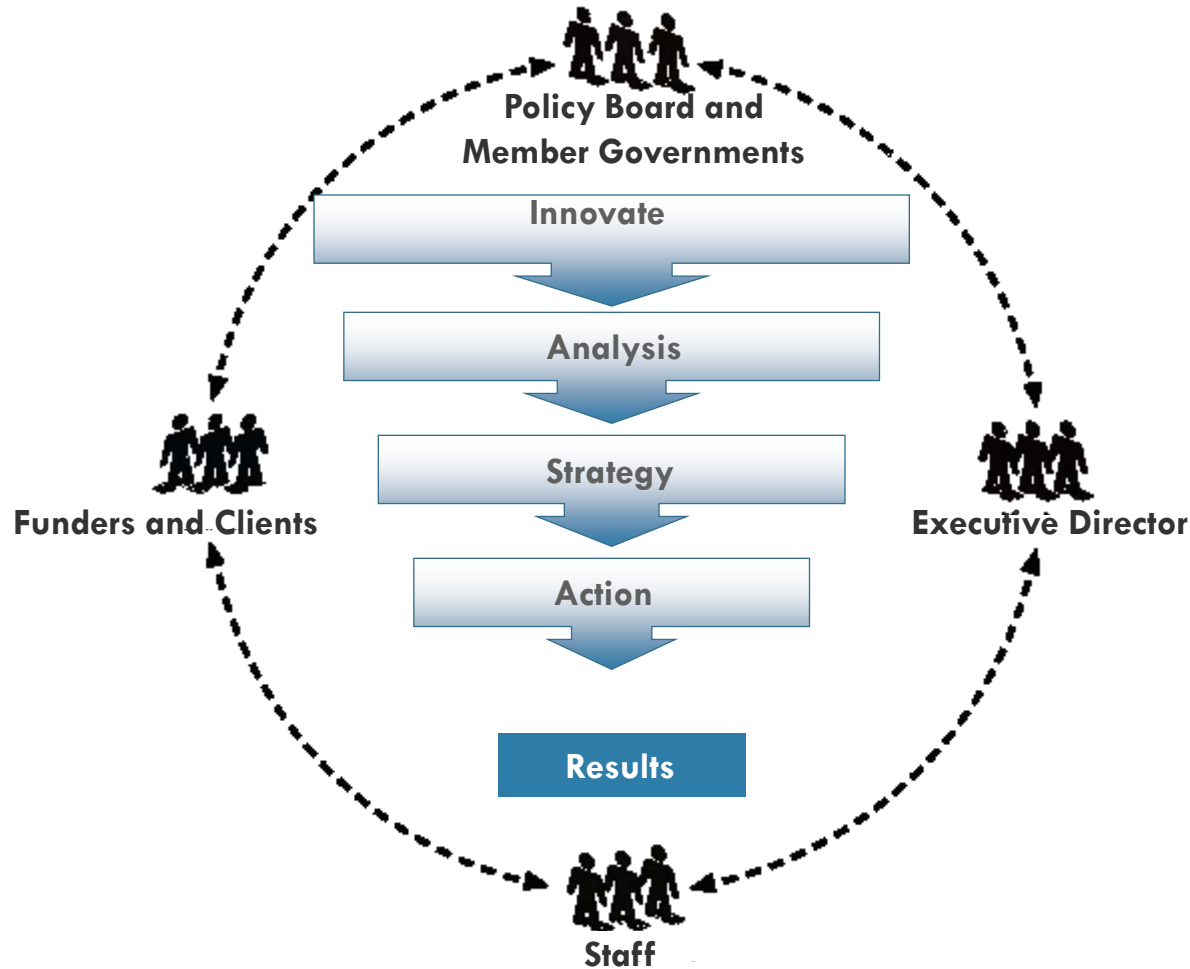
Self-Assessment Toolkit

- Defining Today's Era of Regionalism
- Evaluating Your Role in Modern Era of Regionalism
- Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils
- **Managing an Effective Regional Council Policy Board**
- Regional Council Executive Director Checklists
- State Associations of Regional Councils
- Regional Council Snapshots: Innovations and Practices
- Peer Resource Exchange: Food for Thought
- Concepts of Leadership

Special Thank You to

- Development District Association of Appalachia
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Missouri Association of Councils of Government
- SouthEast Regional Directors Institute
- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- NADO Board of Directors and Membership

Fundamentals of Regional Development Organizations



Seven Significant Issues Facing Regional Councils

- **Relevance**
- **Convener** of the Region
- **Ownership** and Governance
- **Relationships** with Local Governments
- **Relationships** with Federal and State Officials
- **Statewide** Uniformity and Capacity
- **Public Relations/Image**

Fundamentals of Regional Development Organizations

- “Regional councils are sometimes **less bold** in structure and authority than a region’s needs might warrant, yet more **advanced** than area politics comfortably accept.”
 - James Ray, Texas Association of Regional Councils (1978)

Fundamentals of Regional Development Organizations

- Regional councils are **political entities** that must function politically to be highly effective, yet they must also act in a **non-partisan** manner.
 - Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit (August 2009)

Fundamentals of Regional Development Organizations

- “There are really very few roadblocks to creating stronger RPCs (i.e. RDOs). It is simple. They just can’t act like lone wolves. And, they need to focus on **statewide consistency**, have a **positive attitude** and focus on adding value.”

Anonymous Quote from VAPDA Statewide Assessment Interviews, January 2011

Fundamentals of Regional Development Organizations

- RDOs are **knowledge-based** firms
- Presentation of **data, concepts and ideas** are our lifeblood
- We are driven by ideas, **innovations, solutions and results**

Regional Policy Boards:

**How Does Your
Policy Board Measure Up?**

How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

- Establishing **Policy**
- Establish **Partnership** with Executive Director
- Regional **Vision**
- Direction Through **Strategic Planning**
- **Financial Integrity** of the Organization
- **Participate** Responsibly
- Member **Commitments**

1) Establishing Policy:

How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Focuses on meeting the **overall needs of our region**, not just their own individual communities.
- **Sets the policies and strategic direction** that guide our regional council to run effectively, legally and ethically.
- **Advocates** the use of our regional council to serve as a primary convener, regional planning expert and technical assistance resources to address regional goals and issues.
- Has developed the **policy and governance framework** that is needed to allow management and staff to implement the vision and priorities of the board.

2) Establish Partnership with Executive Director: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- **Sets overall policies and guidelines** that govern the authority, responsibility, accountability, and performance evaluation of the executive director.
- Provides the **support** necessary for the executive director and staff to succeed in advancing the goals and priorities of the board.
- Allows the **executive director to manage the day-to-day operations** of the regional council, without micromanaging staffing and programmatic decisions.
- Remembers that our regional council is NOT always under the **same rules and restrictions as local government.**

3) Regional Vision: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Shares a common **vision**, sense of **mission** and clearly identified **goals** at the board level.
- Takes the **long-term view** with incremental performance measures to evaluate progress of the regional council.
- Places an emphasis on developing a **regional development roadmap** with performance benchmarks and measurements compared with other similar regions in the nation.
- Focuses on putting difficult decisions into the larger **regional context** and perspective, rather than just interests of individual communities.
- Remembers that **organizational risk taking** is essential for progress and innovation.

4) Direction Through Strategic Planning: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Conducts regular **outreach** and feedback sessions with rank-and-file members of the regional council membership.
- Does not limit input and feedback only from members of the board.
- Conducts regular and thorough **strategic planning retreats and visioning sessions** to establish long-term goals and objectives, as well as short-range tasks and action plans.
- Assesses our organizational **opportunities, threats, weaknesses and strengths** on a regular basis.
- Places a major emphasis on the implementation of our organization's **strategic plan**, including personal involvement in outreach and advocacy for the organization at federal, state and local levels.

5) Financial Integrity of the Organization: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Provides for board members to have a firm grasp on the **financial conditions, integrity and operations** of the organization. This includes monitoring annual budget vs. expenditures, conducting an annual audit by independent CPA firm and maintaining a finance committee.
- **Delegates the day-to-day financial management to the executive director**, yet maintains appropriate internal controls.
- **Monitors financial outcomes and performance**, including financial reports at board meetings and review of annual audit findings.
- Maintains appropriate controls and oversight of **nonprofit affiliates** of the regional council.
- Thinks long-term and big-picture about building the organization's **financial foundation**, not only annual profit and loss statements.

6) Participate Responsibly: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Commit the **time** necessary to serve as a board member.
- Keep local politics in perspective to **regional needs and priorities**.
- Review agenda materials prior to the meeting and are prepared to ask **informed questions** and provide good input.

6) Participate Responsibly: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Conduct their **homework** on the organization's activities, plans and programs, along with understanding the regional and local politics.
- Keep the board working on a **policy level**, rather than micromanaging staff level decisions.
- Address serious **management issues** that require board action or attention.
- Are open to involving **committees, advisory working groups** and **staff** in the organization.

6) Participate Responsibly: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Take **special assignments** willingly and enthusiastically when asked.
- Serve as **goodwill ambassadors** for the organization at the national, state, regional and local levels.
- Actively participate in **membership retention** and outreach.

6) Participate Responsibly: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Support the organization's public policy, programmatic and project agenda through **advocacy**.
- **Attend** events and activities, including board meetings, educational seminars and planning meetings.
- **Speak** for the board or the organization only when authorized and appropriate.

6) Participate Responsibly: How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Serve the **whole organization**, rather than any special interest group or constituency.
- **Avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest**, especially on funding and personnel decisions.
- **Disclose** any possible conflicts in a timely and open fashion.
- Commit to **continuous improvement** of the organization.

7) Member Commitments:

How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Know the **goals, mission** and **programs/services** of the organization.
- Have defined **roles and responsibilities** as a board member.
- Provide **constructive and timely feedback**.
- Respect and **value diversity of thought and opinion** of board members, executive director, staff and stakeholders.

7) Member Commitments:

How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Please rate each item between 1 and 5 (1 is low, 5 is high)

- Develop **trust and fight fair** with other board members, management and staff.
- Pitch in to help **advance** the mission of the organization.
- Know how to solve problems and **work toward solving problems and issues**.
- Focus on achieving **positive results** for the region and the regional council.

How Does Your Policy Board Measure Up?

Group Exercise No. 1

- Strengths and Assets
- Opportunities
- Threats
- Weaknesses and Challenges

Regional Policy Boards:

Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Regional Policy Boards: Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Please Answer Yes or No

- Does board set **specific performance goals and benchmarks** for the organization, including holding organization accountable for reaching key milestones and performance targets?
- Does board **meet** at least bi-monthly with a regular meeting time and date?
- Does board have **strong attendance** and no trouble meeting quorum requirements at regular meetings (which is basic measurement of the value placed on the organization by local officials)?
- Does board focus on **policy level issues**, including issues of regional significance, and identifies overall goals and strategies for making the region more economically competitive with a higher quality of life?

Content is based on materials of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University, Canada

Regional Policy Boards: Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Please Answer Yes or No

- Do all board members have copies of the state **law and regulations, bylaws** and other **written policies and procedures** that govern the organization and its affiliates?
- Does board **operate** according to state law and regulations, organizational bylaws and other written policies and procedures?
- Does board or its executive committee normally plan and review the **board meeting agenda** in advance of the meeting?
- Are board meetings typically conducted in the **allotted time**?

Content is based on materials of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University, Canada

Regional Policy Boards: Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Please Answer Yes or No

- Are minutes, committee meeting information/results and staff reports distributed to the board members **at least a week in advance of board meetings?**
- Are there written **job descriptions and conflict of interest guidelines** for members of the board, committees, working groups and for staff?
- Do board members receive regular financial reports and **monitor the performance of the organization** in relation to its budget, assets and liabilities?
- Do board members receive the **annual audit** report by an independent accounting firm, and the board has an audit committee to serve as a liaison with the auditors?

Content is based on materials of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University, Canada

Regional Policy Boards: Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Please Answer Yes or No

- Is there a **policy manual** containing all of the organization's written policies and procedures, including accounting, human resources/personnel, conflict of interest guidelines and grant management standards?
- Does board adopt **quality of service goals and standards** for the organization to follow?
- Do board members regularly solicit the opinions, views and feedback of non-board member **local government officials**?
- Do board members regularly solicit the opinions, views and feedback from **federal and state policy makers and funders** about the performance and services of the organization?

Content is based on materials of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership Program, Dalhousie University, Canada

Regional Policy Boards: Best Practices of Effective Organizations

Group Exercise No. 2

- Strengths and Assets
- Opportunities
- Threats
- Weaknesses and Challenges

Regional Policy Boards:

Resource Checklist for Board Members

Regional Policy Boards: Resource Checklist for Board Members

Keep Informed:

- **Be prepared for meetings.** Prior to regularly scheduled board and committee meetings, be sure to read staff reports, draft and proposed plans, program reports, and meeting materials and minutes.
- **Stay informed of important organizational management and operational issues,** such as budget and audit reports, work program reports, statewide and regional partnerships and programs, and federal and state policy decisions and events.
- **Attend national and statewide events,** as well as read national and state level publications to stay current on federal policy and program activities, national and state program innovations, and industry trends and conditions.

Regional Policy Boards: Resource Checklist for Board Members

Be a Leader:

- **Attend and participate in all regional council meetings.** An active engaged board is the strength of regional development organizations.
- **Remember that you, as a policy board member, are an owner of the regional council.** Be sure to ask timely and appropriate questions, engage in the decision-making process, and learn about the subject areas being discussed at the meetings.
- **Use your expertise and skills to advance the goals and mission of the regional council,** whether it is political knowledge and relationships, public speaking / communications, “behind the scenes” consensus builder, issue area expert, or regional thinker and visionary.
- **Build professional relationships and networks with policy officials from around the region,** not just your county or city. One of the most valuable roles of the regional council is to build trust and cooperation of local officials within a region, and this takes tremendous confidence, trust and understanding of each jurisdictions’ needs, priorities and viewpoint.

Regional Policy Boards: Resource Checklist for Board Members

Spread the Gospel Back Home:

- **Keep your colleagues back home informed** of regional council issues, programs and decisions, especially results and outcomes of programs and projects.
- **Let your colleagues know about regional activities** that would benefit or involve your local community/jurisdiction.
- **Host an event** within your community to showcase special projects, programs and achievements, especially programs/facilities that have benefitted from the work of the regional council.

Regional Policy Boards:

Roles and Responsibilities

Regional Policy Boards: Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Define and oversee the mission of the regional council** and keep it relevant to the needs of the region and its individual local governments and communities.
- **Approve programs and services** and monitor their effectiveness and usefulness.
- **Provide strategic guidance** to the organization and the chief executive officer.
- **Ensure financial solvency**, integrity and soundness, including through fundraising assistance.
- **Select, support and evaluate the chief executive officer.**
- **Ensure continuous board improvement** and engagement.

Regional Policy Boards: Roles & Responsibilities

- **Attend** each meeting of the board.
- **Participate** in statewide and regional activities of the organization, as needed and requested.
- **Serve** on at least one board committee.
- Hold the regional council to a **high standard** of performance and integrity.

Regional Policy Boards:

Tips for Effective Regional Policy Boards

Regional Policy Boards:

Tips for Effective Regional Policy Boards

- **Strategic planning** with board members, including trust building, issue discussions and strategic visioning for the region and regional council.
- **Action-oriented board meetings** with timely, pertinent and useful information.
- **Meetings with key federal and state officials**, including office visits and project tours.

Regional Policy Boards:

Tips for Effective Regional Policy Boards

- **Host forums and events** with high-profile international, national, state and regional leaders at board meetings, State of the Region forums and issue specific events. *(Don't forget to invite and involve private sector and nonprofit sector leaders from the region!)*

Regional Policy Boards:

Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Read the organization's founding **legislative or executive order, bylaws, board and committee minutes and progress reports** for at least the past two years to learn about its stated purpose, activities and concerns. This will give a new board member an understanding of what the organization is about and how it must be legally governed.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Obtain a **current list of board and committee members** and meet with the organization's chief executive officer to determine what is expected of board members. This will give new board members a better understanding of the organization's culture, programs, governance structure and mission.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Review the organization's **audited financial statements** for at least the last two years as well as its current financial reports to see how the organization uses its assets and to evaluate its financial health.
- Obtain an understanding of the **board and committee structures** of the organization and how internal controls are used to monitor the operations of the organization.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Understand the organization's **mission**, learn about its **programs**, read its **publications, reports and Web site, and talk to management.**
- Review the **organizational chart** and understand the accountability structure of the organization. Remember that the board should hire the chief executive/staff officer, who is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the organization, including hiring, firing and evaluation of employees.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Make sure there is a **conflict of interest policy** and form, along with a general code of ethics in place and that it is periodically reviewed and updated.
- Be sure to receive and review the regional council's **annual budget, audit and financial statements**, in addition to making sure the organization has **insurance coverage**, including Directors and Officers liability insurance, general liability coverage and employee fidelity insurance.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Regional councils are focused on addressing areawide issues that require **regional solutions** and attention. Primary focus should be on regional programs and services that cross jurisdictional boundaries and **technical assistance** requests for specific needs, plans and projects, especially in more rural communities, or federal and state mandates.

Regional Policy Boards: Due Diligence Checklist for New Board Members

- Make sure to devote the **time and energy** expected of a board member.
- A regional council is often only as **strong and productive** as its policy board will allow and expect.
- A strong policy board typically translates into a **strong and vibrant** regional council.

Summary

- Board Member **Engagement**
- Board Member **Policy** Role
- Board Member **Financial Oversight** Role
- Board Member **Ambassador/Champion** Role

THANK YOU!

For more information, contact Scott Koons at 352.955.2200 or koons@ncfrpc.org.

Visit our website at www.ncfrpc.org.

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