

# External Relationship Assessment

## INTERNAL FACTORS

<b>Clear Vision and Leadership</b>	A clear and compelling vision of what your project intends to achieve and how that vision responds to a real need in the community is the first step toward sustainability. Not only is the vision important, but also having someone within the organization or project to carry the vision forward is also critical.
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	Organizational capacity encompasses a wide range of capabilities, knowledge, and resources, including systems for fiscal management, accounting, personnel, and governance structures. Quality projects cannot exist without strong internal systems.
<b>Results Orientation/ Program Evaluation</b>	Evaluation keeps your project on track with goals and outcomes and helps you to improve the project if something is not working. If your evaluation shows that the project is having an important impact, you can make a case for why the project needs to continue.
<b>Adaptability</b>	Sustainable projects are those whose leaders are skilled at anticipating, influencing, and responding to new environmental opportunities or threats. This involves keeping abreast of current research in the field as well as the economic, political, and cultural shifts in the community.
<b>Communications</b>	Communications refers to strategically getting the message out to stakeholders (including funders) and the public about your project. Communicating about your project's effectiveness helps the project gain greater visibility and builds support from stakeholders—both external to your project and within your project team.
<b>Strategic Financing/ Diversified Funding</b>	Although project sustainability requires much more than funding, having a stable funding source to support your work is one of the most important factors for sustainability. A strategic financing orientation means that project leaders know what activities they want to sustain, what resources they need to sustain those activities, and how to access those resources. It is important to consider a range of financing options.
<b>Sustainability Plan</b>	A sustainability plan brings together all the pieces necessary for a project to continue. Good plans clarify where the project currently is and where you want it to go. They help policy-makers, opinion leaders and funders decide whether and how to get on board.

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<b>Political Support</b>	No matter how well the internal components of your project operate, the overall economic and political climate will influence your project's ability to get things done—whether at the federal, state, or local level. Highs and lows in the political support for projects and their funding can put stress on projects and make it difficult to provide consistent quality of services.
<b>Broad Base of Community Partners</b>	Projects are more likely to achieve their goals with a broad base of support from community stakeholders and partners, including local businesses, media representatives, community and tribal leaders, youth and their families, and others with a vested interest in youth well-being. Partners can be connectors to resources and expertise, take over providing services if your project has to cut back, and educate and influence others to support your cause.
<b>Key Champions</b>	Key champions are the leaders from your different partner organizations, businesses, faith-based institutions, government, and other stakeholders who are committed to your project's vision. Key champions use their influence to broker connections, channel resources, build networks, and generate support for your project.

(Source: Hayes, 2002; Savaya and Spiro, 2011; Scheirer, 2005; Schell et al., 2013)