



# CAO Performance Evaluation Toolkit

A Free Resource Benefiting  
Canadian Municipalities.

VERSION 1.0

To access templates and best practices documents related to this Toolkit, please use the links included or visit the CAMA [website](#).

Please note that the reference to “Mayor and Council” in this document also includes Reeves, Chairs, Heads of Council and elected officials.

Please contact us with your questions and comments. CAMA will help connect you with other colleagues.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATORS

It seems like a given, but regular performance evaluation is not always a forethought for CAO and Mayor and Council. Feedback suggests that when it is happening, it is not always used effectively. The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) recognizes that performance evaluation is a process and not an event. To facilitate the process, CAMA has pulled together performance evaluation practices from municipalities across Canada.

It wouldn't have been possible to create the Toolkit without the support of our members, or the support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the elected officials who completed our surveys. What we heard was that a CAO Performance Evaluation Toolkit could improve the effectiveness of CAO Performance Management. Survey responders asked us to include standardized templates and sample wording that could easily be adapted to local demographics. They asked us for instructions and guiding principles on proper performance management and evaluation of the CAO.

The Toolkit at your fingertips gives CAOs, Town Managers, and City Managers tools to facilitate discussions with their Mayor and Council so that performance management is fair and effective. Using this Toolkit, the CAO and Mayor and Council can hold open conversations to set clear goals for the successes of the organization and community. For both parties, the Toolkit fosters:

- a foundation for good communication;
- an approach to dialogue and conversation that reduces misunderstandings;
- a process for setting annual work-related goals;
- a shared understanding of performance measures;
- a recognition of the CAO's achievements and assessment of what is being accomplished;
- an identification of performance gaps and proactive measures;
- a focus on aligning the CAO's goals with the strategic plan for the organization.

In addition to our review of sample documents and survey data, a draft of the Toolkit was piloted in early 2016 by members and elected officials. We learned from the pilot project that this compendium of tools assists CAOs to work more effectively with Mayors and Council members to set and reach strategic goals. We think it's a valuable Toolkit, one that will shift Canadian practice to a higher level of professionalism.

It's been an honour to work on this project with the members of the Task Force, our consultants, and our Executive Director. It gave us the opportunity to reflect on the challenges the leaders of Canadian municipalities wrestle with on a daily basis. It gave us an appreciation for the collective wisdom of our membership and for the unique working relationships members have to maintain with elected officials. It is our hope that this Toolkit will assist all of us to achieve our local vision, and create stronger municipalities and communities.



Janice Baker

**CAMA CAO Performance Evaluation Project Task Force Chair**

CAMA Representative for Ontario

CAO/City Manager for the City of Mississauga, ON

## INTRODUCTION

CAMA produced this Toolkit in recognition of the importance of the relationship between the City Manager, Town Manager, or Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Mayor and Council. The CAO is the administrative head of the municipality who ensures policies and programs are implemented; advises and informs Mayor and Council about the operation and affairs of the municipality; and carries out the duties described in legislation.<sup>1</sup> The Mayor and Council rely on the CAO to be the connecting link between Council and municipal operations; and to implement the municipality's policies.

For many municipalities, the annual performance evaluation is the key performance indicator of the effectiveness of the CAO's strategic management decisions and actions. CAMA encourages a broader, more holistic understanding of performance conversations, which form part of a process, not an annual event (see [Appendix 1: Principles](#)).

CAMA's CAO Performance Evaluation Project Task Force reviewed input from Canadian municipalities to identify effective sample documents being used across the country today (see [Appendix 2: Survey Results](#)). From these, the Task Force created templates that will assist you in applying your hard work to agreed-upon strategic, operational, and individual goals. CAMA's Toolkit promotes appropriate, positive discussions between the CAO and Mayor and Council that result in better decision-making for the municipality. You'll find that CAMA's recommended performance review process incorporates many of the practices already used throughout municipalities in Canada; but packaged in an easy-to-use kit.

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### MOST COUNCILS RELY ON THE CAO TO:

- be the connecting link between Council and municipal operations;
- assist Council in arriving at decisions and manage the efficient execution of those decisions by municipal staff;
- develop and use an appropriate decision making process;
- regularly review staff performance;
- maintain organizational health; and
- take all reasonable steps to run the organization professionally and within approved Council policies and the limits of government legislation.

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### THE VALUE OF PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS

Effective performance management and performance evaluation should improve communication and the employment relationship between CAOs and their Councils. This is a unique relationship in that there are a number of people involved in evaluating the performance of the CAO even though Council as a body sets direction. The relationship is significantly more complex than a traditional one-to-one of supervisor to employee. While there may be similarities to Board of Director/Chief Executive Officer relationships, the municipal context has these differences:

- In many cases, provincial legislation sets the basis for the Council/CAO relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Grande Prairie. 2011. City Manager Job Description. Grande Prairie: City of Grande Prairie.

- Elected Officials may or may not have prior experience and training in the oversight and performance evaluation of a professional senior executive.
- Municipal compensation systems may provide financial incentives (i.e., an annual bonus) to drive/reward performance.

Both elected officials and municipal CAOs operate under daily scrutiny of the public and the media. Regular performance evaluations promote “a high-performance organization”<sup>2</sup> that is better able to withstand that scrutiny.

A written performance evaluation provides the CAO, the Mayor and Council with a formal record of their performance conversation and appraisals of the CAO’s achievement of agreed-upon goals, and of the organization’s performance in achieving its goals.

Goal-setting occurs at the start of an evaluation cycle through a conversation between the CAO, Mayor and Council. The conversation gives the CAO an opportunity to identify goals that support his or her career objectives. Aligning the municipality’s strategic goals with the CAO’s goals supports the CAO’s and the organization’s excellence. The review of goals and key results is an important component at the end of the annual evaluation cycle.

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**THE INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (ICMA) STATES THAT THE KEY VALUE OF CONDUCTING CAO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS:**

**... to increase communication between the members of the elected body and the manager concerning the manager’s performance in the accomplishment of their assigned duties and responsibilities and the establishment of specific work-related goals, objectives, and performance measures for the coming year. ICMA 2013 4**

Performance evaluations show appreciation for and feedback on the work of the CAO. Through performance evaluation the CAO better understands the roles and responsibilities of the position. Evaluations:

- offer a prime opportunity for organizational feedback;
- recognize the challenges the CAO faces;
- allow officials to hear about the CAO’s managerial style;
- encourage appreciation for the need for succession planning; and discuss/clarify the future.<sup>3</sup>

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#### FOR CAOS

This Toolkit empowers CAOs with a process that uses strategies and templates they can share with the Mayor and Council to ensure goals, key results, core competencies, and performance measures are mutually understood.

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#### FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL

This Toolkit serves to inform Mayor and Council of the value of CAO performance conversations, and to offer a process for them to fairly conduct the performance evaluations.

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<sup>2</sup> ICMA. 2013. Manager Evaluations Handbook. Washington, DC: ICMA. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cuff 2013a. 3

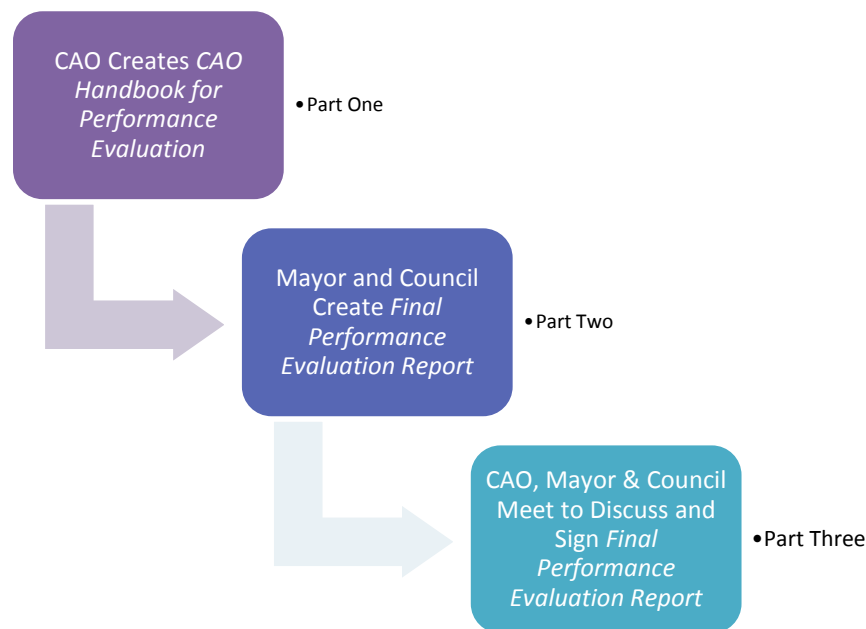
## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The Toolkit provides a Quick Reference section where you can see at a glance the steps for each of CAMA's three-part process. The philosophical approach of the narrative and the foundational set of Principles ([Appendix 1](#)) emphasize “positive intent, mutual agreement, quality conversations, and long-term framing” – leading practices for conducting performance evaluations.<sup>4</sup>

The Toolkit is designed as “pick and choose” with a process that includes foundational steps as well as optional steps. You may choose elements to start a process in your organization or pick additional pieces to add to your existing process. The Toolkit provides suggestions on how and when to start the process, and can help organizations build a simple process or a more complex discussion process to suit their local needs. We offer a single performance evaluation template of core competencies (Template 1.6A). You may choose to alter or add to it from Template 1.6B: Alternative Competencies.

The Toolkit can be viewed as a “start to finish how-to guide” or can be used as a quick reference allowing a CAO or Mayor and Council to consider improved practices in any one step in the performance evaluation process.

To facilitate performance conversations, the Toolkit tasks CAOs and Mayor and Council to pick and choose from tools and templates to create deliverables. In the CAO's case, the deliverable is a handbook for Mayor and Council's response. In the Mayor and Council's case, the deliverable is the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.



**Figure 1: CAMA's Three-part Performance Evaluation System**

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<sup>4</sup> Syme, Gord. 2014 (b) of Conroy Ross describes these four evaluation requirements that promote the long-term success of the municipality.



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1. CAO BUILDS A *CAO HANDBOOK FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION* TO PRESENT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL



CAMA recommends that the CAO first read through the Toolkit, templates, and sample documents to determine which tools would work in their municipality. CAOs build a handbook by gathering select elements from the Toolkit and completing templates for Mayor and Council's response. The CAMA Toolkit may be appended as an appendix; and some Council members may choose to add additional elements for the performance evaluation.

[Appendix 3: CAO Process Checklist](#) provides a way for CAOs to identify the chosen elements of this Toolkit and to gather them together into the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*.

[Handbook Cover Template](#) provides this title page.

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MAYOR AND COUNCIL BUILD A *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT* TO SHARE WITH THE CAO

During Part 2, the Mayor and Council work through the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation* to prepare a *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.

The Mayor and each Council member complete Template 1.6A: CAO Performance Evaluation. All of the ratings are tallied and comments are grouped into a thematic narrative. All of this information is merged into a single, final document. In many cases, a consultant is hired to prepare the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*. (The fee varies for consultants who are sometimes hired to produce the report).

The [Final Performance Evaluation Report Cover Template](#) provides this title page.

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THE CAO, MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEET TO DISCUSS AND SIGN THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*

Part 3 involves a joint performance conversation between the CAO, Mayor and Council. The goals are set for the coming year, and each participant signs off on the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.





# QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

## 1. THE CAO'S PROCESS

### CREATING THE *CAO HANDBOOK FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION*

Note that your municipality may not have all the elements described in the process, but because this Toolkit is a “pick and choose” model, that is completely fine. Use the elements that you do have, and consider, as you read through, whether you’d like to investigate additional elements for next year. As you work through Part 1, you will collect information into a handbook to give to Mayor and Council for their work in preparing the *Final Performance Evaluation Report* in Part 2. A checklist for your information gathering is provided in [Appendix 3: CAO Process Checklist](#).



**1.1 Review Governance Requirements:** The CAO gathers and reviews all policies, bylaws, regulations, and acts that relate to or clarify the role of the CAO, or that Council must follow in regard to performance evaluations of their CAO.

**1.2 Review Hiring Documents:** The CAO gathers and reviews the CAO job description, contract, and covenants (if any).

**1.3 Review Goals & Key Results:** The CAO gathers and reviews previously agreed-upon strategic goals, key result areas, the strategic plan, and/or Council priorities.

Figure 2: Annual CAMA Performance Evaluation Cycle, Part 1

**1.4 Review Core Competencies & Performance Metrics:** The CAO gathers and reviews previously agreed-upon core competencies and the performance metrics that are used to rate performance.

**1.5 Pull the Data Together:** The CAO has completed a review of relevant documents, including any quarterly or periodic reviews.

**1.6 Conduct the Self-Assessment:** The CAO uses Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation template to conduct his or her self-assessment prior to the Mayor and Council using the same assessment template for their assessment of the CAO.

## 2. MAYOR AND COUNCIL'S PROCESS

### CREATING THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*

Part 2 of the performance evaluation cycle occurs when Mayor and Council have the CAO's *Handbook for Performance Evaluation* in hand.



**2.1 Council Receives the CAO's Information Package:** The *Handbook for Performance Evaluation* includes all the background/foundational data the CAO gathered as part of the package as well as the CAO's Self-assessment.

**2.2 Mayor and Council Organize their Review:** The task of gathering and assessing the data involves agreeing on how to get input from all members, whether to designate a committee of Council to lead the exercise and, whether assistance is required from Human Resources or a consultant.

**2.3 Using a Template for Performance Evaluation:** This is the traditional step of the process wherein Mayor and Council rate the CAO's performance using Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation.

Figure 3: Annual CAMA Performance Evaluation Cycle, Part 2

**2.4: Mayor and Council Discuss their Review of the CAO's Self-assessment** – In this step Mayor and Council need to agree on the process for capturing (note taking) agreement on their feedback and developing the *Final Performance Evaluation Report* (rolled up feedback).

**2.5: Council Prepares for the Discussion with the CAO** – Things to be considered include: the rules of feedback, the purpose and desired outcome of the performance evaluation discussion, and who is chairing the discussion.

**2.6: Council Shares the Final Performance Evaluation Report with the CAO** – A date is set for discussion.

### 3. CAO, MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEET TO DISCUSS THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT



Figure 4: Annual CAMA Performance Evaluation Cycle, Part 3

**3.1: Joint Review of the Final Performance Evaluation Report** – The conversation uses constructive feedback to present and discuss the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*. Discussion revolves around the key elements of the Toolkit.

- How well did the CAO’s performance align with Council’s Strategic Goals?
- What were the overall ratings?
- What discussion arises from the final notes? Are there any themes that emerged?

**3.2: Final Review of Proposed New Goals for the CAO** - A final review of the proposed Strategic Goals and Key Results for the coming year links the CAO’s goals with the municipality’s strategic plan/priorities.

**3.3: Meet to Sign off on the Final Performance Evaluation Report** – The CAO, Mayor and Council sign off on the document.

**3.4: A New Year** – Begin the performance evaluation cycle again.

# PART 1: THE CAO'S PROCESS

## Creating the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*

### 1.1 REVIEW GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #1:  
GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS](#)



The CAO and Mayor and Council need to become familiar with the existing documents that give the CAO his/her authority and guidance in regard to his/her role. These documents include legislation, municipal policies, and by-laws. Within the *Municipal Government Act* in some provinces, there are Sections variously describing CAO job descriptions, duties, powers, and/or the purpose of performance evaluation and the processes, including timelines, to be used. These are all very important inputs that inform the performance evaluation process.

Some municipalities have created municipal policies that require evaluation of job performance, set the standards by which it will occur, and outline the procedures for how it should occur. For those wishing to formalize the process in policy, *Best Practices Governance Documents* includes a policy that is in place in Alberta.

Some municipalities have created by-laws that establish and define the powers and duties of the CAO. These typically provide clarity as to the corporation's view of the CAO's role and responsibilities. For those municipalities wishing to formalize the powers and duties of the CAO in by-law, *Best Practices Governance Documents* includes a municipal manager by-law that is in place in Alberta.

Some municipalities have identified, through a by-law, that responsibilities and authorities may be delegated by Council to a Municipal Manager. *Best Practices Governance Documents* includes a manager delegations by-law that is in place in Alberta.

## 1.2 REVIEW HIRING DOCUMENTS



[TEMPLATE 1.2A: JOB DESCRIPTION](#)

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #2: FOR HIRING A CAO](#)

One of our survey respondents noted that he/she thought the purpose of the CAO performance evaluation was “To define the true role of the CAO as opposed to the job description.” It is no simple task to recruit and hire a municipal manager who will help take the municipality where it wants to be in five to ten years. For this reason, Template 1.2A: Job Description advocates for the inclusion of strategic roles such as capacity-building, cultivating economic prosperity, building an historic and active community, and other abilities related to providing strong futuristic leadership. The job description should clearly state the CAO’s:

- responsibilities and roles;
- degree of authority;
- general responsibilities to Mayor and Council;
- responsibilities linked to the Strategic Plan; and
- qualifications.

Include a copy of your job description in the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation* you are creating. The job description is a foundational document and will provide topics of conversation between you and Mayor and Council, particularly if it needs to be updated.

Another document to add to the handbook is the employment agreement signed by the CAO, Mayor and Council. You may refer to CAMA’s Model Employee Agreement found in [Sample Documents #2: for Hiring a CAO](#).

*“...elected and appointed leadership [need to] strategically work together in an anticipatory fashion to align the municipal organization for success.”*

—SURVEY RESPONSES (CAO)

## 1.3 REVIEW GOALS AND KEY RESULTS



[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #3: FOR ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT](#)

[TEMPLATE 1.3: STRATEGIC PLANNING CHECKLIST](#)

[TEMPLATE 1.6A: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TEMPLATE](#)

### ADD THE STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES TO THE HANDBOOK

A municipality's strategic plan is another foundation document the CAO needs to gather and review. If your municipality does not have a strategic plan, then gather information about Council priorities and add these to your handbook.

If you decide to develop a strategic plan, [Template 1.3: Strategic Planning Checklist](#) can provide some assistance, but developing a full three to five year strategic plan is beyond the scope of this Toolkit.

### ESTABLISH THE CAO'S GOALS AND KEY RESULTS

At the start of the evaluation cycle, it is important to establish the CAO's goals in a way that aligns them with the strategic goals for Mayor and Council. At the end of the evaluation cycle, the goals are reviewed and revised as necessary. This is true whether a CAO is brand new or has been with the municipality for twenty years. The goals should be achievable within the evaluation cycle.

The Performance Evaluation Template (1.6A) contains space to record a suggested three to five CAO Goals and Key Results. One effective way of setting them is to use the S.M.A.R.T goal concept. A variety of interpretations of the SMART acronym have been used since the 1960s. George T. Doran's interpretation (1981) is often considered to be the foundational one. It is described below.

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific:</b> target a specific area for improvement.
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable:</b> quantify, or at least suggest, an indicator of progress.
<b>A</b>	<b>Assignable:</b> specify who will do it.
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic:</b> state what results can realistically be achieved given available resources.
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-related:</b> specify when the result can be achieved. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.projectsmart.co.uk/brief-history-of-smart-goals.php>

Doran wrote that it was important to note that not every goal needs to have all of the five criteria, and further, that not every goal is measurable. In the example below, you will find definitions and a proposed SMART goal.

	Council's Strategic Goal	CAO's Goals for the Evaluation Year	Key Results for the CAO (SMART Goal)	Performance Metric	Target Completion Date
<b>Definition</b>	Use this space to identify each of the Council's priorities that align with the CAO's goals	Align each goal with Council's priorities.	Each result statement should directly support a strategic priority	Measure the success of results achieved against the goal	
<b>Example</b>	Continue to be an Employer of Choice (focus on leadership)	Build Trust through Council and Staff Relations	<p><b>Specific target area:</b> trust;</p> <p><b>Measurable:</b> flow of communication between CAO and Council and between Council and its Committees;</p> <p><b>Assignable:</b> to the CAO;</p> <p><b>Realistic results:</b> coordinate and facilitate the flow of information between Council and its Committees;</p> <p><b>Time-related:</b> one year timeframe/ the fiscal year.</p>	1-5 as noted in Table 2	Fiscal Year

*The material provided in the toolkit will go a long way to addressing a number of the challenges that I identified in our process. It is imperative that CAOs and Councils are using a process that everyone sees the value of, and has confidence in.*

— SURVEY RESPONSES (CAO)



## 1.4 REVIEW CORE COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE METRICS



[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #4: FOR THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SCHEDULE](#)

[TEMPLATE 1.6A: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TEMPLATE](#)

### CORE COMPETENCIES

The core competencies that CAMA is using for its performance evaluation come from ICMA's Practices for Effective Local Government Management (Table 1)<sup>6</sup>. These core management areas form the foundation for Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template. We note, however, that in addition to these core areas, our survey findings and review of member's performance evaluation documents, that there are other competencies used across Canada. These examples are found in Template 1.6B: Alternative Competency Areas. As you build your Performance Evaluation Template, you may consider substituting or adding from Template 1.6B.

**Table 1: ICMA's Practices for Effective Local Government Management**

CORE MANAGEMENT AREA	DEFINITION
<b>Staff effectiveness</b>	Promoting the development and performance of staff and employees throughout the organization.
<b>Policy facilitation</b>	Helping elected officials and other community actors identify, work toward, and achieve common goals and objectives.
<b>Functional and operational expertise and planning</b>	Ensuring efficient organizational structure and operations.
<b>Citizen service</b>	Determining citizen needs and providing responsive, equitable services to the community.
<b>Performance measurement/management and quality assurance</b>	Maintaining a consistently high level of quality in staff work, operational procedures, and service delivery.

<sup>6</sup> modified from [http://icma.org/en/university/about/management\\_practices](http://icma.org/en/university/about/management_practices)

<b>Initiative, risk taking, vision, creativity, and innovation</b>	Setting an example that urges the organization and the community toward experimentation, change, creative problem solving, and prompt action.
<b>Technological literacy</b>	Demonstrating an understanding of information technology and ensuring that it is incorporated appropriately in plans to improve service delivery, information sharing, organizational communication, and citizen access.
<b>Democratic advocacy and public engagement</b>	Demonstrating a commitment to democratic principles by respecting elected officials, community interest groups, and the decision making process; educating citizens about local government; and acquiring knowledge of the social, economic, and political history of the community.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Creates an environment of involvement, respect, and connection of diverse ideas, backgrounds, and talent throughout the organization and the community.
<b>Budgeting</b>	Preparing and administering the budget.
<b>Financial analysis</b>	Interpreting financial information to assess the short-term and long-term fiscal condition of the community, determine the cost-effectiveness of programs, and compare alternative strategies.
<b>Human resources management</b>	Ensuring that the policies and procedures for employee hiring, promotion, performance appraisal, and discipline are equitable, legal, and current; ensuring that human resources are adequate to accomplish programmatic objectives.
<b>Strategic planning</b>	Positioning the organization and the community for events and circumstances that are anticipated in the future.
<b>Advocacy and interpersonal communication</b>	Facilitating the flow of ideas, information, and understanding between and among individuals; advocating effectively in the community interest.
<b>Presentation skills</b>	Conveying ideas or information effectively to others
<b>Media relations</b>	Communicating information to the media in a way that increases public understanding of local government issues and activities and builds a positive relationship with the media.
<b>Integrity</b>	Demonstrating fairness, honesty, and ethical and legal awareness in personal and professional relationships and activities.
<b>Personal development</b>	Demonstrating a commitment to a balanced life through ongoing self-renewal and development in order to increase personal capacity.

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

Just as each Goal includes a statement about the Key Result that will be achieved if the goal is met, so too does each competency include statements about standards of behaviour for that competency.

For each key result and competency statement, the performance metric scale is from one to five where one is poor and five is excellent. Each CAO (for self-assessment) and elected official (for the final report) will complete this form and all evaluations will be consolidated and shared with Council and with the CAO. Note that for each statement you leave without a score, a value of “3 = Average” will be awarded.

**Table 2: Rating Instrument<sup>7</sup>**

**5 = Excellent** (almost always exceeds the performance standard)  
**4 = Above average** (generally exceeds the performance standard)  
**3 = Average** (generally meets the performance standard)  
**2 = Below average** (generally does not meet the performance standard)  
**1 = Poor** (rarely meets the performance standard)

Rank answers from 1 to 5

Any item left blank will be interpreted as a score of “3 = Average”

## 1.5 PULL THE DATA TOGETHER

[HANDBOOK COVER TEMPLATE](#)



All of the data you have gathered into the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation* will support your final task of completing the Self-assessment. You should gather together any periodic or quarterly reviews and read them over prior to your self-assessment.

<sup>7</sup> ICMA's City Manager Performance Evaluation Criteria

The same form – Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template – should be used for:

- the CAO Self-assessment;
- the Mayor and Council individual CAO performance evaluations; and
- the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.

You will need to include your completed Template 1.6A as Self-assessment, and a blank Template 1.6A for the Mayor and Council members to complete.

You can also make the blank Template 1.6A for the Final Evaluation Report available to the consultant or Council sub-committee that will compile all of the evaluations into the final report.

Copy the Handbook Cover Template and all of your gathered information to provide the Mayor and each Council member with the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*.

*“To ensure the organization is moving forward and meeting the expectations of Council from both an operational and strategic perspective. Specifically that the organization is focusing on the right things, Council has confidence in the financial management of the City, service delivery is meeting the needs of the community and customer service is seen as meeting or exceeding community expectations.*

— SURVEY RESPONSES (CAO)

## 1.6 CONDUCT THE SELF-ASSESSMENT



[TEMPLATE 1.6A: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TEMPLATE](#)

[TEMPLATE 1.6B: ALTERNATIVE COMPETENCY AREAS](#)

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #5: FOR LINKING THE CAO'S EVALUATION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN](#)

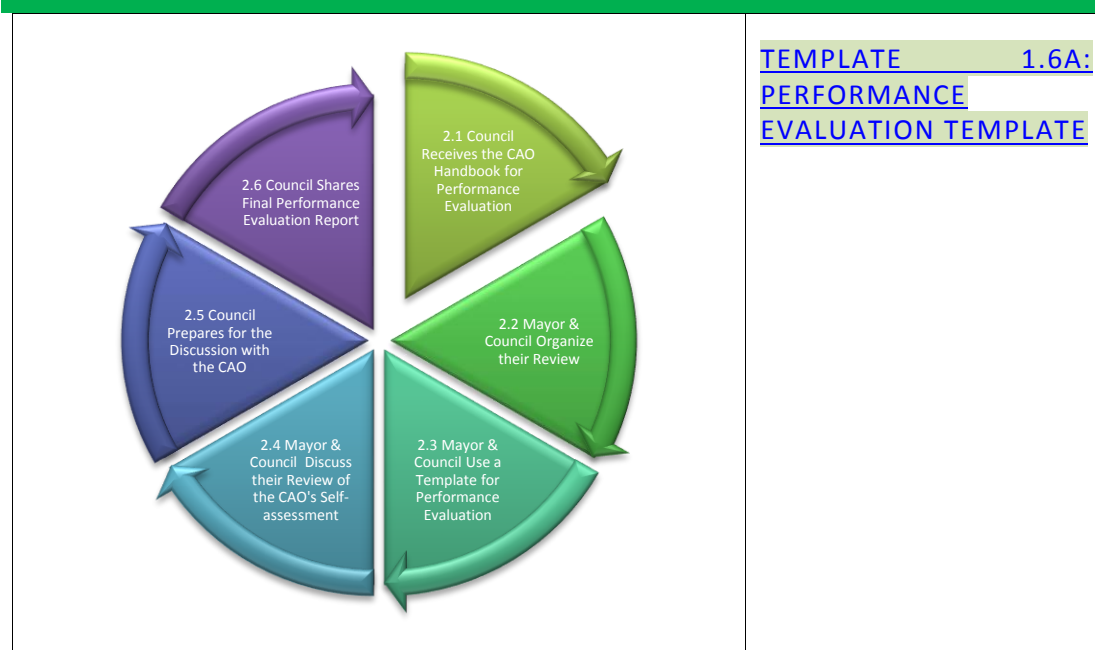
Use Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template for the CAO Self-assessment. If appropriate, use Template 1.6B: Alternative Competency Areas to augment the evaluation components in the evaluation. Sample Documents #5: For Linking the CAO's Evaluation to the Strategic Plan can be used as a way to assess goals and key results.

At the end of the process, when the CAO receives the *Final Performance Evaluation Report* for review, the CAO can extend the self-assessment by comparing personal ratings against those provided by the Mayor and Council.

## PART 2: MAYOR AND COUNCIL'S PROCESS

### CREATING THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*

#### 2.1 COUNCIL RECEIVES THE CAO HANDBOOK FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



The Mayor and each Council member receive the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*. It includes all of the information gathered by the CAO as pertinent for their evaluation. A copy of this Toolkit is appended. In addition, the CAO's Self-assessment is provided for review, and a blank Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template is provided for completion.

Review the CAO's job description, and any signed agreements between the CAO and Mayor and Council. Do any aspects of these documents need to be changed? Are there any new pieces of legislation or municipal by-laws that have triggered the need for change? In the Self-assessment, how well has the CAO met the Goals and Key Results defined in Table 1: CAO Goals and Key Results Areas for [year] (from Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template)?

Upon review of the handbook, a decision should be reached about whether to go ahead with using Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation Template as is, or whether to add in or substitute out some other competencies from Template 1.6B: Alternative Competency Areas.

The CAO may wish to meet with the Mayor or the HR Director/consultant to review the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*.

## 2.2 MAYOR AND COUNCIL ORGANIZE THEIR REVIEW



[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS  
#4: FOR THE ANNUAL  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION SCHEDULE](#)

Mayor and Council need to determine how to manage the information provided in the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation* and to determine a timeline for all meetings and review periods going forward.

The Mayor and all Council members should be involved in the review. Steps taken at this stage include:

- setting timelines for the completion of Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation; and
- deciding who will create the Final Evaluation Report;

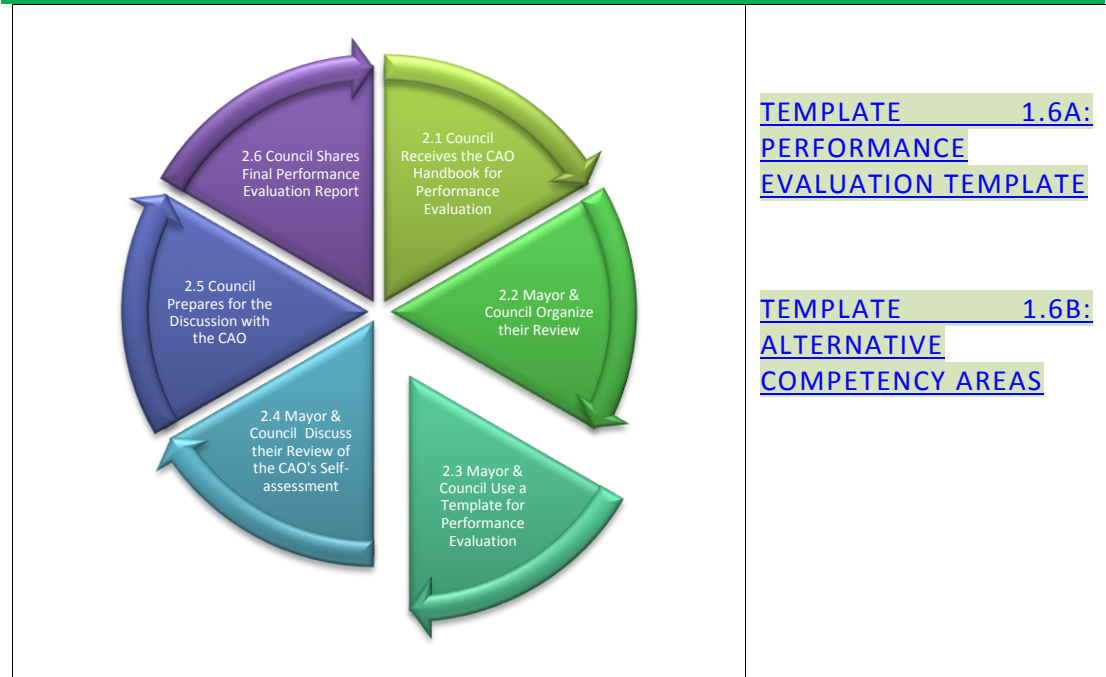
Options that could be considered for those responsible for completing the Final Evaluation Report include:

- the Mayor;
- Council;
- a committee of Council;
- a consultant;
- senior management; or
- a combination of the above.

Council often leans on the HR director because of their expertise. However, because the CAO is an employee of the Mayor and Council, the role of the CAO is unique. The HR department reports to the CAO and would therefore be in an awkward position if asked to manage the CAO's performance evaluation. What seems most appropriate is that the HR director could facilitate the performance evaluation and manage the process, but would not take a role in the content that is developed. Certainly the use of a consultant is widely accepted for facilitating the process. (Note that consultant fees vary.) Performance evaluations take place in executive/closed session.

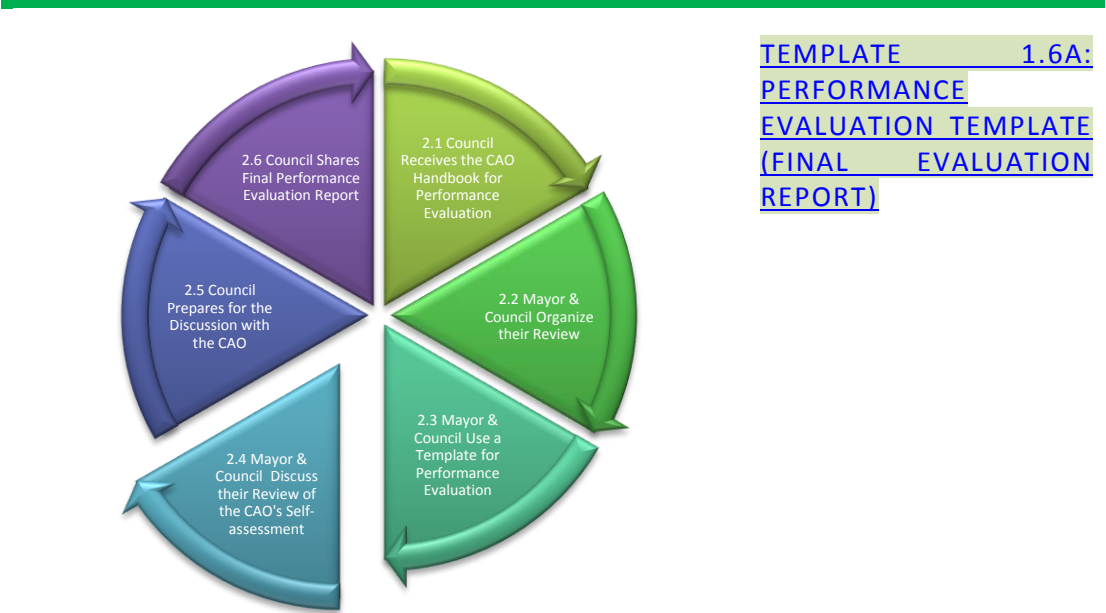
Optional Steps in the Evaluation Cycle (page 26) provides tips for setting up a 360 survey of the CAO, which would include those who report directly to the CAO, and other stakeholders identified by the CAO, and confirmed by Mayor and Council.

## 2.3 MAYOR AND COUNCIL USE A TEMPLATE FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



This is the traditional step in the performance evaluation process. In addition to reviewing the CAO's Self-assessment, the Mayor and each Council member completes their own copy of Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation. Each copy is turned over to the committee or consultant responsible for compiling the information into the Final Evaluation Report.

## 2.4 MAYOR AND COUNCIL DISCUSS THEIR REVIEW OF THE CAO'S SELF-ASSESSMENT

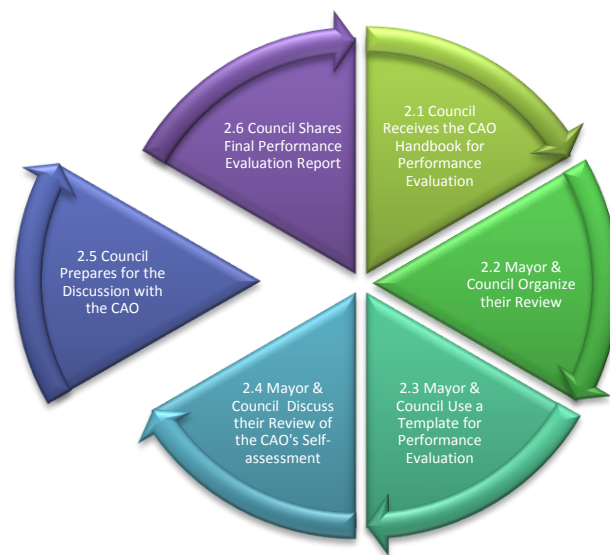




Using Template 1.6A, Council, a Council committee, or a consultant gathers all of the written comments about and ratings for the CAO's Goals, Key Results, and Core Competencies; provides a final score for each category; and ranks the findings. The rankings will show areas of excellence as well as areas for improvement. The written comments are grouped into thematic areas, and appended to the end of the *Final Evaluation Performance Report*.

The Draft Final Evaluation Report and the CAO's Self-assessment are discussed. Any final changes are noted and a few days to a week are allowed for preparation of the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.

## 2.5 COUNCIL PREPARES FOR THE DISCUSSION WITH THE CAO



[TEMPLATE 1.6A:  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION  
TEMPLATE \(FINAL  
EVALUATION REPORT\)](#)

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS  
#4: FOR THE ANNUAL  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION SCHEDULE](#)

Mayor and Council decide how feedback will be discussed, how one of a kind comments will be handled, who will chair the performance evaluation conversation, and the purpose and desired outcome of the meeting. The *Final Performance Evaluation Report* is received from the consultant or sub-committee that prepared it.

*"Our philosophy is to help him succeed, if he succeeds then staff succeeds; if admin succeeds then Council succeeds."*

— Survey Response (Elected Official)

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## DELIVERING POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK IN THE WRITTEN NARRATIVE AND DISCUSSION

It has been said of performance evaluations that when ‘an atmosphere of trust, respect and transparency characterizes the relationship between CAO, Mayor and Council, the CAO’s performance can have a direct and lasting impact on the ability of Council to carry out its mandate.’ That being said, sometimes constructive feedback is necessary, and there are tips to do this effectively. The earlier the better is a good rule. If the feedback did not come with the actual event, and has accrued through the performance evaluation period, then there are some suggestions to keep in mind.

- Don’t use the delivery of the constructive feedback to vent.
- Accentuate the positive. If there is a constructive comment, there must be a positive outcome that is being sought. What is it?
- Ask how the problem originated—it helps to get to the root of the problem.
- Involve the CAO and Mayor and Council in the solution.

For positive feedback, it is equally important to be fair and realistic. As noted in the quote below, too much positive feedback can be deceiving. A better approach is to coach the CAO on the type of appropriate and effective behaviour that could be exercised more often.

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### A CONSULTANT DESCRIBES AN AVOIDABLE FEEDBACK SCENARIO

[There are a] number of instances wherein I have been called by a Council concerned about its deteriorating relationship to the CAO and yet having just polished off another performance assessment proclaiming that the CAO is soon to walk on water. The CAO is of course stunned by one result/sentiment or the other and most likely both. It is akin to the hockey coach receiving a very positive endorsement just prior to the fateful call (sometimes by the same fellow) announcing that the team in its wisdom felt that a change was needed, hard to fire the team, need a different voice ...

(Cuff, George. FCMC. 2015. Governance Zone: What Results? p. 1)

*Maintaining an open communication is important to the success of the municipality. The evaluation should be a conversation between Council and the CAO, not just Council offering their opinions.*

*— Survey Response (Elected Official)*

## 2.6 COUNCIL SHARES FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT



[TEMPLATE 1.6A:  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION TEMPLATE  
\(FINAL EVALUATION  
REPORT\)](#)

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS  
#4: FOR THE ANNUAL  
PERFORMANCE  
EVALUATION SCHEDULE](#)

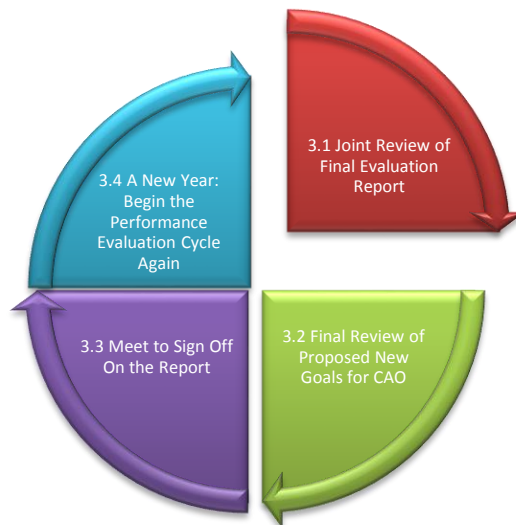
The *Final Performance Evaluation Report* is circulated to all participants. The CAO, Mayor and Council should have time to review the Final Evaluation Report prior to the meeting to discuss it. Some CAOs share the results of the report with their teams, thereby building trust and driving change.

As Mayor (and Chair) of the performance committee, the process was discussed ahead of time with councilors and the CAO. The results of the formal process survey were aggregated and shared with the CAO so that the range of results could be seen. Results where there was significant agreement as well as those areas with a wide range of response were discussed. A cumulative report was filed with opportunity to further discussion.

— SURVEY RESPONSES (MAYOR ON FEEDBACK FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS)

# PART 3: CAO, MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEET TO DISCUSS THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

## 3.1 JOINT REVIEW OF THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*



The meeting is essentially a conversation that presents and discusses the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*. Discussion revolves around the key elements of the Toolkit.

- How well did the CAO's performance align with Council's Strategic Goals?
- What were the overall ratings?
- What discussion arises from the final notes? Are there any themes that emerged?

*Maintaining an open communication is important to the success of the municipality. The evaluation should be a conversation between Council and the CAO, not just Council offering their opinions.*

— SURVEY RESPONSES (ELECTED OFFICIAL)

## 3.2 MEET TO FINALIZE THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*



### PROPOSE OTHER GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR

Template 1.6A: *Final Performance Evaluation Report* leaves room for up to eight strategic goals that are set in Table 1 at the start of the evaluation cycle, and in Table 2 for the close of the evaluation cycle.

Council's Strategic Goal	CAO's Goals for the Year	Key Results for the CAO (SMART Goal)	Performance Metric	Target Completion Date
--------------------------	--------------------------	---	--------------------	------------------------

Setting Achievable Goals
... a good performance review would [include a] discussion regarding whether or not those goals [from last year] were set in a moment of euphoria (i.e., filling all the potholes) or actually achievable. (Cuff, George B. 2015 Governance Zone: What Results? p. 2)

Certain goals set last year may remain unchanged, as they are ongoing strategic goals for the municipality and therefore the CAO. Other goals may be new, so this is the time to discuss all of the chosen goals for the coming year in light of their:

- appropriateness for the municipality;
- advancing the CAO's professional goals and interests; and
- potential for enhancing the relationships between the CAO, Mayor and Council, staff, stakeholders, and the community.

*I have never had a performance evaluation from Council. I have to base my actions going forward on day to day successes I can see myself and staff attain and by trying to determine what goals and actions Council would like to see achieved by listening during their discussions.*

— SURVEY RESPONSES (CAO)

### 3.3 MEET TO SIGN OFF ON THE *FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT*

[SAMPLE DOCUMENTS #5:  
TOOLS FOR LINKING THE  
CAO'S EVALUATION TO THE  
STRATEGIC PLAN](#)



- The CAO, Mayor and Council sign off on the document.
- A final review of the proposed Strategic Goals and Key Result Areas for the coming year links the CAO's goals with the municipality's strategic plan/priorities.

### 3.4 A NEW YEAR



Begin the performance evaluation cycle again.

# OPTIONAL STEPS IN THE EVALUATION CYCLE

## DEVELOPING A COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK

During discussions about job descriptions, hiring, and performance evaluation, a compensation framework can be developed. Use the [Compensation Options Template](#), which provides options from ICMA's Employment Agreement.

When the Mayor and Council meet to discuss the Final Evaluation Report, they may use the time to decide upon compensation. The Final Evaluation Report identifies the level of performance satisfaction for the entire performance period. In addition to the ratings and executive summary of the Final Evaluation Report, compensation decisions may be based on:

- the economic climate of the municipality and community;
- the general status of comparable compensation in the private sector of the community;
- compensation decisions for other employees of the local government; and
- a comparative salary review.

## SETTING UP QUARTERLY REVIEWS

The importance of regular conversations or “check-ins” cannot be overstated. Building solid, respectful working relationships will advance everyone's interests and avoid having surprises arise over the course of the year and specifically at year-end. Regular performance conversations make it easier to link compensation to performance at the year-end performance evaluation.

Some municipalities set up quarterly reviews for a more formal approach to “checking in,” which gives the opportunity to review/change goal that is no longer achievable due to new circumstances.

## SURVEYING STAKEHOLDERS

Whether the municipality is small, medium, or large, there are components of performance evaluations that can elevate their effectiveness, such as a survey of stakeholders. Stakeholders include executive officers who report directly to the CAO and stakeholders identified by the CAO, and confirmed by Mayor and Council.

The review provides valuable information on how results are achieved and how the community perceives both the CAO and the municipality. Some evaluations call for a 30-minute interview with all stakeholders except for those stakeholders who provide feedback online. Conducting performance evaluations holds all those involved to professional standards and builds a community within the organization because all stakeholders involved are asked for input. This includes staff who report to the CAO, stakeholders who work with the CAO, and Mayor and Council. All participants in the Survey of Stakeholders must be assured that their input is confidential and that the results of interviews and surveys will be scrubbed to be non-attributable.



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## APPENDIX 1: PRINCIPLES

### ACHIEVING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

PROFESSIONAL CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO OPERATE WITH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE.

### VALUING EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

CAO PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS ARE A WAY FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL TO RECOGNIZE, APPRECIATE, AND EVALUATE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR EMPLOYEE.

Mayor and Council may change more often than the CAO, so the performance evaluations offer a way to ensure all involved have clearly outlined understandings and expectations for the CAO. The best time to make those expectations known is during the annual evaluation.

Performance evaluations, when there is a good relationship between the CAO and the Mayor and Council, allow for a discussion about the performance of the whole organization. The performance evaluations are a tool to better inform and engage Mayor and Council with the CAO's work, and to recognize the challenges the CAO faces. In gaining such an understanding, Mayor and Council can better appreciate the effectiveness of the CAO's work, and determine ways to strengthen their support of this work.

The relationship between Mayor and Council and the CAO ought to be front and centre in any performance evaluation. Positive relationships, marked by respect, trust, and transparency will advance the achievement of organizational goals.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TOWARD ACHIEVING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

THE FOUNDATION OF A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ALIGNS GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CAO WITH OVERALL ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES.

High performance organizations promote continuous improvement for the CAO and the organization, empowering both to achieve success. As long-term outcomes come within reach, standards of excellence can be redefined.

In some provinces the first goal is to meet legislative requirements that Council conduct regular CAO performance evaluations. Many jurisdictions have policies and bylaws in place that describe responsibilities and expectations towards performance evaluation of CAOs. Performance evaluation is a tool for organizational excellence. Legislative context enriches the process and provides additional tools in the toolbox that are specific to provincial and civic jurisdictions.

## EFFECTIVE, ONGOING COMMUNICATION

POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILT AND MAINTAINED WITH EFFECTIVE, ONGOING COMMUNICATION.

Communication is one tool in the working relationship between manager and elected officials and is NOT a report card that is an end in itself. With ongoing communication between the manager and officials, nothing in the performance evaluation should come as a surprise; it should be a summary of previously held conversations.

The performance evaluation is also an opportunity for the Mayor and Council to better define their vision and their expectations.

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS A PROCESS

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS A PROCESS THAT BEGINS WITH A JOB DESCRIPTION.

CAMA's Toolkit divides the process into three cycles. Part 1 involves six steps of gathering information and preparing the *CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation*. Part 2 involves six steps for creating the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*, and Part 3 has four steps for reviewing the *Final Performance Evaluation Report*.

## APPENDIX 2: SURVEY RESULTS

In the Fall of 2014, CAMA distributed a survey to its membership to better understand the current state of performance management. Responses were received from 82 CAOs. Survey highlights are as follows.

- 79% of CAOs have a formal performance management process.
- 61% of CAOs have annual goals and objectives.
- Only 5% of newly hired CAOs had clear performance expectations when they were hired.
- 95% said the main purpose of the performance evaluation was to identify areas for improvement, followed by 87% for positive feedback.

Only 30% of CAOs strongly agreed that they are rated on actual results. After the CAMA task force completed the CAO survey and analysis of the results, a similar survey was distributed to Elected Officials with the support and co-operation of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). The survey was sent to the FCM members and there were 114 random responses. The survey highlights from Elected Officials are as follows.

- 89% conduct CAO performance evaluations.
- 76% report that all members of Council participate.
- 67% have a formal process however, less than half completely follow their own process.
- Only 43% felt well prepared for the process.
- 44% had templates that were described as very helpful.
- 69% set goals and objectives for CAO performance however, 42% say Council and the CAO don't have to agree to the performance indicators.
- 65% responded that CAO goals are linked or strongly linked to Councils strategic plan, goals and priorities.
- 76% indicate that feedback is provided in a constructive manner.

Based on the responses received, it was clear there was an opportunity for CAMA to take a lead role in this matter and establish a performance evaluation system for CAOs and Mayor and Council. Survey responses indicated this system should include standardized templates and sample wording that could easily be adapted to local demographics as well as instructions and guiding principles on proper performance management and performance evaluation of the CAO.

## APPENDIX 3: CAO PROCESS CHECKLIST

### Recommendations for CAO Performance Evaluation

Initial where appropriate, Complete with Dates as Required, and Circle as Necessary.

For the Year:		Date:
<b>Part 1: CAO Gathers information to create the CAO Handbook for Performance Evaluation</b>		
Review Governance Requirements	Located at: [url]	Attached
Relevant Documents:		
Review Job Description & Employment Agreement	Located at: [url]	Attached
Relevant Documents:		
Set Goals:		
Do the Goals align with the Strategic Plan?	Yes	No
List of Goals:		

Set Date for Strategic Plan Review	Date and time:  Place:	Attendees:
CAO Self-assessment and Mayor and Council Performance Evaluation is based on Template 1.6A: Performance Evaluation	Yes	No
Alternative Competencies to be added from Template 1.6B:		
Confirm the rating instrument meets our needs	Yes	No
Action to take:		
Self-assessment To be completed by: (date)	Yes	No
Mayor and Council Evaluation Timelines are set  These timelines are as follows:	Yes	No



**Part 2: Mayor and Council Compile the *Final Performance Evaluation Report***

The following people will form the sub-committee to compile the evaluations into a single *Final Performance Evaluation Report*:

*Final Performance Evaluation Report* is compiled

Date:

By:

CAO, Mayor and Council review Final Evaluation Report

Date from:

End Date:

**Part 3: CAO, Mayor and Council meet to Discuss the Performance Evaluation**

Joint review of the Final Report

Date and Time:

Attended by:

Place:

Joint Setting of Goals

Date and Time:

Attended by:

Place:

Goals Set for [Year]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### CAMA CAO Performance Evaluation Project Task Force

#### Chair

Janice Baker (CAMA Representative for Ontario and CAO/City Manager for the City of Mississauga, ON)

#### Members

Don MacLellan, CAMA Past President, General Manager of Community Safety Services, City of Moncton, NB

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## PERMISSIONS

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City of Calgary (Alberta Government)	County of Grande Prairie
City of Grande Prairie	Municipality of Jasper
City of Mississauga	Town of Beaumont
City of Moose Jaw	Town of Canmore
City of St. Albert	Town of Essex
City of Summerside	Town of Olds
Comox Valley Regional District	Town of Torbay
Conroy Ross	Town of White City
County of Elgin	International City/Council Management Association (ICMA)

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