

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)



Improving Performance

March 2005

Today's Agenda

- Introduction and Overview
 - Overview of the PART
 - How PART results are used
- The PART Process
 - Overview of Process
 - This Year's Schedule
- The Tool
 - Guidance
 - Section by Section
 - What Makes Up a Good Answer
- Performance Measures
- Questions and Answers

What is the PART?

- PART = Program Assessment Rating Tool
- Evaluates program performance by reviewing four areas:
 - Program Purpose and Design
 - Strategic Planning
 - Program Management
 - Program Results and Accountability
- Targeted questions for certain kinds of program
- PART historically an Excel workbook
- Moving to a web-based tool called PARTweb

What is the PART?

- Evidence-based assessment which is made available to the public
- Consistent approach for evaluating programs
- Tool to encourage continuous improvement
- Component of the President's Management Agenda
- Rates the performance of the program
 - Effective, Moderately Effective, Adequate, Ineffective, or Results Not Demonstrated

How are PART results used?

- Provides framework for targeting and designing program improvements
 - Links program actions to intended outcomes
 - Identifies strengths and weaknesses
- Provides Congress and other stakeholders with important program insights
- Informs OMB and agencies budget decisions
 - Not the only factor in decisions
 - High score does not necessarily mean increased funding
- Published as part of the President's Budget

The Process

The Process

- Fourth year of using the PART
- Approximately 80 percent of federal programs assessed by the end of this year
- PART is intended to be a collaborative process between agencies and OMB
- Assessment informs actions to improve performance and budget recommendations
- Agencies are held accountable for making progress on recommendations

The Process

- Once PARTs are complete, summaries are developed to capture key results
- Summaries include the recommendations for improvements
 - Progress on recommendations does not automatically justify a reassessment
- Agencies will report FY 2005 actual performance data for inclusion in their PARTs
- Programs can be reassessed

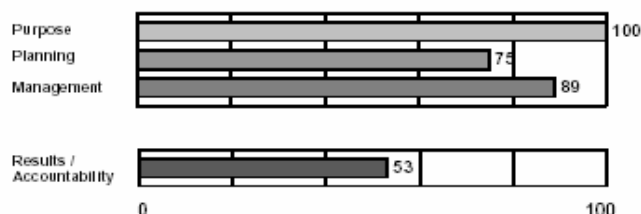
PART Summary

Example of a summary from last year

Program: *Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund Direct Loans*

Agency: *Department of Agriculture*

Bureau: *Farm Service Agency*



Rating: *Moderately Effective*

Program Type: *Credit*

Program Summary:

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) direct loans program provides loans to family farmers who could not otherwise obtain agricultural credit through other commercial institutions. The program is designed to provide a temporary source of credit until such time as the farmer is able to utilize the private sector for their financing needs.

FSA, through its nationwide network of service centers, is able to provide outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and farmers in geographically isolated areas that have few lenders. Additionally, farmers may face a competitively limited market for their loans that can result in higher rates, unfavorable terms, and a shortage of loan funds. FSA direct loans facilitates the provision of credit which can help support low farm family incomes, assist minority and beginning farmers, or help farmers adopt new technology that will make their farming operations more economical. The PART assessment found:

- At the Federal level there are no other agencies that have the same specific goals and objectives as FSA direct loan programs.
- Borrower abuse of FSA loan restructuring led to reforms in the mid-1990's that no longer allow borrowers with more than one write-down to qualify for other capital loans. Questions still remain regarding the ability of farmers, who continue to workout their loans, to meet their debt obligations over the long-term.
- Long term goals include improved economic viability of farmers and ranchers, reduced loan losses, and targeted assistance to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers. However, demand for direct loans is the major driver in the budget request, and it is not clear how this demand ties to accomplishing the annual and long-term performance goals.

In response to these findings, the Administration will:

1. Define long-term outcome measures that focus on a key goal of the program – improving the economic viability of farmers and ranchers through strategic planning efforts and an in-depth program evaluation currently underway.
2. Amend servicing options to reduce the administrative burden without impacting the effectiveness of the program.
3. Implement FSA's new Farm Business Plan in the fall of 2004 which will improve the agency's ability to collect detailed performance information.

Key Performance Measures from Latest PART

	Year	Target	Actual
Long-term Measure: Increased percentage of farm ownership by racial and ethnic minorities and women farmers (Targets under development).			
Long-term Measure: Loan Delinquency rate	2003	<15%	12.5%
	2004	<15%	
	2005	<15%	
	2006	<15%	
Annual Measure: Percent of businesses that remain viable 3 years after assistance	2004	Baseline	0.45
	2005	0.55	
	2006		

Program Funding Level (in millions of dollars)

2004 Actual	2005 Estimate	2006 Estimate
844	955	937

FY 2005 PART Schedule

April 15	Agency first PART draft + evidence due to OMB (BPI deliverable)
Mid Apr- June 30	Continuing PART discussions between agencies and OMB
June 30	Agencies locked out of PART (i.e., cannot make changes online and cannot upload spreadsheets)
July 15-29	Internal OMB PART consistency check
Aug 12	OMB passes back PARTs and PART summaries to agencies
Aug 19	Agency appeals and comments due to OMB
Sept 2	All appeals resolved
Sept 9	Finalized PART and summaries due
Nov 15	Agencies submit updated performance data via PARTweb
Feb 6	PARTs published with President's Budget

The Tool

Tool Overview

- PART contains 25 common questions
 - Generally Yes/No answers, some large/small extent
 - Clear explanation and rigorous evidence required
- Different types of PARTs have additional questions
- Four Sections
 - Section I – Purpose and Design
 - Section II – Strategic Planning
 - Section III – Management
 - Section IV – Results
- Section scores are weighted to produce overall score which is translated into a rating
 - Section IV carries the most weight – 50%

Choosing a PART

- Agencies and OMB have already determined which programs will be PARTed this year
- Seven types of PARTs to choose from
 - Direct Federal
 - Regulatory
 - Capital Assets
 - Credit
 - Research and Development
 - Block/Formula Grants
 - Competitive Grants
- The Direct Federal PART is the foundation
 - Contains core, common questions that generally apply to all types of programs

PART Guidance

- Elements of the PART Guidance
 - Explains purpose of each question
 - Explains requirements for a “Yes” answer
 - Describes acceptable evidence to support answer
- Follow the guidance when answering questions
- PART guidance, workbooks, and other info is available online: www.omb.gov/part
- This year’s guidance has been slightly revised from last year

Section I – Purpose and Design

- Assesses whether a program's purpose and design are clear and sound
- Key elements
 - Clarity of purpose
 - Soundness of design
- Five common questions
- 20% of total score
- Looks at aspects of the program that the manager may not control, but can influence
- Design flaws in underlying legislation are considered when supported by evidence and are grounds for a *No*

Section I – Guidance Changes

- Question 1.5: Switched order of two clauses to read: “...so that resources will address the program’s purpose directly and/or reach intended beneficiaries directly.”
- Not Applicable (NA) is not an option

Section II – Strategic Planning

- Assesses whether a program has valid long-term and annual measures and targets
- Key elements
 - Performance measures must focus on outcomes
 - Link between measures and program planning
- Eight common questions
- 10% of total score
- Performance measures identified in this section will be used when evaluating results
- Evaluations must be of high quality and measure program impact

Section II – Guidance Changes

- Question 2.3: Credit for efficiency measures will now be given on question 3.4. Efficiency measures must be in place, not under development
- Question 2.6: Clarified elements of Yes/No answers

Section III – Program Management

- Assesses program management, including financial oversight and accountability
- Key elements
 - Collection and use of performance data
 - Program efficiency
- Seven common questions
- 20% of total score
- Focuses on how performance information is used, not only whether it is collected
- “Good government” standard of management, not just compliance with law

Section III – Guidance Changes

- Question 3.4: At least one efficiency measure per program is required for credit
- Clarified elements of Yes/No/NA answers
- Added Information Quality as component of 3RG3

Section IV - Results

- Assesses program effectiveness and reported progress on measures
- Key elements
 - Results of independent evaluations
 - Demonstrated efficiency gains
 - Meeting long-term performance measures
- Five common questions
- Small Extent/Large Extent options
- 50% of total score
- Evaluates program results based on data from various sources

Section IV – Guidance Changes

- Question 4.3: Clarified that if the program receives a No on Question 3.4 it must receive a No answer
- Clarified elements of Yes/No/NA answers

What Makes Up a Good Answer

- Explanation must:
 - Address all elements of the question
 - Be specific
 - Answer the question directly and succinctly
- Evidence must be:
 - Directly and clearly linked to claims in the explanation
 - Clear, independently verifiable, and comprehensible by a non-expert
 - Rigorous

Example of a Good Answer

- 3.2) Are Federal managers and program partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results?
- Answer: YES. Explanation: All performance plans for CSAP staff track to management/program objectives in the Administrator's performance contract. CSAP awards only Performance Based Contracts that include schedules, deliverables, and performance standards. After the first year of a contract, all subsequent years are option years, facilitating the ability of CSAP staff to cancel a contract for poor performance. Fees awarded to the contract are also tied directly to the performance of the contractor in meeting its deliverables. All grantees agree to provide performance data and provide regular reports that include both cost and performance information.

Common problem answers

- **Answer simply restates the question.**

Question: “2.7. Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program’s budget?”

Answer: “The program’s budget requests are explicitly tied to accomplishment of the program’s annual and long-term performance goals, and the program’s resource needs are presented to OMB and Congress in a complete and transparent manner.”

- **This type of answer is surprisingly common in agency initial submissions.**

Common problem answers

- **Answer does not address all parts of the question.**

Question: “2.2 Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?”

Answer: “During FY 2004, the program underwent a rigorous target setting exercise for all of its long-term measures, involving all senior managers throughout the agency. Long-term targets were set based on evaluations of program need, policy priorities, projected resources and efficiency gains.”

- **What about timeframes? It doesn't matter if it is implicit, a good answer must address it.**

Performance Measures

- Focus on outcomes
- Need for an efficiency measure
- Linkages between questions

Performance Measures

Outputs – The internal activities of a program (i.e., the products and services delivered). *What does the program do to achieve its goal or purpose?*

Outcomes – The events or conditions external to the program and of direct importance to the public/beneficiary. *What is the program's goal or purpose?*

Performance Measures

Outputs	Outcomes
Number of housing units rehabilitated.	Increases in equity (property value) of rehabilitated houses for low-income families as a result of targeted assistance.
Number of businesses assisted through loans and training.	Percent of businesses that remain viable 3 years after assistance.
Number of people served by water/sewer projects.	Increased percent of people with access to clean drinking water.
Number of acres of agricultural lands with conservation plans.	Percent improvement in soil quality; dollars saved in flood mitigation.

Performance Measures

Efficiency measures:

- Demonstrate the ability of a program to implement activities and achieve results, and makes the best use of resources (e.g., time, effort, money)
- Are usually expressed as a ratio of inputs to outputs/outcomes.

Performance Measures

- Efficiency measures should:
 - Indicate how well the program performs
 - Be useful and relevant to the program purpose
 - Ideally capture improvements in program *outcomes* for a given level of resource use
 - Consider the benefit to the customer

Performance Measures

Efficiency measures in the PART

- An efficiency measure is required to get a Yes on Question 3.4 (credit for efficiency measures previously given in 2.4).
- Efficiency measures are used as evidence for Questions 3.4 and 4.3.

Performance as the Foundation

- Links to performance can be found throughout the PART
 - Measures must support the mission and purpose in Section I
 - Partners must work to achieve goals of the program overall
 - Managers must be held accountable for performance results
 - Independent evaluations must focus on overall performance
 - Must use performance data to inform program management and planning decisions
 - Program must demonstrate efficiency improvements

PARTWeb

- Transitioning to PARTWeb over the next several months
- Options for spring/summer
 - Use from the beginning (pilot)
 - Use the spreadsheets and then upload into PARTWeb whenever you'd like; then work in PARTWeb
 - Use spreadsheets until June 30
- Updates to performance information and PART follow-up in the fall will all be in PARTWeb

PARTWeb

- Available April 1st – check website for updates
- Enter your PART Answers on the web directly
- Facilitates collaboration within agency and between OMB and Agency
- PART Administrators to manage agency users access to PARTWeb
- Fall 2005 – All agencies will enter updates to targets, measures and funding on PARTWeb

PARTWeb

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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User Id

Password

OK



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PARTWeb

Is the program purpose clear? - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address <http://10.11.13.58:8080/app/part/program/assessment/question-answers/answer-question?pid=41&aid=42&aaaid=21> Go Links

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)

- List of existing MAX Programs
- Search for an existing Program in MAX
- Register New Program
- PART TEST 2**
 - Edit Program
 - User Permissions
 - Team Permissions
 - Create New Assessment
 - 2005 Assessment**
 - Edit Assessment
 - User Permissions
 - Team Permissions
 - Question Answers
 - Answer Question 1.1**
 - Question Weights
 - Performance Measures
 - Recommendations
 - Funding Accounts
 - Program XML
- Administration**
 - Users

User: **Hurban, James**
Program: **PART TEST 2 (1999997)**
Assessment: **2005**

Department of the Interior

Is the program purpose clear?

DIRECT FEDERAL PROGRAM QUESTION 1.1

Answer Yes No Not Applicable

Explanation

Evidence

SAVE CANCEL

Previous versions:
None.

1.1 Is the program purpose clear?
Purpose of the question: to determine whether the program has a focused and well-defined mission. Determining this purpose is critical to determination of useful performance measures and targets.

Done Internet

PART Reference Materials

- PART Guidance
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Examples of good measures
- Analytical Perspectives BPI Chapter, President's Budget

Questions?

