

Frequently Asked Questions on IFAC's PAO Digital Readiness Assessment Tool

IFAC recently teamed up with [cloudThing](#) to offer our membership a free Digital Assessment Readiness Tool that would assess an organization's digital readiness ahead of a digital transformation project. cloudThing's PAO Digital Readiness Assessment tool has been designed to measure how digitally 'mature' an organization is, or where they already are on their individual digital transformation journey.

The Tool will be open for PAOs to complete from **November 12, 2020, to April 30, 2021**. During this time, IFAC's main objective is to help PAOs complete the tool and understand, interpret, and prioritize their results. The results, (after being thoroughly anonymized) will allow IFAC, working in conjunction with cloudThing, to assess the digital readiness of the accountancy profession as a whole and strategize future support.

General Questions

1. How do I access the Tool?

You will require a unique code link to access the Digital Readiness Assessment Tool. This was emailed to your organization's key contacts from IFAC Membership with the subject line, "IFAC PAO Digital Readiness Assessment Tool Launch." You should click on the code link and register. *If you cannot locate the email, please contact membership@ifac.org.*

The username and password account details you set up will remain in place and this will allow you to login/out of the Tool. You can save your progress in the Tool and return to the place where you left off to continue completing the questions later if needed.

If you have any issues with registration, please contact support@baselined.app for assistance or to request first-time access.

2. Can the assessment be completed on a mobile device?

Although the assessment will load on a mobile device, due to the nature of the content and the time it will take to work through the questions, we recommend viewing the Tool on a desktop device.

3. What is the best online platform to access the Tool?

The Tool will work best in Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge browsers.

4. What is the purpose of the Tool?

The Tool was created to help and support our member organizations on their digital journey. Each participating PAO will receive a report containing their results. It also contains a great deal of information to educate PAOs on best practices to run a digital transformation project. With the responses received, IFAC plans to put together a PAO industry report on digital transformation to show at a high level where our members are on the journey.

5. What is the response time to inquiries made while completing the Tool?

IFAC and cloudThing are available to support via email and aim to respond to every request within two business days.

6. What is the contractual relationship between IFAC and cloudThing?

Under IFAC's agreement with cloudThing, the web-based Digital Readiness Assessment Tool has been developed for IFAC Full Members and Associates. The Tool itself offers explanatory material to help PAOs to understand the various pillars and aspects involved in digital transformation. The scope of services provided to each PAO by cloudThing includes a customized report with recommendations. Each PAO has the choice to opt-in or to opt-out of direct communications with cloudThing. There is no cost to IFAC or the members for the assessment and report.

7. Is there a cost to complete the assessment?

cloudThing offers technology consultancy and software to PAOs across the globe. These services are available to any PAO, but no purchase from cloudThing is required to get value from the Tool. The Tool is free for all IFAC member organizations.

8. Is the Tool available in multiple languages?

The Tool is available in five languages: Arabic, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. There are currently no plans for other languages, but IFAC and cloudThing will listen to feedback from members and determine the demand for other languages.

9. How much time will it take to complete the Tool?

We have estimated it takes around 2–3 hours to complete the assessment.

10. Does every question need to be answered?

Yes, we recommend PAOs attempt to answer every question to ensure all aspects of technology within their organization are reviewed. If a question is left blank, then the Tool will not count it towards the final assessment.

11. Who should be completing the Tool within our PAO?

A senior leader in your organization responsible for technology is best placed to answer these questions—it could be an IT Director or Chief Technology Officer. If you do not have such a person in your organization, we recommend multiple people work on the different sections within the Tool.

12. Should the answers provided represent the whole PAO?

Yes, the responses should represent the whole PAO. Multiple individuals can complete the Tool; if there are various approaches to digitalization within one PAO, this may cause issues with a transformation program that impacts the entire organization. Completing the Tool allows for PAOs to consider how to unify their strategy in the future.

13. If a PAO submits a questionnaire, how soon can they expect to get their evaluation report?

You will receive the report in PDF format in approximately 1 – 2 weeks.

14. Will individual assessments be made publicly available?

Individual assessments are kept private and given only to the PAO that completed it. Any data released publicly will be anonymized and refer to trends across the sector.

15. What do the assessment results represent?

The assessment results represent a snapshot in time—i.e., when the assessment is completed. Based on the results, we will conduct workshops to help the PAOs understand, interpret, and prioritize their results.

16. Are PAOs able to measure progress by completing the assessment again after a certain period?

Yes, we envision that the Tool will have yearly iterations so that PAOs can assess progress regarding their digital maturity.

17. Who developed the questions for the Tool?

cloudThing developed the initial assessment questions leveraging their experience from working with leading PAOs across the globe. These were then independently assessed and amended by IFAC.

Technical Questions

18. What Partner Quality Assurance support can a PAO expect from cloudThing in assessing a new ERP system for digital transformation?

cloudThing and IFAC will produce a best practice guide for choosing the right technology supplier/partner and share best practices for the industry. Working with local or regional service providers is fantastic for regional economic development. This is one reason why the Tool was released— to enable PAOs from across the globe to share best practices for technology and enable them to choose the right suppliers. Through cloudThing's partnership with Microsoft and other global providers, it is well placed to recommend a potential supplier in the relevant region. The guide on partnering with providers being written in collaboration with IFAC will further support this.

cloudThing itself can provide assessments and audits of technologies and strategies for an individual PAO, but this would be a separate and chargeable service procured by the PAO. Only the Tool and results report provided by cloudThing and IFAC are free of charge.

19. Any advice for encouraging staff who are nervous about technological change to embrace it? How do you get employees to buy-in?

We believe bringing colleagues on the journey with you is key to success; getting feedback and ideas from all departments will ensure investments benefit the entire PAO. Continuous delivery of small, incremental improvements helps keep colleagues bought in by demonstrating value early on.

20. Typically, PAOs cannot grow their revenues quickly, so a new initiative must show savings or other benefits. Is it difficult to demonstrate tangible benefits and return on investment with digital transformation projects?

Collecting and analyzing the right data is key to success in your projects for a variety of reasons. Establishing the right governance and understanding the drivers for your digitalization from the start will be important in determining how PAOs measure or illustrate success. The benefits could be improved membership satisfaction with new services; decreasing the time it takes to respond to queries received; and/or greater organizational efficiencies. Identifying these desired outcomes enables the PAO to make their case for the investment and then measure and improve the solution over time.

21. Can you customize the Tool to fit country requirements?

Unfortunately, IFAC and cloudThing cannot amend the Tool for free for each country. We believe the aspects measured within the Tool should not require localization. While we understand there are some scenarios such as funding that differ from region to region, these questions can be left blank in the Tool where relevant.

22. To what extent is the Tool assessing "external pillars" that are key for a PAO to operate with effective digital platforms? i.e. (a) infrastructure - access to internet, affordability, tools; (b) legal frameworks for data privacy, cybersecurity; and (c) digital skills capacity.

This iteration of the Tool very much focuses on the pillars a PAO can control within their organization. We understand the value in adding these external components to the Tool to provide further customized feedback to each PAO. We will consider adding these to a future iteration of the Tool.

23. Is there a simpler version for smaller PAOs?

We believe the Tool is useful as is to smaller PAOs. It may be less of an assessment, and more of an educational resource to understand different IT infrastructure or other factors to consider as the PAO grows. While not all the content may be relevant, working through the Tool will help you plan your long-term technology strategy.

24. How useful is the Tool where a PAO is not yet established?

The Tool is designed to be useful as an educational tool in its own right. Going through the questions and reading the glossary will provide a good foundation for any individual or organization that is dealing with the current digitalization challenges.

Still did not find the Q&A you are looking for? Please contact support@baselined.app for further assistance.