**Asset Management for Municipal Staff:   
The Technical Basics**

Trainer’s Manual

This initiative is offered through the Municipal Asset Management Program, a five-year, $50 million program designed to help municipalities make informed decisions about infrastructure investment. The program is delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by the Government of Canada.

**About Rural Municipalities of Alberta**

Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) is an independent association comprising Alberta’s 69 counties and municipal districts. Since 1909, RMA has helped rural municipalities achieve strong, effective local government. RMA provides advocacy and business services, including RMA Trade, RMA Fuel, and RMA Insurance.

**About Alberta Urban Municipalities Association**

Founded in 1905, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) represents 269 urban municipalities including cities, towns, villages, summer villages, and specialized municipalities. AUMA works to engage its members and has developed strategic partnerships with the federal and provincial governments and business and community stakeholders on a broad range of issues to strengthen the economic, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of its member municipalities.

**About Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta**

Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta (IAMA) represents the greater community of any person, organization, or agency with an interest in infrastructure asset management in Alberta. As part of meeting its mission and vision, IAMA coordinates three workshops per year to discuss current and emerging trends in asset management. In 2018, workshops will be held in Red Deer, Edmonton area, and Calgary area. The next workshop is in Nisku on June 13, 2018. For more information and to register, visit assetmanagementab.ca.



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# How to use this manual

This manual was developed for the course *Asset Management for Municipal Staff: The Technical Basics*. This manual is intended to help facilitators understand the content and the learning objectives of the course exercises as well as provide consistency to the material delivery.

The introduction provides a brief overview of the target audience and the content of the modules as well as descriptions of the exercises.

# Facilitation Techniques for Teaching Adult Learners

To train adults successfully—to ensure that they enjoy their experience and retain information—training is participant-centered and follows an activity-based approach that encourages peer learning and presents easy-to-use work tools.

We use the following guiding principles to teach adult learners.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Guiding Principle** | **How We Apply It** |
| **Use a task-based approach** | Adults prefer training that focuses on real-life problems and tasks with a strong how-to focus. The course content should be relevant to the work, responsibilities, and experiences of the adult learner. |
| **Motivate learners** | The concepts and skills presented should relate to learners’ needs, goals, and past experiences. |
| **Explain benefits** | Adults see learning as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. They must know what there is to gain and see progress being made at regular intervals. Take the time to summarize the content you have presented so far to inform the learner of what has been covered and what content remains. |
| **Promote shared experience** | Adults bring considerable experience to training. Where possible, allow learners to share ideas and interact. |

In addition to these principles, here are some tips to ensure the course delivery is successful.

**Preparation:**

* Be well prepared and organized: check that you have all the material you will need, including power cables for any electronic equipment, spare batteries for pointers, flip charts, spare markers and pens, etc.
* Be familiar with the training material, agenda, and activities. Have a contingency plan.
* Know the location of the training room/facilities.
* Check the training room: Is it well organized? Is the temperature adequate? Are there enough chairs, tables, pens and paper?

**Start of the session:**

* Welcome participants.
* Introduce yourself.
* Make the training objectives clear. Restate the purpose and the desired outcomes.
* Review the agenda and practical information, such as beginning, break, lunch, end, content, rest rooms, cell phones, emergency exits, muster points in case of emergency.

**Encourage participation:**

* Show that you value ideas, opinions, and questions.
* State the desired behaviours when you give instructions.
* Clarify and paraphrase key ideas. Use probing questions.
* Ask for different points of view; call on individuals by name.
* Encourage participation from people whose experience or knowledge is relevant to the situation.
* Record ideas on a flipchart.

**Keep the group focused and maintain momentum:**

* Give clear directions for participants to follow during exercises.
* Concentrate on what participants are saying and on how it relates to the desired outcomes.
* Pay attention to the flow of the workshop. Are we losing focus on this agenda item? Should it be parked on a flip chart for later? Are we introducing related, but irrelevant information? Are we spending too much time on the early parts of the agenda? Is the need to deal with an issue now preventing us from moving forward?
* Acknowledge and reinforce constructive contributions.
* Use the agenda, desired outcomes, ground rules, and structured discussions to stay on track. Refocus the group when a discussion gets off track. Before starting a new topic, be precise on the format and the timeframe outlined in the agenda.
* Keep the group aware of where they are in the process.
* Thank everyone for their participation.

**End of the session:**

* Review the key learning points.
* Collect the evaluation forms.

# Introduction

This course is designed to give participants an overview of the FCM Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP) Readiness Scale and provide a roadmap and tools to allow them to guide their municipality towards achieving Level 2 readiness on the scale.

The course is designed for staff from multiple levels of small to mid-sized municipal governments. It is designed to be relevant and informative for municipalities with a population of under 10,000. The audience in attendance may range from chief administrative officers (CAOs), general managers/directors, managers, or superintendents who have responsibility for finance, public works, recreation, information technology, or other aspects of local government.

The course is designed in three modules, each conveying a different component of an asset management program.

**MODULE 1: WHAT IS ASSET MANAGEMENT?**

This module is comprised of three sections: Background; Policy & Governance, and Leadership.

## Background

This section provides a brief historical overview of the practice of asset management, and the efforts of Canadian asset managers to raise the profile of the state of assets in Canada. It provides an outline of the Canadian Infrastructure Report Card and its findings, as well as an overview of the FCM Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP) Readiness Scale.

Exercise 1.1 invites participants to assess where their municipality sits on the MAMP Readiness Scale. Participants can use the MAMP Readiness Scale in the Reference Material (p. 102) as a guide to their readiness.

## Policy & Governance

This section provides an introduction to the concept of an asset management policy. It gives participants exposure to the concept of strategy and the implementation of a strategy, it starts to describe the concepts surrounding levels of service and it outlines the methodology of identifying and assessing risk.

Exercise 1.2 invites participants to use the tools in the workbook to start to frame out an asset management policy that might be applicable for their municipality.

Exercise 1.3 invites participants to develop their own personal vision for asset management whether they are at the senior leader level (and developing a vision for the entire organization), at a department leadership level (and developing a vision for their department) or a functional leader (developing a vision for themselves and their team).

Exercise 1.4 invites participants to review a compilation of varying levels of service for a number of asset classes and identify them as either *strategic*, *operational* or *tactical* levels of service.

Exercise 1.5 invites participants to identify key areas of risk in their municipality and assign a rating to them based on the likelihood and impact of an event occurring. Participants are also invited to determine what measures may be taken to reduce risk.

## Leadership

This section provides an outline of the various responsibilities that may be required in an organization to fully implement an asset management system. It outlines the importance of clearly assigning responsibilities to staff resources.

This section also provides an overview of the various ways that participants can use their roles to provide asset management leadership beyond their administrative organization. The material outlines the role that participants can play with their councils and communities.

Exercise 1.6 invites participants to draw out their organizations structure and begin to assign various asset management responsibilities against it.

# Module 2: Asset Management Data Requirements

This module is comprised of two sections: Asset Management Data Requirements and Moving Beyond Existing Data.

This module provides an overview of the many data sources that are likely existing within many (if not all) municipal organizations, and how that existing data can be used as inputs to an asset management system.

The module also explores how participants can find data that may not be readily available to add depth to their understanding of asset performance and condition.

Exercise 2.1 invites participants to review a sample tangible capital asset register and determine how much information they can take away from it, and how many of the ‘7 Key Questions’ they can answer.

Exercise 2.2 invites participants to explore what sorts of inspections could be completed on various assets they manage, and how often they could be done.

# Module 3: Asset Management Plans

This module is comprised of two sections: Bringing It All Together and Build Your Own.

This module provides an outline of typical asset management plans and provides an opportunity for participants to explore the value and power of using multiple perspectives in decision making. This module also allows participants to begin drafting the content of an introductory asset management plan that they can use as a starting point when they return to their municipality.

Exercise 3.1 is a highly facilitated exercise that allows participating to role play as either the Director of Public Works or the Director of Finance for Albertaville - a fictional Alberta municipality. Using two sets of information for the same waterman infrastructure, participants are able to explore the data and generate conclusions based on the data for their role.

Exercise 3.2 is a continuation of Exercise 3.1. Participants are now invited to form a group with a partner who played the opposite role to them and assume the role of CAO of Albertaville. By viewing both sides of the same data, and reviewing the conclusions reached by each of the Directors, the participants are able to see how using the entire set of information can generate a much richer conclusion.

Exercise 3.3 is a highly facilitated exercise which allows participants to walk through the various components of an asset management plan and begin to explore and capture their thoughts related to (1) Plan Introduction; (2) State of Local Infrastructure; (3) Levels of Service; (4) Goals and Approach; (5) Financial Plan; and (6) Improvement and Monitoring Plan. As a Facilitator guide the participants through each of the 6 sections of the exercise (in roughly 20-minute segments each) to conclude the exercise and the course.

# Conclusion

At the conclusion of the course, Participants are invited to review the MAMP Readiness Scale that was covered in Module 1, and their results from Exercise 1.1. The facilitator reviews the requirements for municipalities to demonstrate achievement of Level 1 & level 2 on the Readiness Scale. By comparing the stages of the Readiness Scale against the material covered in the course, participants are able to see how applying the material learned in the course can put their municipality on a path to achieve Level 2 Readiness on the MAMP Scale.