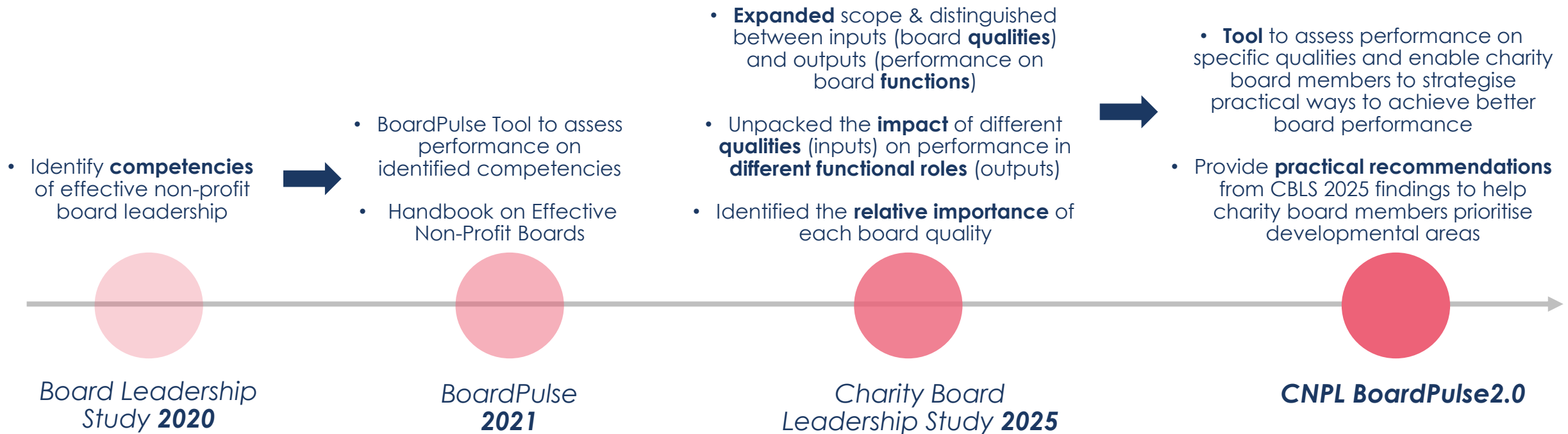


Charity Board Leadership Study 2025 and **CNPL** BoardPulse2.0

Background of Charity Board Leadership Study 2025 (CBLS 2025)

Building on the 2020 Board Leadership Study (BLS 2020), the Charity Board Leadership Study 2025 (CBLS 2025) marks the second phase in advancing our understanding of board leadership in the charity sector.

This research aims to establish an evidence-based framework that informs the development of **CNPL BoardPulse2.0** — a self-assessment tool designed to help charity board members gain practical insights for strengthening the performance of their charity boards.



CBLS 2025 Fieldwork Details



SAMPLE SIZE FOR ANALYSIS

Charities: 114*
Board members :1140*



QUESTIONNAIRE

Online questionnaire
Average length: 30
minutes



FIELDWORK

10 July 2024 to 8 April 2025

*Note:

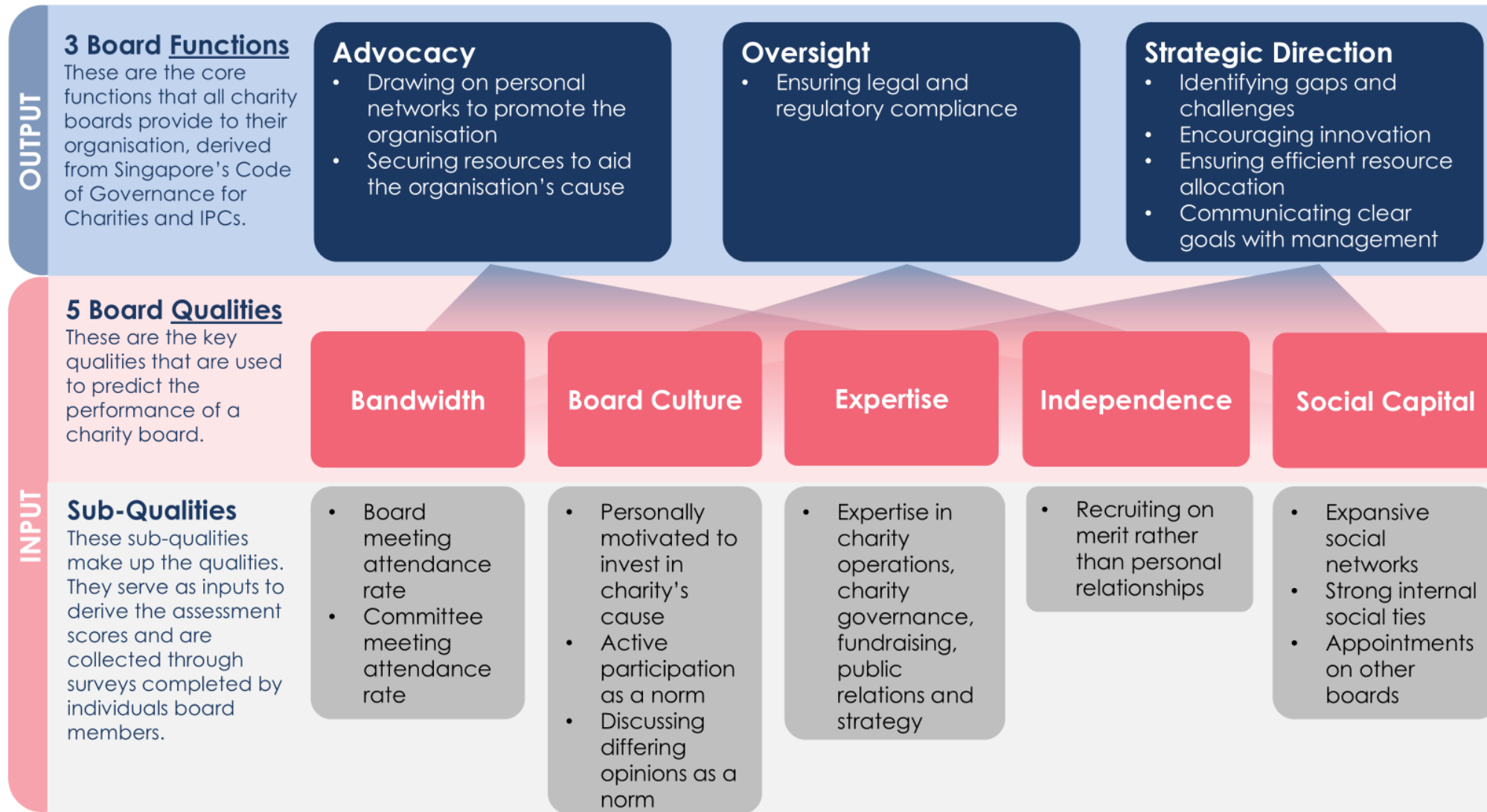
96 charities achieved 100% board participation

18 charities achieved at least 80% board participation

3 charities achieved less than 80% board participation (not included in analysis)

1281 participants responded to the study

CBLS 2025 Key Output: Charity Board Performance Framework



CBLS 2025 **Key Findings** on Charity Board Performance



1. Board members' **personal motivation and passion to serve the charity's cause** has the most **influence** on the performance of board functions.



3. Board members must have **time to devote attention** to their duties, and **strong interpersonal ties** within the board and with management team facilitates effectiveness.



2. Board culture is a critical board quality. In addition to personal motivation, **strong social norms around active involvement** in board-related matters are crucial.



4. Boards must **balance trade-offs**:

- Independent recruitment VS strong internal social capital
- Serving on multiple boards VS bandwidth

CBLS 2025 Key Recommendations on Enhancing Charity Board Performance



Recruitment

- Recruit board members independently
- Look out for passion and personal investment before considering experience and expertise
- Consider members who hold multiple appointments while ensuring sufficient bandwidth

CNPL 
BoardMatch



Board Development

- Work with board chair to foster a culture of active involvement and open discussion of differing opinions
- Conduct activities that enhance personal investment in the cause
- Create opportunities for board members and management to build interpersonal relationships

Charities
Capabilities
Grant

SGOOD

GovernWell



Strategic Planning

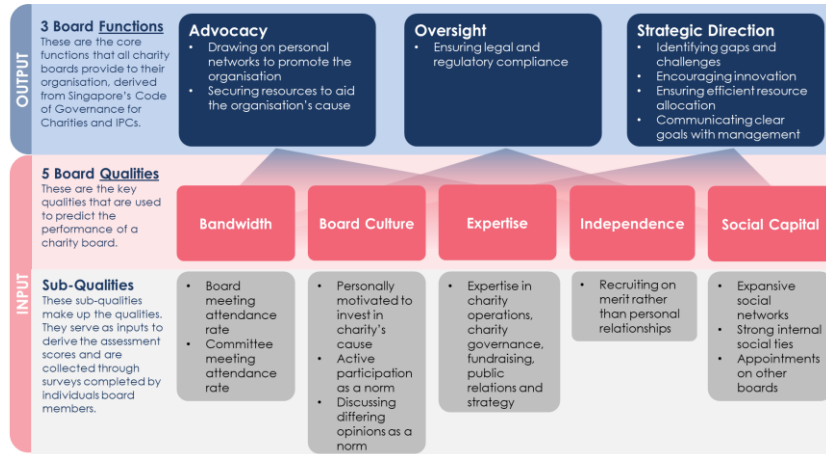
- Prioritise board qualities that have a larger impact on the board functions that your charity would like to enhance
- Consider regular assessment using CNPL BoardPulse2.0 to monitor progress of board performance enhancement efforts

CNPL 
BoardPulse2.0

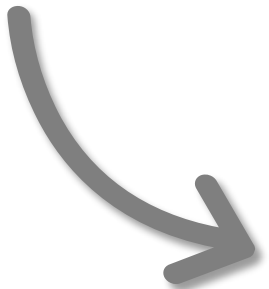
For more board resources, please refer to our website: <https://nvpc.org.sg/cnpl/board-resources>

Applying Key Findings from CBLS 2025 to develop CNPL BoardPulse2.0

1. Performance Scoring Model



2. Key Findings and Actionable Insights



CNPL BoardPulse2.0

A self-assessment tool designed to help charity board members gain practical insights for strengthening the performance of their charity boards

BoardPulse2.0 User Journey

Key User: Charity Board Members



Board members complete 20 min **online survey**. A representative from the charity will work with NVPC to disseminate and ensure completion of surveys.



Customised CNPL BoardPulse2.0 Report is generated for charity board after survey period is closed by representative or all members have completed.




Charity uses report to uncover improvement areas and take actions to **strengthen board performance**. Boards can tap on solutions in the eco-system and sharing of best practices.

CNPL BoardPulse2.0 can be taken regularly (e.g., on a yearly basis) to support **continuous improvement**

BoardPulse2.0 Report Key Features

Assessment of Board Functions and Board Qualities identified in Charity Board Performance Framework

- Derived from average of individual scores
- Compared against CBLs 2025 Benchmarks

| Board Qualities | | Intensity Scores for Your Charity | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Bandwidth</p> <p>Bandwidth reflects a board member's capacity to actively engage in governance duties by considering their board and committee meeting attendance. High meeting attendance indicates a strong commitment to the charity and greater availability and focus.</p> <p>This category provides insight into how much attention and energy each board member is realistically able to dedicate to their role at the charity. Ensuring members have adequate</p> | |  <p>70.3</p> | <p>Lower than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark by more than 10 points</p> |
| <p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing on personal networks to promote the organisation • Securing resources to aid the organisation's cause <p>80.5</p> <p>Equal to or better than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark</p> | | <p>47.2</p> <p>Lower than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark by up to 10 points</p> | |
| <p>Oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring legal and regulatory compliance <p>73.1</p> <p>Lower than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark by more than 10 points</p> | | <p>88.4</p> <p>Equal to or better than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark</p> | |
| <p>Strategic Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying gaps and challenges • Encouraging innovation • Ensuring efficient resource allocation • Communicating clear goals with management <p>88.4</p> <p>Equal to or better than CBLs 2025 overall benchmark</p> | | | |

Usage Notes

- These scores have been provided for information.
- Boards should focus on improving performance as recommended in pages 6 to 8.

Usage Notes

- Identify functions that are performing at less than overall benchmark level (marked yellow or red).
- Refer to analysis on respective detailed results pages to identify recommended focus areas that could be addressed to improve performance.

Please refer to page 12 for a complete overview of your Board performance scores benchmarked against charities of similar financial size, status and sector.

BoardPulse2.0 Report Key Features

Ranking of board qualities according to relative importance and influence on the performance of board functions based on model weights in Charity Board Performance Framework

- Highlights more impactful board qualities to facilitate strategic planning
- Prioritise sub-qualities using “to sustain”, “prioritise improvement”, and “to monitor”

1. Advocacy

Advocacy reflects the extent to which individual board members actively promote the charity and expand its external reach. This includes engaging with external stakeholders to build or sustain partnerships, speaking positively about the charity to outside audiences, and leveraging personal networks to identify resources or connections.

This category recognises the board’s role as ambassadors and connectors who help the charity grow its influence and access new opportunities. More frequent and proactive involvement helps to raise the charity’s profile and strengthen its support base, shaping opportunities for future broadening engagements.

| Impact of Sub-Qualities on Advocacy | | Your Charity Board's Overall Performance for Advocacy |  80.5 Overall Recommendation: To Sustain |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Quality | Sub-Quality | | |
| Board Culture | Personally motivated to invest in charity's cause | Prioritise Improvement | |
| | Strong internal social ties | To Sustain | |
| Bandwidth | Committee meeting attendance rate | Prioritise Improvement | |
| Board Culture | Active participation as a norm | Prioritise Improvement | |
| Expertise | Expertise in public relations | To Sustain | |
| Board Culture | Discussing differing opinions as a norm | To Sustain | |
| Expertise | Expertise in fundraising | To Monitor | |
| Social Capital | Appointments on other boards | To Monitor | |
| Social Capital | Expansive external social networks | To Sustain | |
| Bandwidth | Board meeting attendance rate | To Monitor | |

BoardPulse2.0 Report Key Features

Benchmarking across final sample of 114 charities that participated in CBL5 2025 to help charities understand their relative performance compared to other charities with similar profiles

- Benchmarks include financial size, IPC status and sector that a charity is administered under


| The following parameters were used for the benchmark comparisons of your results. | | CBL5 2025 Benchmarks* | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|--------|--------|
| Financial Size: Less than \$10,000,000 | | Legend: | | | | |
| IPC Status: IPC | | You are equal to or better than benchmark | You are lower than benchmark by up to 10 points | You are lower than benchmark by more than 10 points | | |
| Sector: Social & welfare | | | | | | |
| Performance of Board Functions | | Score | Overall | Size | Status | Sector |
| Advocacy | 80.5 | 65.3 | 65.7 | 65.8 | 64.7 | |
| Oversight | 73.1 | 83.8 | 83.1 | 84.1 | 83.4 | |
| Strategic Direction | 88.4 | 85.1 | 85.6 | 85.0 | 84.7 | |
| Intensity of Board Qualities | | Score | Overall | Size | Status | Sector |
| Bandwidth | 70.3 | 83.9 | 83.0 | 85.2 | 85.2 | |
| Board meeting attendance rate | 73.3 | 87.9 | 88.0 | 88.6 | 88.2 | |
| Committee meeting attendance rate | 69.0 | 82.3 | 80.9 | 83.8 | 84.0 | |
| Board Culture | | Score | Overall | Size | Status | Sector |
| Personally motivated to invest in charity's cause | 31.8 | 46.5 | 46.1 | 46.3 | 46.0 | |
| Active participation as a norm | 61.6 | 66.1 | 65.9 | 66.0 | 66.0 | |
| Discussing differing opinions as a norm | 66.7 | 62.7 | 62.3 | 62.4 | 62.0 | |
| Expertise | | Score | Overall | Size | Status | Sector |
| Expertise in charity operations | 16.7 | 22.0 | 22.8 | 21.8 | 21.2 | |
| Expertise in charity governance | 12.5 | 22.6 | 21.1 | 23.6 | 23.4 | |
| Expertise in fundraising | 0.0 | 11.1 | 11.7 | 11.0 | 12.6 | |
| Expertise in public relations | 33.3 | 24.2 | 26.1 | 23.3 | 22.5 | |
| Expertise with strategy | 41.7 | 33.5 | 32.9 | 33.7 | 33.2 | |
| Independence | | Score | Overall | Size | Status | Sector |
| Expansive external social networks | 88.0 | 69.6 | 69.7 | 69.9 | 70.3 | |
| Strong internal social ties | 39.6 | 20.8 | 21.6 | 20.1 | 21.7 | |
| Appointments on other boards | 20.0 | 25.8 | 23.9 | 27.4 | 22.8 | |


* The CBL5 2025 benchmarks are derived based on the 114 valid participating charities in the study.

BoardPulse2.0 Report Key Features

Action Planning Template to help charities quickly identify strategic areas to invest in for enhancing board performance

- Template does not need to be submitted to NVPC and is for charities' own use



CNPL  BoardPulse2.0

Action Planning Template

Complete the following steps to record action plans for improving board performance. The template is for the charity's own use and does not need to be submitted to NVPC.

| Charity Name | Date of Discussion |
|--------------|--------------------|
| | |

Step 1: Identifying Board Functions to Focus On

Using page 5 of CNPL BoardPulse2.0 report, check functions that the board wants to improve on based on analysis of overall performance against relevant benchmarks. Click on checkboxes to mark them.

| Board Functions | Advocacy | Oversight | Strategic Direction |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Check the functions that the board wants to work on | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Step 2: Identifying Sub-Qualities to Focus On

For functions that have been identified for improvement, use the relevant analysis on page 6 to 8 to identify sub-qualities that have been recommended to "prioritise improvement". Greyed out spaces are not of high priority for the respective functions.

| Sub-Quality | Advocacy (page 6) | Oversight (page 7) | Strategic Direction (page 8) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Personally motivated to invest in charity's cause | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strong internal social ties | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Committee meeting attendance rate | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Active participation as a norm | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Discussing differing opinions as a norm | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Expertise in charity governance | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Appointments on other boards | | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Expertise in strategy | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1

BoardPulse2.0 What's Next

Charities can visit our website to learn more and request an assessment.

- The report will be generated within 5 working days after the data collection end date (as decided by the charities).



Scan or click the QR code to access the CNPL BoardPulse2.0 website

Recommended Usage



Charities that are keen to understand and improve your board's performance



On a regular basis (e.g. during board retreat) for continuous review and improvement



Request for a CNPL BoardPulse2.0 assessment via our website

BoardPulse2.0 FAQs



The tool is provided to **facilitate charities' needs in reviewing board performance** and partially fulfils GEC Principle 2.2. It is **not compulsory for charities** to utilise the tool and charities do not need to submit plans or report progress to NVPC.



The CNPL BoardPulse2.0 report offers insights to **kick-start discussions** about strategic board performance enhancement. **Discuss the findings with board members to uncover perspectives** that facilitate enhancement action planning.



The results in the customised report are computed based on individual survey responses and the Charity Board Performance Framework to capture **key performance factors that are applicable to boards in general**. Charities should **factor in your board's unique context** which cannot be captured through the CNPL BoardPulse2.0 tool.



The tool is based on self-assessment by individual board members. **It is not a 360 tool.**

For more FAQs about CNPL BoardPulse2.0, please refer to our website: <https://nvpc.org.sg/cnpl/boardpulse>

Thank You

If you have any questions, please email us
at boardpulse@nvpc.org.sg