



Strategic & Thinking Planning

Developing Good Practice for Women's Rights Organisations

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**African Women's
Development Fund**

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About The African Women's Development Fund

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a grant making foundation which aims to support the work of the African women's movement. **The vision** of the AWDF is for African women to live in a world in which there is social justice, equality and respect for women's human rights. To this end, **our mission** is to mobilise financial resources to support local, national and international initiatives led by women, which will lead to the achievement of this vision. The Fund has been set up by three African Women who have been active in various institutions within and outside Africa, and who have a track record of successful empowerment interventions, which have helped strengthen the African women's movement.

Funding Priorities

AWDF awards grants to African women's organisations working in the following thematic areas:

- Women's Human Rights
- Economic Empowerment
- Political Participation
- Peace-Building
- Health and Reproductive Rights
- HIV/AIDS

These thematic areas have been chosen because they feature very highly on the agenda of the African women's movement. The themes are specific enough to be able to focus on work that is being prioritized by many women's organisations, and they are also flexible enough to enable potentially good projects to qualify for support. AWDF also funds programs which develop and promote women's leadership across all these themes. Between 2001 and December 2009, AWDF has supported over 800 women's organisations in 42 African countries in grants amounting to over US\$15,000,000.



Foreword

AWDF established a Capacity Building Unit In 2001 to support the work of grantee partners. The focus is on organisational and management development, and conceptual analysis in order to build an autonomous and sustainable women's movement in Africa.

AWDF believes that the impact of work can be maximised if organisation's manage the internal and external dynamics of their growth and development well. Therefore, investing in strengthening organisational capacities of its grantees is an integral part of AWDF's strategy to support women's rights organisations. AWDF has demonstrated this by embarking on skills and capacity building activities in the area of resource mobilisation, strategic thinking and planning, communication, monitoring and evaluation, networking and partnership; and information and documentation. As part of its capacity building activities, AWDF has also developed a number of resources and tools to assist grantee organisations in strengthening their organisational performance and development.

This handbook on Strategic Thinking and Planning is one such resource and is a guide on how organisation's can begin the process of internal planning. It offers a comprehensive and practical guide to the processes to be undertaken by those developing their strategic plans or reviewing existing ones. While this handbook provides a generic approach to preparing a strategic plan it does so with an emphasis on non-profit organisations that work on women's rights.

The structure of this handbook is meant to encourage self-learning and can therefore be used by an institution or an individual. It aims to simplify the process by breaking down some of the technical terms that are often difficult to understand. As such it includes a set of steps to be taken, followed by a set of questions, which enable the user to assess their progress.

We hope that this handbook will be a useful resource that will help strengthen strategic thinking, planning processes and performance of institutions and individuals who utilise it.

Roselynn Musa

Information and Documentation Officer
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Acronyms

AWDF	The African Women's Development Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results focused, Time bound

Introduction

Strategic planning is goal oriented and focuses on specific measurable actions. It is based on available and factual information and assumptions regarding the future of an organisation. It clarifies relationships, promotes understanding of established objectives, and assigns specific responsibilities, tasks, and time schedules. It includes orderly reviews of progress.

In sum a strategic plan determines where an organisation is going over a planned period, how it will get there and how it will know if it gets there or not. Its focus is on the entire organisation and not a programme or a project in the organisation.

The strategic plan therefore responds to internal strengths and weaknesses of an organisation and allows for preparation to manage external possibilities. It has the advantage of providing a master framework within which development is guided over the projected period, it sets targets with specific indicators so that monitoring and evaluation can take place. The consultative process gives stakeholders the opportunity to put their energy behind a shared vision, agreed goals, objectives and action plans. This makes implementation easier to manage since ownership of the plan is not in doubt.

The key objective of a strategic plan is to identify, initiate and manage change. In effect, it helps create a desirable future and determines the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. In spite of its obvious and numerous

advantages, not many institutions have a strategic plan. To initiate the preparation and implementation of a strategic plan requires visionary leadership, that projects the future and prepares for the accompanying change. That is strategic thinking.

It is important that every organisation, irrespective of its size, thinks strategically and adopts a strategic planning approach towards its growth.

What is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is defined as taking a desired position in the future and following a clearly designed and measured path to reach it. It determines where an organisation is going over the next year or more and how it's going to get there. The path is guided by the assessment of the organisation's current strengths and weaknesses and an assessment of the options available to it. In the process, there is room for short, medium and long term rolling plans.

A strategic plan answers three questions:

- *Where are we?*
- *Where do we want to go?*
- *How do we get there?*

In answering these questions, one would assess the current capacity and forecast the desired future destination. In between the future and the present, one would develop strategies to take care of present weaknesses and maximise on strengths, within the competitive environment. A strategic plan is usually designed for a minimum of 5 years, but the type, size and state of the organisation also helps define the period. An individual, group, institution or a community can develop a strategic plan.

Why Should You Do It?

There are a variety of reasons why every organisation should engage in strategic thinking and develop a strategic plan. There are immediate and future benefits, which include:

- **A road map for the future:** The plan will provide clear guidelines on how to get to where an organisation plans to be in the future.
- **Focus on goals and use of resources:** The plan will set achievable goals and the action plan set will focus on achieving them. This will ensure the efficient use of resources on key priorities.
- **Relevance in a competitive environment:** The strategic plan will re-examine and re-evaluate its core business, in relation to its stakeholder needs and in the competitive environment, to improve its performance and its market share.
- **Shared understanding of the organisation's goals:** A strategic plan carefully takes the views of workers, stakeholders and management into developing the road map. This enables the development of a plan that is mutually agreed upon and is thus jointly understood by all who will be implementing the plan..
- **A greater understanding of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses:** The internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the external

possibilities open to it are identified and carefully analysed. This helps the organisation to maximise on its strength, strategise to overcome its weaknesses and also prepare for any possibilities.

- **The establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems:** A strategic plan will set measurable indicators that can be monitored and evaluated periodically to assess progress or otherwise towards the desired future. Data gathered will provide a mechanism for and inform the decisions about what change is required.
- **Strengthening of board and staff.** The process of developing a strategic plan brings together everyone's best and most reasoned efforts in building consensus on the future direction of the organisation. It strengthens teams because all are involved in the assessment of the organisation and the formation of the plan.
- **Defined roles:** In a strategic plan, each member of the implementation team is assigned a specific role in the action plan based on one's competence and experience. Each one therefore knows what to do at each time. Weak links can be detected and ambiguities removed for efficient operation.

Strategic Planning Checklist

It is important to test the readiness of the institution to undertake strategic planning, because it involves a lot of effort and resources at the planning stage and costs a lot more to implement. The checklist must be completed by senior management.

Strategic Plan Checklist.

✓ / x

1

Organisation has seen the need for a strategic plan

Are they dissatisfied with the results? Are they dissatisfied with the method that produces the results? Can they continue with the same method to get new results? If no to all these, are they prepared to use new methods to get new results?

2

Future relevance threatened

Do both management and staff see competitors crowding in on the donor corridors? Are new and parallel organisation springing up? Does the organisation have a future if it remains in its current state?

3

High staff turn over

Is the organisation losing experienced staff to other competitors? Is it likely more will leave? Is there a lack of commitment on the part of staff? Are these related to the conditions of service? Is the staff ready to embrace a change?

4

Resource mobilisation

Is the management prepared to mobilise resources for the preparation of the plan? Is the staff willing to participate in the preparation of the strategic plan

5

Commitment to implementation

Is management prepared to commit resources for the implementation of the action plans? Does the staff trust management's willingness to take action on this?

6

Shared vision on improved performance

Do management and staff share the belief that a strategic plan can turn things around? Do the management and staff believe in the ideals of the organisation? Do they share in the core values of the organisation and are they willing to preserve them?

6

Credible facilitator

Is there an experienced facilitator from within or outside the organisation who can handle the process successfully and within the time frame?



5.0

Strategic Planning: How Can it be Ineffective?

Even though strategic planning has obvious advantages, certain factors as shown in Fig 1 below need to be present without which the advantages cannot be realised. These include:

- 1 **An ambitious agenda without sufficient resources and specific time frames:** Targets of a strategic plan should match current needs and the mobilising capacity of the organisation so that it will be able to mobilise and implement the plan according to the deadlines set.
- 2 **Insufficient or poor situational analysis:** Strategic planning is about projecting into the future; if the basis on which projection is being made is wrong then the future landing pad will crumble irrespective of the efforts put into the implementation.
- 3 **Ineffective facilitation:** Those guiding the process of the planning exercise must have adequate knowledge of the organisation in order to shape the discussions for a focused and well considered plan for the future direction of the organisation.
- 4 **Too many people at the planning table:** Even though many views as possible will be required to provide an informed basis for an effective plan, too many people at the planning table, poses the risk of losing focus.

- 5 **Lack of consensus and commitment from stakeholders:** If stakeholders in the planning process fail to come to consensus on matters, then the implementation is likely to fail. Again if the stakeholders are not committed to realizing the plan, then it is likely to fail.
- 6 **Underestimating the effort of plan execution:** If the implementers ignore the importance of follow-up during the implementation, then the plan will fail.
- 7 **Ignoring field experience:** A strategic plan is implemented in the field therefore all strategies developed should take into account field experience to make it locally applicable.

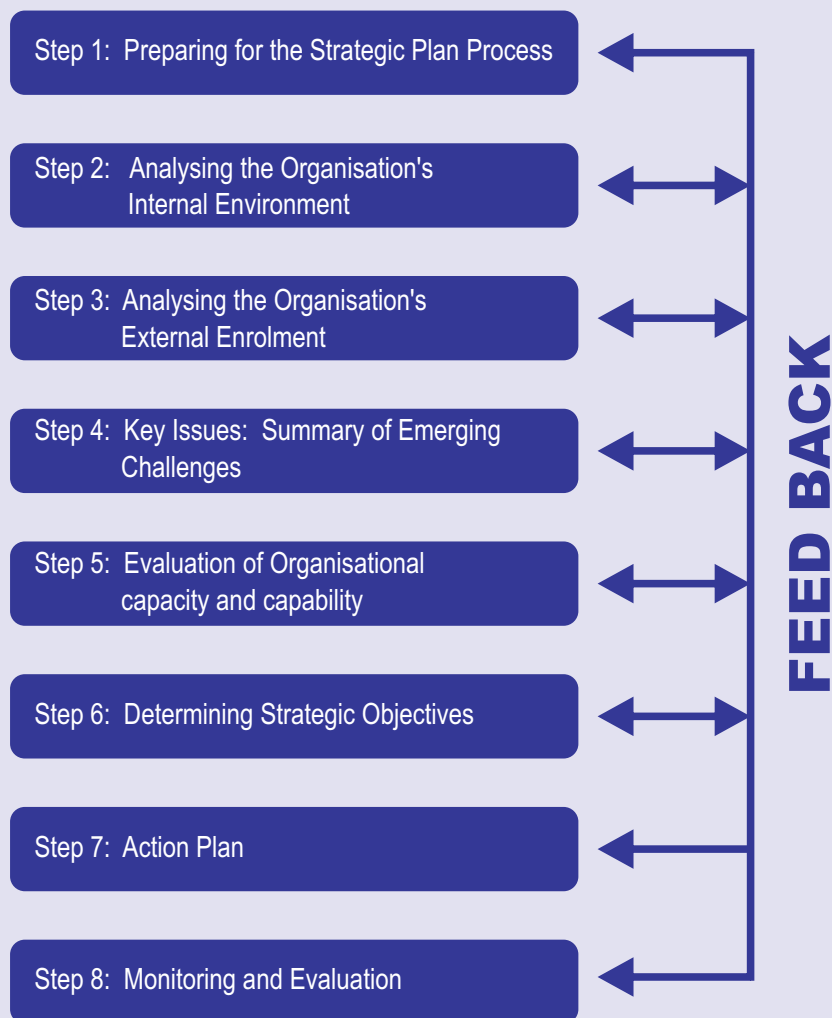
Fig. 1 Some Factors That Can Render Strategic Planning Ineffective



6.0

The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process can be represented diagrammatically as shown below:



Step 1



Preparing for the Strategic Planning Process

Process:

Stage 1: Identify and agree on the factors accounting for the preparation of the strategic plan. The factors could be internal or external. You may list them:

Internal

- a) _____
- b) _____

External

- a) _____
- b) _____

Stage 2: Decide on who to invite to the preparation meeting. The invitees could be both internal and external but the number and type of persons to be invited will be informed by the factors identified in stage 1 as well as the core values of the organisation.

Internal: who are to be invited and for what reasons:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

External: who is being invited and for what reason

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

Stage 3: Identify the methodology to be adopted for the planning process. The methodology may be:

- Paper presentations by department heads or by the director only
- Presentation of a research paper
- Group work and plenary presentations
- Or a combination of any of the above.

Stage 4: Prepare a work plan, which has the following elements:

- Tasks to be performed during the entire planning period
- The tasks should be in order of the steps outlined
- Who is responsible for which task
- What are the deadlines for each task?

- Budget: Prepare a budget to cover the successful completion of the entire planning process. The budget should be activity based in order to capture all items on the work plan. The budget may follow this format:

Item	Unit cost (Ghc)	Total cost (Ghc)
Lunch for 15 participants for 3 days	18	270
3 realms of A4 sheets for secretarial services	35	140
Cost of venue for 3 days	40	120
Allowance for 2 facilitators for 3 days	50	300
Total Gh¢	830	

Stage 5: Identify the facilitator. Decide whether a member of staff is capable of handling the process or an external consultant will be needed. If external, estimate the cost and include it in the budget.
Facilitator: name and reason

Stage 6: Decide on the coordinator of the process who must be at the management level. This will enable effective control of the process as well as enforce deadlines.
Coordinator and role

Stage 7: Hold a preliminary meeting with the facilitator to decide and agree on the methodologies outlined, the data that will be required and the invited stakeholders amongst other planning details.

Stage 8: In consultation with the facilitator, finalise the time frame to be devoted to the entire process and adjust the budget accordingly.

The entire process in Step 1 must be collectively agreed upon by management irrespective of who was mandated to prepare the plan.

Summary Results of Step 1.

- A common agreement has been reached on factors driving the preparation of the strategic plan and stakeholders have been identified to help position the organisation into the future.
- A coordinator, facilitator, methodology, time frame and budget have been prepared
- A work plan with responsibilities and time lines has been developed.

Step 2



Analysing the Organisation's Internal Environment

Process:

Stage 1: Preparing the desk study file of your organisation.

The file should have the following information:

- The core values, vision, mission and objectives of the organisation.
- All on-going activities and forthcoming planned activities (projects).
- List of partners, donors, stakeholders; both at the national and international level.
- Budget for the last 3 years at a minimum or for 5 years at a maximum
- The organogram, i.e. management structure, list of staff, their qualifications and number of years left for retirement, policies and annual reports for the last 3 years.

These documents must be made available as reference materials during the process of the strategic planning. Use the format below

Vision

Mission

Objectives

a)

b)

List of on-going and future projects
On-going Projects

a)

b)

Future projects

a)

b)

List of partners, donors, stakeholders

Partners

- a) _____

- b) _____

Donors

- a) _____

- b) _____

Stakeholders

- a) _____

- b) _____

Budgets records available

- a) _____
- b) _____

Organogram (Management structure)

Stage 2: Verification of ideals

- a) Are your core values still relevant? (yes/no)
 - b) Is the vision of the organisation still attainable? (yes/no)
 - c) Is the mission consistent with the vision and core values? (yes/no)
 - d) Which of the above must change to improve your influence in your operational area?
-
-

Stage 3: Identification of strategies adopted so far?

- What types of projects have you carried out in the last 5 (or 3) years? E.g. women's economic empowerment, promoting gender parity in school enrollment
-
-

- What methods has the organisation been using to develop the projects? This means, which participatory approaches are being used? (authoritative standards, discretion by officials, decision by negotiation or investigation and enquiry).
-
-

- What strategies (efforts) or mix of strategies and in what proportions is your organisation using to gather or disseminate information for project? Are they consistent with the mission and objectives and are they acceptable in the operational areas? For example, which of the following strategies do you use most and when? (focus group discussions, open forums, contacting opinion leaders, structured and non-structured surveys).
-
-

Stage 4: SWOT analysis. This tool is used to identify your **strength, weakness, opportunities**, and **threats** (challenges). The following questions may be helpful in your analysis:

- What is the staff numerical strength in the organisation?
- Do you have the right mix of staff in terms of qualifications and gender?
- What is the level of dedication and attitude to work by staff?
- Is the decision making structure in the organisation participatory?.
- Is the organisational culture (how things are organised and managed) consistent with the stated vision and mission?
- Is there a well publicised career development path for staff?

- What are the possible external phenomena that can have positive or negative influences on the organisation?
- Are there competitors or collaborators in the immediate environment?
- What is the organisation's performance in terms of financial analysis?

Strength

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats (challenges)

Summary Results of Step 2:

1. Basic information file has been opened
2. Core values, visions and mission have been re-examined for its relevance and consistency and amended if required
3. Strategies being followed have been reviewed in terms of its conduct and impact
4. The SWOT analysis has been undertaken to ascertain the status quo of the organisation and any possible external or local threats have been noted.

Step 3



Analysing the Organisation's External Environment

Process:

Stage 1: Analysis of the Macro Environment.

This relates to the international dimension of occurrences or issues outside your country. For example the world financial crisis, high crude oil prices, political or ideological changes in Eastern Europe to mention a few. The analysis helps to ascertain the potential impact of these occurrence on initiatives and activities of your organisation. In doing so you may address the following:

- What are the direct or indirect opportunities or threats associated with the phenomena?
- What is the value of the opportunities and threats for your organisation?
- What strategies can be developed to address the impact?

Table 3: Example: An Analysis For Women In Community Sanitation Promotion (NGO)

Environment Table				
Phenomena	Opportunities	Threats	Importance	Strategic Targets
			How important is it to us: (0-10)	
Economic level				
World financial crisis	Package and promote traditional communal facilities	Risk of losing potential donors and partners	8	Develop local income generating projects
Political Level				
Continuous America and Iraq war		Operations in Moslem countries / communities may not receive funding	5	Seek support from the Moslem world
Technological Level				
Introduction and use of computers and the internet	Adopt and develop links with the global world for ease of communication and knowledge gain	Extra cost in acquisition and may lack information in competitive market	4	Raise funds to acquire technology and train staff to acquire the knowledge
Socio-Political Aspects				
Mass movement against gender activists	Rally up support from other women's rights organisations for a common front	Proposals from women's rights organisations may not receive the required support	6	Adopt an advocacy and information, educative and communicative approach to gender issues
Socio Cultural Level				
Female genital mutilation has been approved by an affiliate international religious authority in areas of operation	Educate people on the health hazards rather than the cultural values of the practice	All women rights advocacy organisations are set on a collision course against traditional authorities	5	Lobby for the passage of a legislative instrument against the act

The analysis above will show you how an external factor can affect your local activities and also how to devise means of fighting it.

Stage 2: Analysis of Micro-Environment.

This is in relation to issues occurring within your home country, which can also have an effect on the operations of the organisation. The analysis is similar to the example offered above of the macro-level. Using the same Community Sanitation Promotion NGO, complete the format below:

Phenomena	Opportunity	Funders	Importance	Strategic Targets
Discovery of crude oil	More people may be willing to pay for facilities because of anticipated higher standard of living	Other donors may come in to support the activities	9	Develop simple and replicable sanitation facilities targeted at the poor
Partners				
District Assemblies promoting private ownership of sanitary services	Cost of provision reduced for all prospective applicants	Local political authorities	9	Register groups and provide matching funds on loans at the group level
Competitors				
Donor training artisans in the construction of sanitary facilities	More artisans will be available for prompt delivery of facilities	Other groups may offer higher prices to poach away artisans	7	Submit list of staff to be trained and give them job security
Governments				
Policy to ban all public toilets by 2015	Package and introduce private toilets in the homes	Government support may not be adequate to support programme	8	Seek and provide rotational funding for women groups to support the provision of the facilities

Summary results of Step 3

- 1 Macro and Micro factors, which can have effect on the organisation have been identified.
- 2 Areas of impact have been identified
- 3 Strategic plans have also been devised to meet the challenges
- 4 Importantly, the organisation will be alert, in order to minimise or take advantage of the effects of the phenomenon.

Step 4



Key Issues: Summary of Emerging challenges (Steps 1, 2, & 3)

Process:

Stage 1: Summary:

It is important at this stage to sum up all the key challenges identified thus far in your organisation from step 1-3. Between step 1-3, you have assessed the organisation using the SWOT analysis, external and internal influences on the organisation have been considered, besides these, the core values, the vision and mission of the organisation have been reviewed and affirmed.

Given all of the above, what are the challenges that must be overcome in order to reach your vision? Alternatively, what are the difficulties that will impede the implementation of your mission? List them down. Examples could be:

- The organisation does not have the right mix of staff
- Financial flow for the forthcoming years could be difficult
- Keen competition in terms of fundraising
- Equipment and tools available are reaching the decommissioning age.
- Most of the staff are getting to retirement
- The work load is overwhelming the staff available
- The beneficiaries of our services are shifting their trust to other agencies.

Stage 2: Establishing strategic targets:

This section is central to the entire strategic planning. The following questions are useful:

- Which of the above key issues should the organisation target in order to pursue our mission and reach our vision?
- Which of the key issues should be tackled immediately (0-1yr) - short term?
- Which of them should be considered in the medium term (1-3yrs)
- Which of them should be put on hold with preparation plans put in place towards meeting them in (3-10yrs) - long term?

Stage 3: Examples of strategic targets (based on the issues above)

- Innovation with regard to sourcing finance and improve efficiency in the use of funds
- Diversify approaches in the delivery and the type of services rendered
- Upgrade the equipment in the organisation

Among these strategic targets, you can select which should be classified as short term, medium term and long term. These classifications will inform the next stage where the organisation's capacity to handle these strategic targets will be examined.

Step 5



Evaluating Organisational Capacity and Capability

Process

Stage 1: Based on strategic targets developed in step 4, determine the variance in your organisation's resources to reach them within the defined time frame. Follow the framework below:

1. Needs Assessment (for more information see Glossary page 33 for Available Resources/Budget)
2. Available Resources (for more information see Glossary page 33 Available Resources/Budget). This is the difference between resources that are required and that which your organisation has.

Strategic Target	Human Resources						Financial Resources			Material Resources					
	Required		Current		Variance		Required	Current	Variance	Required		Current		Variance	
	Type	No.	Type	No.	Type	No.				Type	No.	Type	No.	Type	No.
Target 1															
Target 2															
Target n															

For more information see Glossary, page 33 Available Resources / Budget

Summary Results of Step 5:

At the end of this exercise the variances between the resources that are necessary and the resources that are available to attain each of the strategic targets must have been identified.

Step 6

Determining Strategic Objectives

Process:

Stage 1: At this stage identify the strategic objectives that will enable you obtain the variance identified in step 5 which should help the organisation to obtain the strategic targets it set up in step 4. In developing the objectives consider the following:

- Are the objectives in conflict with the organisation's core values? (An example of a core value: *The Organisation shall promote and defend women's bodily autonomy and integrity*).
- Are the objectives in line with the Mission of the organisation?
- How far will the objective maintain or deviate from the character of your organisation?

However, if there is a conflict between the objectives and the values of the organisation and adopting a particular objective is the only way out, then a decision must be reached on how far the shared values can be modified.

Analysis of impact, and risk

Strategic Targets	Strategic Objectives	Impact/risk	Remarks
Target 1			
Target 2			
Target 3			

Results of the analysis will show which objectives have been selected for implementation.

Step 7



Action Plan

Process:

Stage 1: An action plan provides a framework for implementation. It shows the activities to be carried out, in order of priority. It also provides the time frame within which the activities are to be carried out and who is responsible for what. An example of an action plan for a Women's Empowerment NGO is presented below:

No	Activity	Time frame (Months)								Budget	Responsibility
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Meet to develop criteria for identifying marginalised women based on different variables such as poverty										President of group
2	Approach 10 identifiable groups and sensitise them on the objectives of the NGO										Secretary

Stage 2: In preparing an action plan, use action verbs, such as **meet, approach etc** in the activity column. The responsibility refers to the person whose duty it is to prompt the group to take action, but not the person who will take the action. In the case of activity 2, the secretary may have to write letters to the identified groups and schedule the time to visit them for the sensitisation. The actual task of sensitisation could either be contracted or carried out by programme staff.

Step 8



Monitoring and Evaluation

Process:

Stage 1: Monitoring is the continuous assessment of an on-going project to see if the indicators set for the project are being met and are on schedule so that corrective measures can be taken in advance. Monitoring is very important because if a project is not monitored it will be difficult to measure the progress of the project.

Stage 2: Indicators are set in the action plan used to implement the project. It is important to establish if what was set out to be done has been done and on time. If not an explanation must be sought and the contributing factors addressed.

Stage 3: In monitoring, the following questions must be answered:

- What is monitoring?
- Why should we monitor?
- Who should monitor what?
- When should we monitor what?
- Who should receive the report of which activity?
- Who should take corrective measures for which challenges?
- What lessons are we learning; are we making progress or retrogressing?

Stage 4: Evaluation:

Evaluation is the periodic assessment of all on-going activities within a project. At this stage you assess whether the project is progressing according to cost estimates, labour input amongst other factors. This is the time to find out if the original plan or methodology is worth continuing with in the face of new challenges. Can the method be changed and at what cost – both financially and with regard to human resources. Evaluation can be done either in the middle of the project or at the end of it.

Stage 5: In evaluating, the following questions may be asked?

- Why are we evaluating?
- Are we within budget?
- Is the method or approach still relevant?
- Could we benefit from a new strategy?

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial tools in any planning venture, especially a strategic plan, which works towards a desired vision for the future. We do not wait until the end of the planning period before we assess the progress rate or what went wrong.

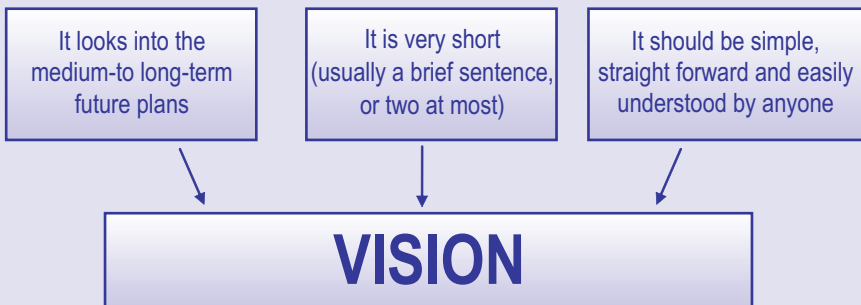
Glossary

Vision, Mission and Values:

A vision statement defines in clear terms the desired future image that the organisation envisages. While it is futuristic it should have a definite time period. A vision statement may not lend itself to exact measurement but there should be no ambiguity about its direction. All stakeholders in the organisation should know, believe, understand and appreciate the vision without difficulty and work towards it.

Example: You may have been asked this question more than once by your friends as a teenager or as a young adult: “What would you like to be when you grow up?” Even though the future career may be 10 years away, you could picture the type of job you wanted. Your answer may have been informed by your skills, interests or individuals in the same career whom you admire. That was your vision. When creating a vision statement, think about what your organisation aims for during the period of the strategic plan.

An effective and useful vision statement typically possesses the following characteristics:



Consider the following questions when developing the VISION:

- What kind of organisation do you want to become?
- What will your organisation look like in next five years?
- What have you learned about your organisation that you think should be reflected in your vision statement?

Examples of Vision Statements for Groups X and Y

Women's Group X:	Ensure women's and children's rights in all spheres of life.
Women's Group Y:	Empowerment for women

Mission Statement:

A mission clarifies the organisation's purpose of existence, i.e., what it is doing and why it is doing what it does. It is specific and is aimed at achieving the vision. The difference between Mission and Vision is that a mission is a purpose while a vision is a dream. Mission statements are therefore written with the vision in mind; it should capture all the practical aspects of the vision. Let us look at the mission statements of Group X and Y as an example.

Examples of Mission Statements, X and Y	
Group X:	To identify, expose and consistently raise our voice against abuse of religion, tradition, national and cultural heritage by vested interest and to gain legitimacy and political power
Group Y:	To identify, train and mobilise to resource women classified as poor with a revolving fund and monitored to sustain the cycle towards women empowerment.

SWOT Analysis:

This is an analysis of the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on current environmental factors, both internal and external, which could affect the future of your organisation. The results of a SWOT analysis can form the basis for identifying your organisation's strategic objectives. You can establish strategic objectives that leverage your strengths, eliminate your weaknesses, alert to threats, and take advantage of opportunities. A SWOT Analysis is just one of many techniques that can help you build a strong comparative advantage amongst your competitors and may produce some interesting insights.

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, consider your responses to the following questions.

Strengths:

- What are your advantages over other competitors?
- What do you do better than others?
- What relevant resources do you have that others do not?
- What do other people see as your strengths?

Weaknesses:

- What are others doing better than you?
- What could you improve to remain competitive?
- What do you do badly that affects your vision?
- What should you avoid in order to remain relevant?

Opportunities:

- Are there aspects within your environment that you can take advantage of?
- Are there any interesting trends in your field that you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from:

- Changes in government policy related to your field
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.
- Local events
- Training institutions
- Part time staff
- Personalities and collaborators

A useful approach to looking at opportunities is to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask whether you could create opportunities by eliminating them.

Threats:

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are your competitors doing better?
- Are the required specifications for your job, products or services changing?

- Is changing technology threatening your position?
- Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your business?
- Are you in danger of losing your staff to better paid competitors?

Carrying out this analysis will often be informative both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and putting problems into perspective.

Action Plan:

The action plan is an operational plan that will enable you attain the strategic objectives.

For each of the strategic objective, define:

- How you are going to proceed in order to implement them
- Where will the funding come from
- Who will be responsible for what part of the implementation process

You must therefore define:

- The how
- Who does what
- The anticipated results
- The indicators of success, for conducting your follow-up

and for enabling you to respond quickly to any significant variance that may occur in the course of the year

- The planned deadlines
- The detailed budget plan, which takes into account the financial capability of your organisation
- The sources of funding.

Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Often, people use the words goals and objectives interchangeably. However, in the context of goal setting, the difference between the two has an important practical meaning. You begin by setting goals and then move towards setting objectives. Objectives are also goals, but they are sub goals, which augment the main goals. Specific objectives are things you have to achieve - results to ensure that you reach your mission.

Difference between Goals and Objectives

- Goals are broad; objectives are narrow
- Goals are general intentions; objectives are precise
- Goals are intangible; objectives are tangible
- Goals are abstract, objectives are concrete
- Goals can't be validated as is; objectives can be validated.



Example:

Goal: Women in Ankaase are trained in Business Management

Objective: 50 poor women in Ankaase receive training and run profitable small-scale businesses on their own in 2 years.

When developing your strategic objectives have an idea of what type of information needs to be included in order to make your objectives SMART.

SMART

- S – Specific
- M – Measurable
- A – Attainable
- R – Result-focused
- T – Time



The example above has all the elements of a **SMART** objective it is **specific** in terms of the type of women it has in mind (poor women). It is **measurable** because it specifies the number of women targeted (50). It is **attainable** because resourcing 50 women over two years is achievable for an NGO. It is **results**

focused because all the activities point to: empowering the women and it is ***time*** bound - 2 years

Priorities:

Strategic Planning can help your organisation survive when resources are scarce by setting priorities. If your organisation is facing a crisis, it may be useful to address the immediate issue rather than wait for long term planning. However, your organisation may want to plan for crisis prevention in the future.

Available Resources/Budget:

You need to evaluate your organisations capability, therefore you must do needs assessment:

- Assess the needs in terms of human, material and financial resources that are necessary to reach your organisation's strategic target
- Identify the needs in terms of human, material and financial resources that your organisation's strategic target
- Identify the resources that are lacking but which are required to achieve your organisation's strategic target.

Strategic Target	Human Resources			Financial Resources			Material Resources		
	Required	Current	Variance	Required	Current	Variance	Required	Current	Variance
Target 1									
Target 2									
Target 3									

Useful References

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