

INTRODUCTION TO PRINCIPLES OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. How to develop a risk management approach in planning.
2. Definition of program, project, activities, and task.
3. Elements of strategic planning
4. The process of planning
5. Effective strategy implementation
6. Logical Framework

1. HOW TO DEVELOP A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH IN PLANNING.

1. Identification: The most common approach to risk identification is to interweave it into the strategic planning processes – specifically the external and internal input gathering steps. Risks can be identified via surveys, management team brainstorming, or other sources (e.g. expert sources). In addition, risk identification should become an ongoing activity.

2. Prioritization: The most common approach is to rank risks by 1) their likelihood of occurring and 2) the potential negative impact on the strategy. The highest scoring risks should then be identified as either of strategic objectives (e.g. build the strategy around the risks) or as considerations for strategic initiatives (e.g. be prepared for their occurrence when executing the strategy). Risks that exist but are not likely or impactful should not be included in a risk management plan. Also, not all risks will be identified, as it is impossible to 'know what one cannot know.'

3. Mitigation: For those identified risks that are likely and could cause significant impact, a mitigation plan should be articulated that outlines either (a) what will be done to prevent or minimize the likelihood, or (b) what would be done in the future to minimize its impact if the risk occurs.

4. Monitoring: For most organizations, an annual risk management plan review may be sufficient to both refresh the risks and to update the mitigation plans. However, many risks are event-dependent So, it is important to review a particular risk at the point in time when it might occur to ensure the mitigation plan is put into action (i.e. develop a special calendar that reminds managers or leaders to check on the status of a particular risk.

2. DEFINITION OF PROGRAM, PROJECT, ACTIVITIES, AND TASK.

A PROGRAM: This is a set of coordinated projects implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost, and performance parameters. Programs aimed at achieving a common goal are grouped under a common entity (country plan, operation, alliance, etc.).

A program is also a collection of projects, formed into a cohesive package of work, in which a project is a unique venture to produce a set of outputs within a specified time, cost, and quality constraints.

A PROJECT: Is a set of coordinated activities implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost, and performance parameters. Projects aimed at achieving a common goal from a program.

AN ACTIVITY: This is a combination of several tasks, all of which target the same objective. Activities are the lowest level of actions that need to be planned.

Example of an activity: Examples of activities include organizing a community meeting (scheduling the time, finding a location), developing communication materials, training volunteers in certain techniques, or organizing the distribution of relief supplies

TASKS

These are the simplest actions that makeup activities

Example of a task: Examples of tasks include writing a letter, checking a warehouse inventory, or ordering stock.

3. ELEMENTS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

For any strategic planning, the following elements below should be taken into account

- 1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:** The external environment as an element of a strategic plan looks at the factors outside the agency that should be considered when developing a plan. For instance, **Political** (that is, the major current political realities or anticipated political development that could affect the achievement of the strategy), **Economical** (that is, the current or future anticipated economic conditions that could affect the achievement of the strategy), **Social** (that is, the current anticipated social realities of the relevant societies and cultures that could affect the achievement of the strategy) **Technology** (that is, the technological realities or anticipated technological development that could affect the achievement of the strategy), **climate** (this look at the current environment or climate conditions that could affect the achievement of the strategy), and **legal** (that is the current legal or anticipated legal issues that could affect the achievement of the strategy).
- 2. THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:** This element of strategic planning is centered on the inward scanning of the organization, institutions, or entity. It looks at the following:
 - ❖ Capacity to deliver the intended services
 - ❖ Core competencies (i.e. what the entity is fundamentally good at doing) and business processes (i.e. how work gets done)

- ❖ Staffing (i.e. roles, skills, knowledge)
- ❖ Assets (i.e. buildings and equipment)
- ❖ Financial resources (i.e. budget)

3. **VISION:**

The vision is the starting point for any strategic framework. It shapes the framework and gives the organization or projects a basis on which to answer certain questions, it is the dream of the organization. Organizations and projects in the not-for-profit sector usually exist because they want to make a difference in society. They have a vision of how society could or should be in the future. This vision is not something they can achieve on their own. It is something that guides them in their work and which they believe can be achieved if enough projects and organizations share the vision and work towards it.

An example of a vision might be:

1. We strive to contribute to a society where every citizen has equal access to quality health care and can live in an environment that supports quality health through access for all to clean water, healthy food, and sanitary living conditions.

The particular organization with this vision may be an organization that trains and supports community health workers in rural villages. It believes that its work will contribute to this vision.

4. **VALUES**

Your **organizational values** are the shared values that underpin your work as an organization and your relationships with users and other stakeholders. They are what you believe is the right way to do things and to deal with people, and what you believe about the way that, ideally, the world ought to be organized. Your organizational values will determine your strategies and your operational principles. If, for example, you have an organizational value that emphasizes doing things with rather than for people, then you are likely to involve beneficiaries, or potential beneficiaries, closely in your planning process.

5. **MISSION**

The Mission statement defines the fundamental reason for the organization's existence. It defines the organization's present and future direction and answers the three basic questions that every organization must be able to answer:

- What are our services?
- What will it be?
- What should it be?

6. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives: Define the results to be achieved by the organization, and its personnel. They ensure the directions set for the future are achieved. Goals are a broad statement of need for achievement e.g. higher productivity, lower expenses, etc. Objectives on the other hand are a specific statement of a requirement for achievement which specifies the:

The item for achievement (Measure)

Target amount to be reached (Level)

Timeframe within which the Level is to be achieved (Time)

Goals and objectives are key elements of a strategy; because any strategy or plan you want to implement should have goals and also an objective that would help in achieving the goal.

4. THE PROCESS OF PLANNING

Since planning is activity there are certain logical steps for every manager which is as follow:

1. **SETTING OBJECTIVES:**

The first and foremost step is setting objectives. Objectives or goals specify what the organization wants to achieve. Also, the Objectives should be stated clearly for all departments, units, and employees. They give direction to all departments. Objectives have to percolate down to each unit and employees at all levels. At the same time, managers must contribute ideas and participate in the objective-setting process. They must also understand how their actions contribute to achieving objectives. If the result is clear it becomes easier to work towards the goal.

2. **DEVELOPING PREMISES:**

As planning is futuristic; therefore, the manager is required to make certain assumptions about the future. These assumptions are called premises. Assumptions are the base material upon which plans are to be drawn. The base material may be in the form of forecasts, existing plans, or any past information about policies. For example, forecasting is important in developing premises as it is a technique of gathering information. Forecasts can be made about the demand for a particular product, policy change, interest rates, prices of capital goods, tax rates, etc. Accurate forecasts, therefore, become essential for successful plans.

3. **IDENTIFYING ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION:**

Once objectives are set assumptions are made. Then the next step would be to act upon them. There may be many ways to act and achieve objectives. All the alternative

courses of action should be identified. The course of action which may be taken could be either routine or innovative. An innovative course may be adopted by involving more people and sharing their ideas. If the project is important, then more alternatives should be generated and thoroughly discussed amongst the members of the organization.

4. EVALUATING ALTERNATIVE COURSES:

The next step is to weigh the pros and cons of each alternative. Each course will have many variables which have to be weighed against each other. The positive and negative aspects of each proposal need to be evaluated in light of the objective to be achieved. Alternatives are evaluated in the light of their feasibility and consequences. That is, which alternative course of action can be easily achieved and the consequences of choosing a particular course of action.

5. SELECTING AN ALTERNATIVE:

This is the real point of decision-making. The best plan has to be adopted and implemented. The ideal plan, of course, would be the most feasible, profitable, and with the least negative consequences. Most plans may not always be subjected to mathematical analysis. In such cases, subjectivity and the manager's experience, judgment, and at times, intuition play an important part in selecting the most viable alternative. Sometimes, a combination of plans may be selected instead of one best course. The manager will have to apply permutations and combinations and select the best possible course of action.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN:

This is the step where other managerial functions also come into the picture. The step is concerned with putting the plan into action, i.e., doing what is required. For example, if there is a plan to increase production then more labor, more machinery will be required. This step would also involve organizing labor and purchase of machinery.

7. FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

To see whether plans are being implemented and activities are performed according to schedule is also part of the planning process. Monitoring the plans is equally important to ensure that objectives are achieved.

5. EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

This is where the real action takes place in the strategic management process since this is where the tactics in the strategic plan will be transformed into actions or actual performance.

It can be supported by the following factors:

1. People

Two questions must be answered: "*Do you have enough people to implement the strategies?*" and "*Do you have the right people in the organization to implement the strategies?*"

The number of people can be easily addressed by hiring additional manpower. The tougher part of this is seeing to it that you have the right people, looking into whether they have the skills, knowledge, and competencies required in carrying out the tasks that will implement the strategy. If it appears that the current employees lack the required skills and competencies, they should be made to undergo the necessary, seminars and workshops so that they will be better equipped and ready when its limits put the strategic plan into action.

Also, the commitment of the people is something that must be secured by management. Since they are the implementers, they have to be fully involved and committed to the achievement of the organization's objectives.

1. Resources

One of the basic activities in strategy implementation is the allocation of resources. These refer to both financial and non-financial resources that (a) are available to the organization and (b) are lacking but required for strategy implementation. Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is the amount of funding that will support implementation, covering the costs and expenses that must be incurred in the execution of the strategies. Another important resource is time. Is there more than enough time to see the strategy throughout its implementation?

2. Structure

The organizational structure must be clear-cut, with the lines of authority and responsibility defined and underlined in the hierarchy or "chain of command". Each member of the organization must know who he is accountable to, and who he is responsible for.

Management should also define the lines of communication throughout the organization. Employees, even those on the lowest tier of the organizational hierarchy, must be able to communicate with their supervisors and top management, and vice versa. Ensuring an open and clear communication network will facilitate the implementation process.

3. Systems

What systems, tools, and capabilities are in place to facilitate the implementation of the strategies? What are the specific functions of these systems? How will these systems aid in the succeeding steps of the strategic management process, after implementation?

4. Culture

This is the culture, or the overall atmosphere within the organization, particularly concerning its members. The organization should make its employees feel important and comfortable in their respective roles by ensuring that they are involved in the strategic management process and that they have a very important role. A culture of being responsible and accountable for one's actions, with corresponding incentives and sanctions for good and poor performance, will also create an atmosphere where everyone will feel more motivated to contribute to the implementation of strategies.

Causes of Failure of Strategy Implementation

1. When the employees and managers do not fully understand the strategy
2. Lack of effective communication or lack of communication
3. Lack of ownership on the part of the "implementers", the members of the workforce
4. Confusing, convoluted, and generally overwhelming plan
5. When the strategy is paid little attention by management

How to avoid barriers to planning

Start at the top – to ensure commitment top managers should set the goals and strategies that lower-level managers will follow

Planners should recognize limits – no planning system is perfect

Communication– vertical communication within the organizational hierarchy

Participation – involvement leads to motivation and ownership of the plans

Integration – of the long-term, intermediate, and short-range plans must be properly integrated for the effective overall planning

Contingency planning– Develop alternative plans of action if conditions change
Planning must not be left to chance; Planning must be organized

STEPS IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure effective and successful implementation of strategies, it's a good idea to have a system to go about it. Take a look at the steps to ensure that happens.

Step 1: Evaluation and communication of the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan, which was developed during the Strategy Formulation stage, will be distributed for implementation. However, there is still a need to evaluate the plan, especially concerning the initiatives, budgets, and performance. After all, there may be still inputs that will crop up during evaluation but were missed during strategy formulation

There are several sub-steps to be undertaken in this step.

1. Align the strategies with the initiatives.
2. Align budget to the annual goals and objectives.
3. Communicate and clarify the goals, objectives, and strategies to all members of the organization.

Step 2: Development of an implementation structure

The next step is to create a vision, or a structure, that will serve as a guide or framework for the implementation of strategies.

1. Establish a linking or coordination mechanism between and among the various departments and their respective divisions and units.
2. Formulate the work plans and procedures to be followed in the implementation of the tactics in the strategies.
3. Determine the key managerial tasks and responsibilities to be performed, and the qualifications required of the person who will perform them.
4. Determine the key operational tasks and responsibilities to be performed, and the qualifications required of the person who will perform them.
5. Assign the tasks to the appropriate departments of the organization.
6. Evaluate the current staffing structure, checking if you have enough manpower and if they have the necessary competencies to carry out the tasks.
7. Communicate the details to the members of the organization. This may be in the form of models, manuals, or guidebooks.

Step 3 Development of implementation support policies and programs

Some call them “strategy-encouraging policies” while others refer to them as “constant improvement programs”. Nonetheless, these are policies and programs that will be employed in aid of implementation.

1. Establish a performance tracking and monitoring system.
2. Establish a performance management system.
3. Establish an information and feedback system
4. Again, communicate these policies and programs to the members of the organization.

Step 4: Budgeting and allocation of resources

It is now time to equip the implementers with the tools and other capabilities to perform their tasks and functions.

1. Allocate the resources to the various departments, depending on the results of financial assessments as to their budgetary requirements.
2. Disburse the necessary resources to the departments, and make sure everything is properly and accurately documented.
3. Maintain a system of checks and balances to monitor whether the departments are operating within their budgetary limits, or they have gone above and beyond their allocation.

Step 5: Discharge of functions and activities

It is time to operationalize the tactics and put the strategies into action, aided by strategic leadership, utilizing participatory management and leadership styles.

Throughout this step, the organization should also ensure the following:

- ❖ Continuous engagement of personnel by providing trainings and reorientations.
- ❖ Enforce the applicable control measures in the performance of the tasks.
- ❖ Evaluate performance at every level and identify performance gaps, if any, to enable adjusting and corrective actions.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

The log frame matrix consists of a table with four rows and four columns, in which the key aspects of a project/programme are summarized. It sets out a logical sequence of cause-effect relationships based on the results chain/objectives hierarchy.

- ❖ *The vertical logic* identifies what the project intends to do, clarifies the causal relationships, and specifies the important assumptions and uncertainties beyond the project manager's control.
- ❖ *The horizontal logic* relates to the measurement of the effects of and resources used by the project through the specification of key indicators of measurement, and how the measurement will be verified.

There are a variety of formats used for log frames, and it is important to have a clear and common understanding of the different terms used; which are:

Overall Objective

All the objectives should be written as **simple, clear, and concise** statements that describe the intended result to be achieved.

- The Overall Objective should explain why the project is important to society in terms of the long-term benefits to beneficiaries and of the wider benefits to other groups.
- It should show how the project fits into sartorial or national goal or plan or policy, macro-level context, to which the activities are designed to contribute.

The goal

The “goal” is a simple, clear statement that describes “the long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention”. **It should reflect the ultimate aim of the intervention, i.e. the conditions to be changed.** It relates to the highest level of results, those over which **you have the least control.**

Often, the goal may be developed from the main objective set out in the objectives tree. The goal may also be taken from a lower-level objective in the objectives tree, especially if the main objective that was originally identified was at a very high level (e.g. “improve the overall well-being of the community”.)

“Impact” is often used primarily to refer to the *actual long-term results* brought about by the intervention, whether positive or negative, primary or secondary, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. Impact refers to the same level of long-term results as the goal, but the goal refers to the *intended positive results* of the intervention only.

Outcomes

“Outcomes” are “the primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes, or practices of the target group”. The achievement of the outcome(s) should contribute directly to the achievement of the overall goal. Outcomes are the intended medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs. **You have less control over outcomes than outputs.**

Example project outcome 1: *The capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.*

Outputs

“Outputs” are “the tangible products, goods and services, and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes”. They are the most immediate effects of an activity, the results over which you **have the most control**.

The outputs should describe all the results that need to be achieved to achieve the outcome (s), no more, no less. Normally, the key outputs can be developed from the objectives statements at the next level down of the objectives tree, but it is necessary to verify whether there are any missing or unnecessary outputs.

Activities

“Activities” are the collection of tasks to be carried out to achieve the outputs– the day-to-day actions that need to be carried out to achieve the project/program outputs and, by extension, the outcome(s).

Activities are not always included in the log frame. Sometimes they are included in detail, sometimes in summary, and sometimes not at all. If they are only summarized or not included at all in the log frame, they are usually set out in more detail, along with an activity schedule (work plan), in a separate document.

Example activities for output 1.1:

Organize 10 community planning meetings; Train peer facilitators and professional trainers; Develop/translate disaster management awareness materials.

For example, for a community to have a new water supply, the activities may include: forming and establishing a water-user committee, writing water supply maintenance procedures, site preparation, collection of local materials, tank construction and pipe laying, digging soak pits, and so on.

Inputs/resources, costs, and sources

The inputs/resources are the materials and means needed to implement the planned activities. This concept includes the required personnel (number and profile), equipment, facilities, technical assistance, funds, contracted services, etc.

Example inputs: *Space to hold meetings, trainers'/ peer facilitators, training materials. Costs/sources, volunteer time, donated venue for the meeting.*

Assumptions and Risks

The Assumptions refer to perceptions made about conditions that could affect the progress or success of the activity, but over which activity managers may have no direct control.

Positive and Risk Assumptions

An assumption is a positive statement of a condition that must be met for objectives to be achieved, while a risk is a negative statement of what might prevent objectives from being achieved.

Examples of external factors outside the control of the project include political and economic changes, war/civil disturbance, and the actions of other actors, such as public agencies, private organizations, and civil society organizations.

Indicators

Indicators are measures of progress or lack of progress used to assess progress towards meeting stated results or objectives. An indicator should provide, where possible, a clearly defined unit of measurement and a target detailing the quantity, quality, and timing of expected results.

Indicators can be **quantitative** (e.g. the percentage of farmers adopting new technology, number of sanitation facilities constructed or renovated) or **qualitative** (e.g. the level of commitment of farmers to using new technology, beneficiaries' perceptions of the quality of the sanitation facilities provided). It is best to use a combination of both when possible.

Means of Verification

Should specify the expected source of the information we need to collect. We need to consider how the information will be collected, who will be responsible, and the frequency with which the information should be provided. Data sources can include:

- Project documentation such as training reports, partner meeting minutes, event reports, field visit reports, campaign reports, workshop reports, and reports from focus group meetings or key informant interviews.
- Government documents such as the national development plan or policies, sartorial development plan, national statistics, or surveys.

The Log frame, therefore, summarizes :

- **Activities:** what are the specific tasks to be carried out?
- **Results:** what the project is going to deliver?
- **Purpose/Outcome:** why a project is being proposed?
- **Indicators:** how the progress or success of the project can be determined or measured?
- **Means of Verification:** where the information required to assess the progress of the project can be found or verified?
- **Assumptions:** what are the potential issues which could affect the success of the project.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK TEMPLATE AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Objectives (What we want to achieve)	Indicators (How to measure change)	Means of verification (Where/how to get information)	Assumptions (What else to be aware of)
Goal The long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention	Impact indicators Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the goal	How the information on the indicator(s) will be collected (can include who will collect it and how often)	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the goal to contribute to higher-level results
Outcome(s) The primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes, or practices of the target group	Outcome indicators Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the outcomes	As above	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the outcomes to contribute to achieving the goal.
Outputs The tangible products, goods and services, and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes	Output indicators Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the outputs	As above	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary if outputs are to lead to the achievement of the outcomes
Activities The collection of tasks to be carried out to achieve the outputs	Inputs The materials and resources needed to implement activities	Costs (and sources) The summary costs for each of the identified resources/activities; sources of income can also be specified	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the activities to achieve the outputs

HOW TO SET A GOAL

STEP 1 Identify your goals: Take some time to think about the things that you would either like to do or that you want to change. **Try to identify some short-term goals** (for example, things you would like to work on over the next couple of weeks or months), **medium-term goals** (for example, things you would like to be able to do in six months or a year from now) and **long-term goals** (for example, things you are hoping to accomplish in your lifetime).

Also, make sure that your goals are **realistic and attainable**. If you set your goals too high, it will be too difficult to accomplish them and your motivation will drop.

STEP 2 Break goals into smaller steps: Many goals can be broken down into smaller steps. This is especially true of medium and long-term goals. For example, if your goal is to develop some friendships at work, an initial goal may be to ask two co-workers about their weekend plans on Friday afternoon. If your goal is to find a new job, a smaller goal may be to check the classified ads in the newspaper on Saturday

STEP 3 Identify obstacles: Once you have established a realistic and concrete goal, identify any obstacles that may be standing in the way of accomplishing your goal. For example, one of the obstacles to going to the gym maybe finding childcare. So, if you have set a goal of going to the gym for 30 minutes after work on Wednesday, you will have to arrange for a babysitter.

STEP 4 Schedule your goals: You are more likely to complete your goals if you are clear about what you are going to do and when you plan to do it. It is important to be flexible. Sometimes things can get in the way of accomplishing your goals (for example, there is a rainstorm on the day you wanted to go for a hike, or your son comes home sick from school the morning you were planning to practice driving). Be willing to come up with an alternative plan (e.g., go for a walk in an indoor mall or re-schedule your driving session for the next day).

STEP 5 Carry out your goals: Now that you have picked a goal, you need to start taking the necessary steps to follow through with it. However, it can be hard to get started. In addition to writing down your goal (e.g., work out at the gym for 30 minutes after work on Wednesday), you can write out the steps that you will need to take to complete it (for example, call a babysitter on Monday to arrange for her to pick up the kids after school on Wednesday, pack gym clothes on Tuesday evening, take gym clothes to work on Wednesday morning, head straight to the gym after work on Wednesday).