



Project on “Provision of Legal Training Components for Legal Institutions of Iraq”

Training session on “Strategic Planning”

24, 25 and 26 October, 2010

Erbil

Explanatory Note

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Simply put, strategic planning determines

- a. where an organization is going over the next year or more,
- b. how it's going to get there and
- c. how it'll know if it got there or not.

The concepts behind strategic planning are generally derived from the business world. However, most modern nations (starting in the US and Great Britain) have developed a strategic planning framework to optimise the activities of the Government, public service in general and the public administration.

In the private/business sector, the focus of a strategic plan is usually on the entire organization, while the focus of a business plan is usually on a particular product, service or program. In a public administration framework, one would consider rather a strategic plan to define the policy framework, visions and orientation and an action plan to practically implement the policy.

There are a variety of perspectives, models and approaches used in strategic planning, especially in a business perspective. The way that a strategic plan is developed depends on the nature of the organization's leadership, culture of the organization, complexity of the organization's environment, size of the organization, expertise of planners, etc. There are a variety of strategic planning models, including goals-based, issues-based, organic, scenario (some would assert that scenario planning is more of a technique than model), etc¹.

1. Strategic planning serves a variety of purposes in organizations, including to:
Clearly define the purpose of the organization and to establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with that mission in a defined time frame within the organization's capacity for implementation.
2. Communicate those goals and objectives to the organization's constituents.
3. Develop a sense of **ownership** of the plan.
4. Ensure the most effective use is made of the organization's resources by focusing the resources on the key priorities.
5. Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change when needed.
6. Listen to everyone's opinions in order to build **consensus** about where the organization is going. Other reasons include that strategic planning:
 - Provides clearer **focus** for the organization, thereby producing more efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Bridges staff/employees and the board of directors (in the case of corporations).

¹ Issues-based strategic planning often starts by examining issues facing the organization, strategies to address those issues and action plans. Organic strategic planning might start by articulating the organization's vision and values, and then action plans to achieve the vision while adhering to those values. Some planners prefer a particular approach to planning, eg, appreciative inquiry. Some plans are scoped to one year, many to three years, and some to five to ten years into the future. Some plans include only top-level information and no action plans. Some plans are five to eight pages long, while others can be considerably longer

- Builds strong teams in the board and in the staff/employees (in the case of corporations).
- Provides the glue that keeps the board members together (in the case of corporations).
- Produces great satisfaction and meaning among planners, especially around a common vision.
- Increases productivity from **increased efficiency and effectiveness**.
- **Solves major problems** in the organization.

Goals-based planning is probably the most common, and has been recognised as the most efficient model by most international organisations involved in development assistance and cooperation and /or dealing with public administration reform. It starts with:

- a. focus on the organization's mission (and vision and/or values),
- b. goals to work toward the mission, strategies to achieve the goals, and
- c. action planning (who will do what and by when).

The proposed model for the strategic planning training session foreseen **October 24-26, 2010** in Erbil is based on a **Logical Framework Approach** and offers a structured step by step methodology to develop a roadmap to change (enhancement, reform) from development of a coherent vision (decision making, overarching orientation, principles such as constitutional principles, international commitments etc...) down to the practical details of the step by step process of implementing the planned changes.

The summary of this goal based strategic planning process includes the following steps:

Summary of Goal-Based Strategic Planning

1. External/internal assessment to identify “SWOT” (Strengths and Weaknesses and Opportunities and Threats) and problem analysis
2. Strategic analysis to identify and prioritize major issues/goals
3. Design major strategies (or programs) to address issues/goals
4. Design/update vision, mission and values (some organizations may do this first in planning)
5. Establish action plans (objectives, resource needs, roles and responsibilities for implementation)
6. Record issues, goals, strategies/programs, updated mission and vision, and action plans in a Strategic Plan document called logical framework matrix, and attach SWOT, etc.
7. Develop the yearly Operating Plan document(from year one of the multi-year strategic plan)

8. Develop and authorize Budget for year one(allocation of funds needed to fund year one)
9. Conduct/implement the organization's year-one operations
10. Monitor/review/evaluate/ implementation phase
11. Update Strategic Plan document

The session's content will cover the **full management cycle** from planning, programming, and implementation, to design of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan in line with the EU best practices as presented in the PCM Manual (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/reports/index_en.htm).

Particular **focus** will be placed on:

- the planning phase: with technical tools and techniques including the SWOT analysis, problem tree analysis, objective analysis and **logical framework** elaboration
- the key aspects of **M&E** activities (structuring a monitoring plan, defining indicators of progress)

Development of the strategic plan greatly helps to clarify the organization's plans and ensure that key leaders are all "on the same script". Far more important than the strategic plan document, is the **strategic planning process** itself.

In line with EU and major donors best practices, Strategic Planning is understood as a **participatory** exercise in order to:

- develop a shared vision across the organisation
- facilitate coordination through shared tools and techniques

