



**TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION**

**Guidelines for the  
Preparation of Strategic  
Plan**

*April 2014*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In preparing these guidelines, the TEC reviewed numerous publications and plans for other organizations/governments. The primary references used are from the California State Department of Finance, from which we have incorporated practical and informative materials.

While every care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, by its nature, it may contain errors which are unintentional.

## **Introduction**

Strategic planning and budgeting are integral components of good management. The strategic plan charts direction, while the budget provides resources to implement the plan. A strategic plan neither grounded in fiscal reality nor linked to the budget would be only a dream. On the other hand, resource allocation without strategic thinking would be short-sighted and unresponsive to future conditions.

Strategic planning guides the budget process. It establishes and affords management an opportunity to re-evaluate existing allocations of funds. Institutions can develop strategies and action plans that detail what will be accomplished to achieve strategic planning goals and objectives each year. These action plans, together with performance measures, provide the strongest links between the operating and capital outlay budgets.

Planning and budgeting are interactive. Assumptions about available resources affect what can be achieved in the plan; the plan also sets priorities for resource allocations. Since government funding continues to be limited, strategic planning can help institutions as they strive to “do more with less” while remaining focused on results.

## **Purpose of Planning**

The purpose of planning is to improve the chances of reaching desirable possible outcomes. The benefits of planning enable an institution to:

- (1) prepare for contingencies that could prevent it from attaining its goals,
- (2) prepare a framework for the organization’s orderly growth and progress, and
- (3) have a strategy for the allocation of resources in a manner that will allow the institution to meet its goals.

## **What is a Strategic Plan?**

A strategic plan is a practical action-oriented guide, based on an examination of internal and external factors, which directs goal-setting and resource allocation to achieve meaningful results over time.

A strategic plan develops a clear statement of the institution’s mission and vision, identifies a set of goals and objectives and formulates key strategies that address those factors that are essential to the institution’s success. Key strategies also indicate the major undertakings that will reposition the institution for the future.

A plan should address the institution’s reengineering of its core activities. This reengineering is the search for and implementation of, radical changes in the way it operates and do business that result in dramatic efficiencies, reductions in cost, improvements in quality, or improvements in customer service.

## **What format to adopt for the Strategic Plan?**

There is no prescribed detailed standard format for s Strategic Plan. Each institution may determine the format and content of the documentation of its strategic plan. However, the guidelines below are intended to ensure that the documentation is sufficiently detailed to provide the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the ministries of Tertiary Education, Science, Research & Technology (MTESRT) and that of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) and other stakeholders with a

clear understanding of the institution's strategies. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the information provided in its strategic plan represents its current strategy.

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS**

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*FORMAT STRATEGIC PLAN*

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1. Executive Summary
2. Table of Contents
3. Mission Statement
4. Description
5. Principles
6. Internal/External Assessment Summary
7. Vision
8. Goals
9. Objectives
10. Performance Measures
11. Resource Assumptions
12. Appendix Items

Required:

Methodology Statement

Action Plan

Recommended but Optional

Organizational Chart [\*]

Plan for Monitoring and Tracking

Performance[\*]

Other Information [\*]

\* recommended components but not required

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Each component in the strategic plan is summarized below.

◆**Executive Summary**— this should encapsulate:

- (1) What the institution hopes to achieve with this plan;
- (2) A brief description of the plan's context; its purpose and scope (i.e., what it is intended to do), its relationship to other state plans and state planning goals, its relationship to the state budget and when it will be revised
- (3) the key elements of this strategic plan; and the name and the phone number of the agency's contact persons who will respond to
  - a) Questions about the plan, and
  - b) Requests for copies of the plan.

◆**Table of Contents:** the Table of Contents given above is the basic coverage expected

◆**Mission Statement:** the reason for the institution's existence.

◆**Description:** a summary of the institution's major duties, responsibilities and customers served. This information will provide the reader with more background information about the institution. If the institution intends to widely distribute the plan, this additional information becomes more valuable.

◆**Principles:** the institution's core values/principles.

◆**Internal/External Assessment Summary:** an evaluation of key factors which influence the success of the institution in achieving its mission and goals. At a minimum, the institution should provide a brief summary of the key internal strengths, weaknesses and external opportunities and threats, as well as strategic issues that have been identified during the internal/external assessment.

Institutions may also choose to include tables, charts, and graphs to illustrate information that supports the internal/external assessment. Graphics can be incorporated in the text, or provided in the Appendix. In their sections on Internal/External Assessment, institutions may also want to summarise their general planning assumptions. However, resource assumptions are to be addressed separately, as discussed below.

◆**Vision:** A compelling, conceptual, vivid image of the desired future

◆**Goals:** the desired end result, generally after 5 or more years. Institution goals should reflect the most important strategic issues for the organization as a whole; they should not represent a comprehensive inventory of every program activity. Generally, since the goals in this document only represent key goals, five or fewer strategic goals will be sufficient for most institutions

◆**Objectives:** Specific and measurable targets for accomplishment of a goal; Objectives should follow the SMART principle (S= specific; M= measurable; A- achievable; R= realistic; T= time bound). An institution may have multiple objectives under a single goal; however, at a minimum, each stated goal must have at least one objective for each of the following three fiscal years: 2015, 2016 and 2017.

(Budget requests must provide the cross-reference to the specific objectives in an organization's strategic plan. Therefore, the cross-reference should not appear in the strategic plan. The strategic plan is not a wish list of budget requests.)

◆**Performance Measures/ Indicators:** the quantified results to be achieved. Performance measures/ indicators provide a basis for assessing successful achievement of the institution's mission, vision, goals and objectives by focusing on attainment of the objectives. However, in order to retain focus on only the most significant, the vital few, the institution should limit the number of measures by selecting

only the most pertinent measures for each objective for which data can be collected. (More than three or four measures will probably be too many). At a minimum, there should be at least one key performance measure under each objective.

When considered in the aggregate, institutions should strive for a balance of measures in their strategic plans, with an emphasis on outcome, efficiency, and quality measures. The use of simple input and output measures is not encouraged.

At a minimum, actual and projected performance data for the 2014 submission should be shown for the following fiscal years:

- FY 2012 actual
- FY 2013 actual
- FY 2014 estimated (target)
- FY 2015-2017 expected (budget year target)
- FY 2018-2019 expected (target)

Two actual years show the established base level.

The current year is shown (FY 2014).

The next five years show the institution's objectives in the strategic plan.

**◆Resource Assumptions:** assumptions about resources required to implement the institution strategic plan. In this section, an institution should indicate whether they can accomplish the institution goals, annual objectives and performance targets within their existing budget or with reduced resources, or if additional resources must be requested. Keeping in mind that the strategic plan is not a budget document, the intent of this section on Resource Assumptions is to provide brief statements that strengthen the link between the plan and the budget.

Institutions should describe their resource assumptions for fiscal year 2014 and subsequent fiscal years. If they can accomplish their institution goals, objectives and performance targets within their current base budget, they should add a general statement to indicate that no new resources are being sought to support the agency strategic plan. Institutions may find it helpful to explain that they intend to achieve their planned results in fiscal year 2014, and subsequent specifically identified fiscal years, by other means such as by improving a process or reallocating existing resources.

#### **◆Appendix Items**

##### **A. Required:**

Methodology Statement- a brief description of the internal planning process used and the participants involved in the development of the strategic plan. It should address the stakeholder involvement to date in building the plan's (a) vision, (b)goals, and (c) objectives. It can include a brief description of how the plan was put together: identification of participants, in what kinds of forums, and a list of references and/or organizations involved in the development of the plan. It can include a description of the method by which planning actions are prioritized.

##### **B. Optional, and provided at the institution's discretion**

Action Plans- A detailed description of the key strategies used to implement each objective. the methods or strategies used to accomplish objectives and the summary of the detailed descriptions of how strategies will be implemented on an operational basis

**◆Organization Chart:** the current Organization Chart which displays the division and subdivisions within the institution and lines of authority. For large institutions, a summary chart will suffice.

◆**Program Structure:** the current list of programs and subprograms within the institution. Alternatively, a diagram illustrating the program hierarchy can be provided.

◆**Plan for Monitoring and Tracking Performance:** description of the methods the institution is using to determine if the strategic plan is being accomplished. Emphasis should be placed on describing how progress to achieve the objective is currently being monitored by using performance measures, as well as describing the projected plan for each of the other future fiscal years. The description should evaluate the results of past actions implemented.

**For example,** the institution may note that it developed an action plan which it monitors monthly, while it compares actual performance data with planned targets on a quarterly basis. Institutions may wish to indicate that they also plan to summarize overall progress in achieving the institution strategic plan in their annual report.

◆**Other Information:** Additional information to augment the institution's strategic plan. This can include technical studies which may assist readers in understanding the plan, and/or a glossary of technical terms used in the text.