**Strategic Planning Workshop Facilitation Notes**

**These facilitation notes are designed to be used alongside the PowerPoint presentation** [**Strategic Planning Workshop.**](http://capacityforconservation.org/tools/strategic-planning-workshop/)

**Scheduling a Strategic Planning Workshop**

Below is an example ‘short’ schedule for a strategic planning workshop for a small organisation. The workshop can be completed in one week (including a rest or ‘reflection’ day is recommended) or can be spread over several weeks. Timings are roughly based on around 12 participants on Days 2 to 4, but timings will depend on the number of participants, the amount of planning that has been done previously that can be built on, and the amount of discussion required at each step. Equally, who is involved at each step will depend on the organisation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **When?** | **What?** | **Who?** | **Timing** |
| **Day 1** | 1. Introduction – why are we here?
2. What is strategic planning? (short presentation)
3. Hopes and expectations?
4. Where is your organisation now?
5. ClarifyVision, Values and Mission (visioning exercise
 | All staff and key stakeholders including board members | **Half day**  |
| **Day 2** | 1. Agree final vision statement (if needed)
2. Complete stakeholder analysis (to help define organisation’s field of action)
3. Situation Analysis
 | Programme and project staff(including board members and key stakeholders if possible / desired)  | **Full day** |
| **Day 3** | 1. Complete SWOT analysis to identify the human and financial resources and capacity available.
2. Identify and prioritise strategic issues
3. Agree strategic issues and strategic objectives
 | Programme and project staff (including board members and key stakeholders if possible / desired) | **Full day** |
| **Day 4** | 1. Agree strategic actions
2. Finalise mission statement
3. Capturing organisational capacity issues
4. Form follows function: review organisational structure
 | Programme and project staff (including board members and key stakeholders if possible / desired) | **Full day** |
| **Day 5** | 1. Present strategic plan back to all staff - clarify and incorporate feedback where required. Revisit hopes and expectations.
 | All staff and key stakeholders including board members | **1 hour** |

**DAY 1**

Time: Half day

Participants: All staff and key stakeholders, board members

Preparation:

* Agree date for feedback session
* Prepare timeline

**Objectives:**

* Review and agree vision, mission and values
* Review and update strategic plan based on external and internal situational analysis
* Review and integrate internal capacity development needs into the strategic plan and organisational capacity development plan

**Introduction: why are we here?**

* The best kinds of organisations are constantly changing, are dynamic. Planning processes help manage this change. It is therefore good practice for organisations to repeat the strategic planning process every three to five years. As your strategic plan is about to come to an end, now is a good time to reflect on what you have achieved, to look at what has changed internally and in your environment, and to use this to revise the strategic framework that will guide you over the next three years.
* There will be opportunity to reflect on the progress made under the existing strategy (if there is one), and it is recognised that it is an extremely valuable and useful document.
* Although we will be going through a whole strategic planning process over the next few days - in order to allow new ideas to emerge and changes in context to be documented and incorporated where relevant - we are by no means starting from scratch: each of you has been closely involved in delivering the existing strategic plan and will be bringing all of this experience to this planning process.
* It is *your* strategic plan and *you* who will be developing the plan over the next few days. So not only will it reflect any changes you think are necessary, it will also reflect all the experience gained under the direction of the previous plan.

**Introduction: Why am *I* here?**

* Effective organisations comprise many parts – and individuals who play one role may have different perspectives from those others whose role with the organisation is different.
* When reviewing and revising an organisation’s vision and guiding principles, it is therefore useful to involve everyone involved with that organisation, each of whom has valuable views and ideas to share.
* You may not be involved in all of the strategic planning process over the next few days, but what you contribute today will form the basis of on-going discussion amongst those who will be, and will be reflected in the results. At the end of the process, the results of your colleagues’ continued work will be fed back to all of you, and there will be opportunity for questions, feedback and clarifications before the strategic plan is complete.

**Introduction: Why Plan?**

Planning helps to:

* Provide a clear understanding of what you need to do to achieve your goals
* Provide a coherent guide for day-to-day implementation
* Guide you in prioritising and making decisions
* Allow you to focus limited resources on the actions that will benefit your work most
* Provide you with a tool to communicate your intentions to others
* Measure progress
* Planning together strengthen unity across an organisation
* Keep you in touch with your context- global, national, local

**Introduction: What is strategic plan?**

So what is a *Strategic* Plan, and how does this differ from other types of plan?

* A *Strategic* Plan is the bigger picture - a high-level guiding framework that helps an organisation focus all its actions, decisions and allocation of human and financial resources on contributing towards a long-term vision and mission, therefore improving efficiency and impact
* It is a touchstone against which to answer questions such as:
	+ Is this the sort of work we should be doing?
	+ Will this activity contribute to the achievement if our vision and goals?
	+ Given we have scarce resources, is this the most strategic action for us to take?
* It is based on the broader internal and external context in which the organisation functions
* It should articulate specific objectives (what you want to achieve) and strategic actions (how you are going to achieve them).
* As a rule, most strategic plans should be reviewed and revamped every three to five years.

**Introduction: Other Planning Tools**

A strategic plan is NOT:

* A plan that spells out specific activities, time frames and the roles of individual staff and board members (this is an operational plan).
* A plan that says what individuals hope to achieve in a given time frame (this is an individual plan).
* A plan detailing the HR and financial structures needed to achieve the objectives (this is included in an internal capacity plan).
* A plan that shows what donors need to achieve from a given project (this is included in a project plan).

The strategic plan overarches and informs all of these plans.

**Planning diagram**

**Introduction: How to make a Strategic Plan**

1. Clarify vision and scope of your organisation’s work
2. Analyse the external environment
3. Analyse the internal environment
4. Identify and prioritise the strategic issues
5. Define the strategic objectives
6. Define strategic actions to address each strategic objective

Follow-up steps:

1. Identify the resources required to achieve the strategic objectives.
2. Draw up an internal capacity building plan.
3. Develop an operational plan and cost it.
4. Link the plan to project development and implementation.

**Workshop Day 1**

* Today, we are going to make a start on Step 1. Specifically, we are going to review the organisation’s progress to date, and then look at the vision, mission and values of the organisation.
* There are going to be X more day’s of workshop involving X staff and stakeholders only, which will build on what you all do today.
* There will then be a final session involving everyone again in which the results of the rest of the workshop will be shared. This will be an opportunity for those of you who do not participate in subsequent sessions to provide feedback to incorporate into the strategic plan before it is finalised, and to ask questions.

**Hopes and concerns**

* Before we get started, I’d like each of you to just take a moment to write your hopes for the strategic planning process on a green post-it note and any concerns you have on a blue post-it note.
* Is there anything in particular you are hoping to gain from the process, or you hope to see? And is there anything about the process that is worrying you or you would like to know more about?
* I’d like you to then please add these to the wall over there. You don’t need to write your name on them, but please do try to remember which ones are yours!
* Knowing your hopes and concerns will help us to do the best job possible over the next few days. We will revisit these during last session when we all meet up again in order to ensure we have, where possible, met your hopes and addressed your concerns.

**EXERCISE: Timeline**

Groups of 4-5 people, 40 minutes

Equipment: Large post-it notes, masking tape for timeline

This is a quick exercise to remind us all of the progress the organisation has made and what has been achieved.

1. In groups, spend 10 minutes thinking about things to mark on the timeline. Write each one on a post-it note (one idea per post-it note) and remember to also add the year / date. After 10 minutes, add these to the timeline. Mark on the timeline things like:
* The organisation’s founding
* Implementation of different projects
* Partnerships formed
* Key external events
* Key organisational developments (e.g. new systems)
* And so on…
1. Then spend 10 minutes thinking about:
* What have been the organisation’s biggest achievements?
* What are we really good at?
* What areas need improvement?
* What are the main lessons learned since the organisation was founded?

Write your ideas down so you can share these with the rest of the group. Or put on post-its and let everyone peruse so don’t need to be read out loud? Can invite people to share?

1. Facilitate a group discussion (10 minutes)

**Vision statement**

* To ensure everyone is working towards the same ideals for the future is it important to spend some time reflecting on and clarifying the organisation’s vision.
* Organisations like this exist because they want to make a difference. They have a vision of how the world could 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 they strive to work towards.
* Your organization's vision defines the way an organization and world will look in the future; it is the future you want to create for the community and landscapes you wish to impact.

For example, FFI’s vision is:

“A sustainable future for the planet, where biodiversity is effectively conserved by the people who live closest to it, supported by the global community”

* The vision is the starting point for any strategic framework. It shapes the framework and gives the organisation a basis upon which to answer: *Will this objective or this activity help us to make a contribution to our vision?*

**EXERCISE: Defining a vision statement**

Groups of 4-5 people, around 1 hour

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

1. Think of up to four key issues you are trying to address in your work and write these down (5 minutes)
2. Imagine you have been out of the country for ten years. You have arrived back to find their dreams of how the world should be, in terms of the problems in the area you have identified, have been fulfilled – the problems are solved and society and your organisation is functioning just as you had hoped. What does this look like? In your groups, construct a picture of what this looks like, using words and /or drawing (20 minutes).
3. Present your picture and explain what it represents (facilitator: capture keywords, especially anything that is value-related) (15 minutes)
4. As one group, study the words and statements captured earlier and jointly (or in smaller groups if necessary) construct a vision statement that reflects the range of input and around which there is consensus (15 minutes).
5. Compare this to your existing vision statement and decide if this needs revising to reflect what you have discussed.

Note: this does not need finalising today, and will be revisited at the end of the planning process when the internal and external contextual analysis has also been completed.

**Organisational values**

* Your organisational values are the shared values that underpin your work as an organisation and relationships with others.
* They are what you believe is the right way to do things and to deal with people.
* These values help determine your strategies and the way in which you work day to day – they represent the ethos of the organisation, how you behave and the principles that underlie your way of working.
* Clarifying and reaching consensus on your values provides a basis for making decisions such as whether to work with a certain group of people, project or organisation or where to allocate resource, and so on.

**EXERCISE: Defining organisational values**

Groups of 4-5 people, around 30 minutes

Equipment: large post it notes; flip chart paper

1. Write up the vision statement
2. In the same groups, spend 10 minutes thinking about the values implicit in this statement that should guide our work if we are to make a contribution to our vision. What should be the ethos of the organisation? How should we behave? What are our values and principles with regards to the way we work? Write each one on a separate post-it note and add these to the wall.
3. As one group, organise the values into groups where there are overlaps, duplicates.
4. Based on the results, develop a set of values or principles in terms of the way in which you will work towards your vision, i.e. how the organisation functions, how staff / volunteers will behave when they do their work, and so on.

**Mission statement**

This states the particular way in which your organisation intends to contribute towards its vision.

It describes what the organisation does, with whom or form whom it does it, and, in broad terms, how it does it.

An organisational mission should contain:

* What do you aim to do/achieve?
* Who is it aimed at and done with?
* How do you work/methods?

i.e.

We are……..

We aim to…….

We do this by……

*For example, FFI’s mission statement is:*

*“We strive to act to conserve threatened species and ecosystems worldwide by choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science and take into account human needs.”*

It is important because:

* It is an easy way to communicate what you do and how you do it
* It helps you clarify and focus your work

**EXERCISE: Defining a mission statement**

Groups of 4-5 people, around 30 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

1. Think about the following and write down (5 minutes):
	* Who or what are the primary targets that you expect benefit from your work?
	* Who, if anyone, will we work with on an on-going basis to achieve this?
2. Write a statement that says (15 minutes):
	* We are…
	* We aim to…(be specific about who and what)
	* We to do this by…
	* For example: We are an NGO working to ensure that the landless poor have access to arable land by helping government develop land policies that will benefit the disadvantaged.
3. Discuss as a group

Before comparing this to the organisation’s existing mission statement and seeing if this needs updating, we first need to know that the organisation’s strategic objectives for the next three years will be, which we will not look at until later. So we return to these mission statements later in the week as well.

**Thank you for your inputs!**

Outline what will happen next and how everyone’s inputs today will be used.

**DAY 2**

Time: Full day

Participants: Programme and Project staff

Preparation:

* Prepare stakeholder map
* Flipchart paper stuck together and on the wall for Situation analysis

**Content**

Today we are going to a) finalise the vision statement (if it was decided at the previous session it needed revising) and b) analyse the external and internal environment in which the organisation is working in order to help answer the following questions:

* Who influences our work? (Basic stakeholder analysis)
* What is our theory of change? (Situation analysis / causal model)
* What resources and capacity are available? (SWOT analysis)

This will in turn, tomorrow, help you to define your strategic objectives and actions for the next 3/5 years.

**EXERCISE: Finalising the Vision Statement**

This activity is only required if, in the previous session it was agreed that the vision statement needs updating / revising. Allow approx. 1 hour

Equipment: large post-it notes, pens

Preparation:

* Present the visions statements on slides from the previous session
* Place the vision drawings somewhere where everyone can see them.
1. Remind everyone what a vision statement is and is for
2. Based on the previous statements, ask each participant to write what they think the vision statement should be on a large post-it note – ask them to write clearly and in large letters
3. Once everyone has done so, read them out and stick them on the wall where everyone can see them, grouping together similar statements
4. Facilitate a discussion around the key terms used and any differences / similarities
5. Ask everyone to repeat the exercise and write what they now think the vision statements should be on a large post-it note.
6. Continue the steps above until you a) have agreed on one statement or b) have a few similar statements and ask then can ask them to vote for their favourite in order to agree on just one.

**Stakeholder analysis**

A stakeholder analysis looks at all those individuals, groups and institutions that will influence your organisation’s ability to achieve its mission and contribute towards its vision.

Stakeholders are those who:

* Are affected by or can affect your work
* May place demands on you
* Have an interest in your work

Stakeholders might be individuals, groups or organisations - including government departments, private sector, donors, NGOs, local communities, staff and so on…

Although you are very familiar with your key stakeholders, it is useful to reassess periodically the context in which you are working – including any changes in the scope of the area you seek to influence - and incorporate these changes into your strategic plans.

Specifically, a stakeholder analysis useful to help you to:

* Clarify the content and scope of stakeholder influence on your work
* Highlight and tensions / contradictions in demands being made on you
* Clarify your organisation’s scope of influence

**EXERCISE: Basic Stakeholder Analysis**

Around 8 participants, around 1.5 hours

Equipment: flipchart paper and masking tape for pre-prepared ‘map’; large post-it notes; felt tip pens

*Could do this either with stakeholder identification in pairs followed by working in one big group with their own scribe OR in two groups of 4-5 people each doing their own map, and then taking it in turns to add stakeholders to the final map on the wall and facilitating a discussion around any differences / contradictions. Remember – it’s the process, not necessarily the results, that is important!*

1. In pairs, spend 5 minutes writing down all the stakeholders you can think of that will influence your organisation’s ability to contribute towards its vision, are affected by your work or have an interest in your work.
2. Make a stakeholder map, plotting those with the strongest influence nearest to the core organisation team in the centre, to show:
	* Their interest in / influence on your organisation
	* Their expectations from the relationship
	* The contribution they could make to the organisation and its vision
3. Discussion: *Are there any contradictory demands that need to be resolved? Has anyone been left out? Well done - this will remain on the wall and help us when we come to develop our strategic objectives and actions in our next session.*

**Situation analysis**

* The objective of a Situation analysis is to give an accurate picture of the situation you are seeking to change, and then to use this to decide how you are going to go about changing it. It helps you to explicitly define your theory behind how this change will happen.
* Identifying the underlying causes of the problems you are trying to influence is one of the most critical components in planning because all of your work is based on this.
* It enables you to clearly identify problems and the causal relationships between them.

**Situation analysis**

* A visual method of representing a set of causal relationships between factors that are believed to impact one or more biodiversity targets (i.e. the organisation’s target species, habitats or landscapes).
* It should explicitly link the Biodiversity Targets to the Direct Threats impacting them, and the Factors (indirect threats and opportunities) influencing the Direct Threats.
* Causal links should flow from bottom to top and it is the logic of these connections which will underlie your planning.

**Situation analysis – example**

**Situation analysis – identifying threats and factors**

* If you find yourself saying “lack of…” (for example local crop production is poor due to a lack of irrigation equipment) think again!
* A problem is not necessarily a lack of a solution but due to an existing unwanted situation (i.e. local crop production is poor due to drought)

**EXERCISE: Situation analysis**

Around 8 participants, around 2 hours

Equipment: Large Post it notes, flipchart paper, felt tip pens

1. **Define Targets & Scope**
2. Define the Geographic Scope of your organisation’s focus
	* Write this on a post-it note and place it at the top of your workspace
3. Define one or more Biodiversity Targets (i.e. your organisation’s target species, habitats or landscapes)
	* Write each one on a post-it note and arrange them showing any relevant linkages between different targets (e.g., upland forest affecting downstream wetlands)

Refer to your work on the vision and mission!

1. **Identify Direct Threats**

Identify the main Direct Threats to your Biodiversity Targets. A direct threat is one that immediately degrades one or more biodiversity targets. For example, “logging” or “fishing.”

* + Write each of your ideas clearly on a large post-it note (one idea per post-it note) - be clear and specific, and avoid “lack of…” statements.
	+ Place each Direct Threat on your workspace and use arrows to connect it to the Biodiversity Target(s) it directly affects.
1. **Threat Ranking (only if necessary)**

Identify the most critical threats:

* Rate each threat on criteria such as scope, severity, and irreversibility (1 = Low, 2 = Medium, 3 = High and 4 = Very High)
* Combine the individual ratings to produce an overall rating for the threat for each target
* Add these results to your Situation Analysis
1. **Identify Factors**
* Identify Factors (indirect threats and/or opportunities as well as enabling conditions) that lie behind each Direct Threat (but focus on the highest ranked Direct Threats)
* Indirect threats are often related to demographic change; inequality and poverty; public policies, markets, and politics; macroeconomic policies and structures; social change; and development biases. These factors can often be favorable and, therefore, present themselves as opportunities. Opportunities may also include conditions, attitudes, and values that will support conservation action.

**Wrap up**

**DAY 3**

Time: Full day

Participants: Programme and Project staff

**EXERCISE: SWOC Analysis**

Groups of 4-5, around 2 hours

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

Introduce the SWOC analysis and the objectives of the exercise: to look at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints faced by the organisation in relation to the organisational vision.

*Strengths and weaknesses usually relate to internal factors, whilst opportunities and constraints usually relate to external factors.*

***Strengths:*** *These are usually internal attributes that help you to achieve your objectives (e.g. project adaptability, key skills).*

* *What do you see as the key strengths of the team?*
* *Consider what makes these team strengths?*

***Weaknesses:*** *These are usually internal attributes that prevent you from achieving your objectives (e.g. missing expertise, financial resources, workload).*

* *What do you see as the key weaknesses of the team? What obstacles may prevent progress?*
* *What can be improved upon? What elements need strengthening?*
* *What stops the team performing at its best?*
* *What necessary skills are missing that you might need for delivering the team objectives?*

***Opportunities:*** *These are usually external conditions that are helpful in achieving your objectives, such as forthcoming events, issues or activities (e.g. new partnerships, funding opportunities).*

* *What opportunities do you see for the team outside the organisation that could help us do better?*
* *Are there some existing suitable gaps the team could step into?*
* *Where do you see the best forthcoming opportunities for the team?*
* *What is changing in the outside world that might create new opportunities for the team in the near future?*

***Constraints:*** *These are usually external conditions that could prevent you from achieving your objectives by constraining or threatening the team, partnership or project and its ability to act on opportunities (e.g. loss of key staff, economy, security).*

* *What constraints do you see for the team outside of the organisation?*
* *What obstacles does the team face in overcoming these constraints?*
* *What high risk things are you doing that might make you vulnerable to external impacts?*

a) Allow participants a few moments to note down individual ideas for each SWOC factor before sharing them in their group.

b) Ask each group to brainstorm as many Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints in relation to their objective/priority as possible, and to document ALL of these on their flipchart. Instruct sub-groups to tackle each of the four SWOC cells separately and in order, and to **prioritise the top 5 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints (i.e. 1 being the most important) before moving on to the next category.** You may wish to provide time limits for each category of the SWOC, e.g. 10 minutes for each.

Throughout this activity, the facilitator should, as needed:

* encourage individuals to be as honest and open as possible;
* ensure that participants do not get too caught up on categorizing factors that might fit in more than one category (for example something may be considered a strength or a weakness depending on individual perspective) as the important thing is to recognise it as a factor so that later the team can later agree whether and/or how to act on or address it;
* encourage participants to admit team weaknesses and recognise potential constraints, as ignoring these may undermine long-term success;
* ensure that the SWOCs are specific to the priorities/objectives identified earlier in order to make the exercise more constructive to the teams.

d) Evaluate your priorities, by answering the following questions - make brief, clear notes on a flipchart to present back to the rest of the group:

* How can you maintain or build on your strengths in the future?
* What can you do to remedy or negate identified weaknesses? Were any capacities identified in Activity 2 that might plug gaps identified as weaknesses?
* Is there a fit with any of the identified opportunities that might allow that opportunity to be pursued with pre-existing skills (considering the capacities identified in Activity 2 in particular)?
* Are there any ways in which the team’s strengths can be used to reduce vulnerability to or overcome constraints?

e) Present your priorities and suggested actions to the rest of the group.

Time: Around 5 hours

Participants: Programme and Project staff (and board members if possible / desired)

**Objectives**

* Identify and agree strategic issues
* Develop and agree strategic objectives
* Develop and agree strategic actions
* Finalise mission statement
* Organisational structure and capacity issues

**What are Strategic Issues?**

* Strategic issues are the issues that your organisation will address in order to contribute towards its vision
* Strategic issues will be a combination of programmatic and organisational capacity issues:
	+ Some strategic issues will relate specifically to the programmes and activities of your organisation - these will be tackled through the strategic actions that will be generated from the **strategic objectives**.
	+ Others will cut across your work and may be best addressed through an **internal capacity building plan**.
* It can help to state strategic issues as questions because this helps highlight where you need to make choices and decisions

**EXERCISE: Identifying the strategic issues**

Two (more if necessary) groups, around 1 hour

Equipment: Large post-it notes, felt tip pens

1. Using the work on visioning, defining the mission, the situational analysis (internal and external), identify the key strategic issues in the area you are working and for the organisation. Add each issue to a post-it note (one per note)

Think (is this issue strategic?):

* + Can your organisation do anything about the issue?
	+ Will the impact of addressing the issue be significant?
	+ Are there significant human / financial resource impacts?
	+ Will this issue be significant in 2 years’ time?
	+ Will there be important consequences if this issue is not addressed?

If the answer to most of these questions is ‘yes’, it is likely that the issue is strategic.

1. Add your issues to the wall – group related issues together.

**Prioritising Strategic Issues**

We now need to:

* Prioritise the strategic issues, synthesise (merge!) them and develop themes.
* Decide where the organisation is most likely to have most positive impact.
* Agree if there are any existing areas of programme work that will need to be phased out or new areas introduced.
* Decide which issues the organisation will NOT attempt to address even if they are burning issues, for example because it lacks the expertise to be as effective as another organisation with the relevant capacities.

**EXERCISE: Prioritising Strategic Issues**

As one group if possible, around 30 minutes

Equipment: large post-it notes, felt tip pens

1. Synthesise the strategic issues from the previous exercise and develop themes, and then prioritise them. Try to select 3 to 4 issues you feel are the most important.

This map may help you prioritise issues in your groups.

**Strategic Objectives**

* Statements of how you want the world to look when you have fixed a particular problem. They state clearly and precisely *what* the organisation wants to have achieved during the three or five year period ahead.
* These statements should be:
	+ realistic
	+ compatible with the mission (relevant)
	+ clear, as specific as possible
	+ achievable in the timeframe of the strategic plan
* There should be no more than 5 or 6 Strategic Objectives.
* Try to make each Strategic Objective clear, as specific as possible, and achievable in the timeframe of the strategic plan

**Examples of Strategic Objectives**

1. Increased employment of young people aged between 16 and 24 years in Belize City
2. For the breeding range and population of all native sea-birds to have significantly increased
3. For survival rates from infectious diseases to have increased to International Levels on Partner Sites

**EXERCISE: Develop Strategic Objectives**

One group if possible (could split it), around 1 hour

Equipment: flip chart paper, felt tip pens

1. Develop and agree wording for each of your strategic objectives (you may want to nominate a scribe and a facilitator within the group)

**Strategic Actions**

* Strategic actions state **how** each strategic objective will be achieved.
* There should be a set of strategic actions for each strategic objective.
* They form the basis for the more detailed operational plan which contains specific actions for specific people over a shorter time frame (e.g. 1 year).
* It is important not to make too many of these (e.g. recommend up to five per objective) or they will become impossible to achieve!

**Example**

Objective:

1. Increased employment of young people aged between 16 and 24 years in Belize City

Actions:

* Increase understanding of the development needs of young people in Belize City
* Develop young people’s skill base
* Improve access for young people to employment and training info and opportunities
* Raise awareness of employers of government incentives to employ young people
* Secure funds to develop the programme

**Key points to consider:**

* What are the most appropriate actions/activities to pursue in working towards the identified strategic objectives?
* What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of methods such as research, project funding, networking, advocacy and capacity building for realising each of the strategic objectives?
* What approaches or combination of approaches will be used: capacity building, institutional strengthening, research, advocacy, networking, conflict resolution, etc?
* Who will the partner organisations or counterparts be: other local NGOs, CBOs, faith groups, network NGOs, labour organisations, etc?
* Whom will the organisation collaborate with: government departments, international agencies, other local NGOs?

**EXERCISE: Defining Strategic Actions**

As one group or split between two groups and then each review the other team’s work, around 2 hours

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

1. Referring back to the Situation analysis which shows the underlying causes of the problems you are seeking to address, clearly define strategic actions for each of your strategic objectives. Write these clearly on your flipchart.
2. Review the work of the other group.
3. Discuss and agree strategic actions.

**Organisational Capacity Issues**

* During the strategic planning process, a number of strategic issues will have been identified that relate to organisational capacity, both strengths and weaknesses:
	1. Where these relate directly to the programmatic strategic objectives, it is important to ink them to the strategies for achieving those aims.
	2. Some issues will be broader and best addressed by developing an internal capacity development plan to help you build on strengths and overcome weaknesses.

**EXERCISE: Organisation Capacity Issues**

Two (more if necessary) groups, around 15 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

Please spend 10-15 minutes:

* 1. Checking that organisational capacity issues identified have been integrated under programme strategic actions where appropriate
	2. Capturing broader key organisational capacity issues that need to be included in an organisational capacity development plan

**DAY 4**

Time: Half day

**EXERCISE: Form follows function**

Two (more if necessary) groups, around 15 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens

You cannot decide how to organise your work until you have a clear idea of what that work will be. You may need to be open to considering changes. In your groups, answer the following questions – you may wish to sketch your ideas or write them down in order to share them with the rest of the group.

1. In order to achieve our strategic objectives:
* How should we group ourselves? What units, departments, teams are need to achieve all our objectives?
* What administration and financial support will be needed?
* Does it make sense to change any of our existing structures?
* Do we need any additional structures?
* Do we have the skills to do what needs to be done? If not, what additional skills do we need?
* What policies do we have in place?
* What systems will we need?
1. Discuss as a group and agree on any actions required.

**EXERCISE: Finalising your Mission Statement**

One group, around 20 minutes

Equipment: flipchart paper, felt tip pens, past exercise where everyone can see it

Preparation:

* Prepare mission statements from the first session so that everyone can see them
* Also ensure everyone can see the strategic objectives

Using the contributions from the first session, and based on what you now know are your strategic objectives for the next three years, together develop and agree on a mission statement. Repeat the process used for the vision statement above.

**What next?**

Present next steps**:**

* Writing up of process
* Present strategic plan to all staff – clarifications and incorporation of feedback
* Approval by Board
* Organisational Capacity Development Plan
* Annual Team Work Plan - including resources required to feed into Fundraising / Finance Strategy
* Individual Work Plans and performance objectives
* Well done – round of applause!