GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING IN MINE ACTION

GICHD

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is an international expert organisation based in Switzerland that works to eliminate mines, explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards. By undertaking research, developing standards and disseminating knowledge, the GICHD supports capacity development in mine-affected countries. It works with national and local authorities to help them plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate mine action programmes. The GICHD also contributes to the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other relevant instruments of international law. The GICHD follows the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APMBC
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

ASM
Ammunition Safety Management

AVR
Armed Violence Reduction

CCM
Convention on Cluster Munitions

CCW
Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

CRPD
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DAC
Development Assistance Committee (OECD)

DRC
Democratic Republic of Congo

EMS
Environmental Management System

GICHD
Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

GIZ
Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Germany)

IHL
International Humanitarian Law

IM
Information management

IMAS
International Mine Action Standards

IMS
Information management system

IMSMA
Information Management System for Mine Action

IND
Instituto Nacional de Desminagem (Mozambique)

KPI
Key performance indicator

MA
Mine action

MAC
Mine action centre

MAP
Mine action programme

MDG
Millennium Development Goals

MINT
Mine action Intelligence Tool

MSP
Meeting of States Parties

NGO
Non-governmental organisation

NMAA
National mine action authority

NMAC
National mine action centre

NMAS
National Mine Action Standards

NMASP
National Mine Action Strategic Plan

NRA
National Regulatory Authority (Lao PDR)

PCM
Project cycle management

PDCA
Plan – Do – Check – Act

PEST
Political, economic, social & technological

PESTLE
Political, economic, social, technological, legal & environmental

PI
Performance indicator

PSSM
Physical Security and Stockpile Management

PWD
Persons with Disabilities

QM
Quality management

QMS
Quality management system

RBM
Results-based management

SALW
Small arms and light weapons

SMART
Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound

SWOT
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats

TMP
Training Management Plan

UNDP
UN Development Programme

UNMAS
UN Mine Action Service

UNSCR
UN Security Council Resolution

UXO
Unexploded ordnance

VA
Victim assistance

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is relatively straightforward in principle, but often highly complex in practice. In essence it is the discipline of using available resources efficiently in pursuit of defined higher-level goals. Behind such a simple statement sit many different, and often conflicting, requirements, requests, preferences and desires. Strategic planners must balance what can be done with what should be done to provide a clear, appropriate and achievable national mine action strategic plan (strategic plan) from which managers, operators and stakeholders can develop their own work plans, systems and structures.

Some key words and phrases are used repeatedly in this guide: *participation; transparency; information management; monitoring; evaluation; review; improvement.* The basic building blocks of an effective and efficient strategic plan are involving stakeholders, ensuring that accurate and up-to-date information is made available to all those who need it, monitoring progress, evaluating the implementation of the plan, reviewing the context and amending the plan, when necessary.

This guide can be used when developing a strategic plan for the first time as well as when updating an existing strategic plan. National programmes already in existence should have performance data collected through monitoring and the results of previous evaluations to help inform the strategic planning process. New programmes are likely to have little or no such information to make use of, but they can benefit from the experience of other countries, as described in this publication and in detail in the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) case studies.

This guide draws on findings from seven strategic planning country case studies commissioned by the GICHD in 2012 and 2013.[1] The case studies document national strategic planning processes and identify good practices and lessons learnt. The case studies, and the references made to them in this guide, provide concrete examples of what has gone well and what has proved more problematic in mine/ERW action programmes around the world. The clearest conclusion is from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) case study:

The overarching lesson learnt by the DRC mine action programme was the importance of strategic planning.

METHODOLOGY

This guide has been developed based on an analysis of country case study findings and a thorough review of existing national mine action strategies. The case studies include countries with mine action programmes extending over more than 20 years and, in the case of Vietnam, over 40 years. The draft guide was reviewed by GICHD experts and by study advisory group members.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

A number of words used in this guide have specific meanings. They include:

- Output: the products, capital goods and services that result from a mine action intervention.
- Outcome: the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.
- Effectiveness: the extent to which planned activities and results are achieved.
- Efficiency: the relationship between the result achieved and the resources used.
- Monitoring: a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an on-going project, programme or policy with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives, and progress in the use of allocated funds.
- Evaluation: a process that attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the merit or value of an intervention.

Formal definitions of all terminology can be found in International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 04.10.

1 The country case studies are: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Vietnam. The country case studies are available on the GICHD website: www.gichd.org

QUICK START GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

A quick start guide is provided with this publication summarising key points and principles and describing the overall strategic planning cycle. It is provided as a check list and aide memoire for strategic planners. It is recommended for use in conjunction with the detail found in this guide and with further information available through the various publications listed in the 'further sources' list at the end of this publication.

Chapter 1

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

1.1 STRATEGIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

There are many definitions of strategy, but all agree that strategy is a high level plan to achieve goals and desirable ends with available means.

Strategic planning is the process of establishing a strategic plan, defining goals, ends and objectives and of allocating resources and responsibilities. At the heart of the process are questions such as what do we do? What do we want to achieve and why? For whom do we do it? How do we excel at what we do?

Strategic planning:

- clarifies the overall purpose of a national programme;
- defines the desired results of that programme's activities; and
- explains how those results will be achieved.

This guide focuses on the development of strategic plans for national mine action programmes. For simplicity and consistency this guide refers to programmes (rather than organisations) throughout, although many of the principles and tools described within it can also be applied at the level of individual organisations.

Strategic planning defines where a programme is going, how it intends to get there, and how it will know whether it is succeeding. A strategic plan encompasses an entire national mine action programme (MAP). Individual organisations, working within the programme, normally have their own action plans, consistent with the overall national strategic plan.

Strategic planning can be done well or it can be done poorly. To have real value it needs to be carried out with rigour, objectivity and the participation of appropriate stakeholders. When strategic planning is done in a superficial way, or when participants in the strategic planning process are not properly engaged and truly committed, it usually leads to nothing useful. Poor strategic plans sit on shelves or deep in filing cabinets, ignored until it is time for the next version to be prepared.

Standard quality management methods can be applied to the planning process and can be useful both to improve quality and to provide a framework for planners.

1.2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The purpose of the strategic planning process is to deliver a strategic plan that is appropriate, feasible and acceptable to key stakeholders and that addresses *all* aspects of mine action within the national programme. In Tajikistan, for example, the GICHD study noted that 'a key shortcoming of the [strategic plan] was that it focuses too much on TMAC (the Tajikistan mine action centre)'.[2]

The plan should not only address issues relating to the outputs of the MAP, but also consider questions about the relevance of the work, desired outcomes and the results of the work carried out within the MAP, as well as effective and efficient programming, coordination and information sharing. The plan also provides guidance to operators, maintains stakeholder confidence in the overall direction of the programme and acts as a reference point for funding to support programme activities.

Strategic planning addresses higher level questions of purpose, aims and how to achieve them. It does not normally include the detailed planning of individual operations or sites, nor would it usually include detail about which tasks are prioritised over others. It may well, however, describe the policies that should be applied when taking prioritisation decisions.

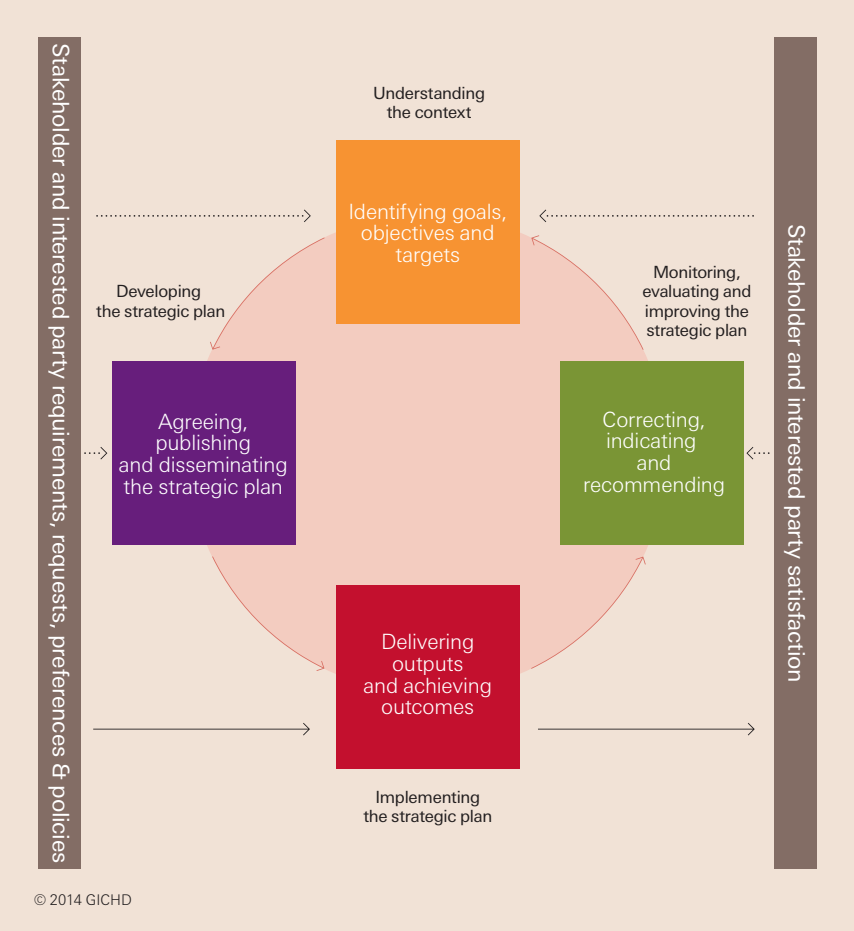
The full scope and benefits of the strategic planning process include:

- reflecting the needs, perspectives and priorities of a diverse groups of stakeholders and building consensus about where the programme is going;
- defining the purpose and vision of the programme; setting out clearly what the programme does (and does not do), and describing how it sees the situation in the future as a result of its activities;
- setting and communicating realistic goals and objectives to realize the vision within a defined and achievable time-frame;
- describing the approaches that will be adopted in pursuit of each goal;
- identifying action plans in relation to each approach and encouraging ownership of the plan by those responsible for its implementation;
- identifying responsible actors, establishing accountability for implementation of the strategy and focusing programme resources on key priorities;

2 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Tajikistan* (GICHD 2014).

- specifying the funds required to carry out the work;
- providing a baseline and specifying how the strategy will be monitored and evaluated;
- agreeing on future reviews and updates of the strategy in light of the results of monitoring and evaluation;
- identifying and solving major problems and challenges facing the programme; and
- compiling and agreeing the strategy.

FIGURE 1 THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE



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In DRC it was found that 'encouraging national government counterparts to link up with all levels of government for the purpose of planning helps both the quality of the planning process and future implementation efforts. This needs to be done within the context of formal planning initiatives that include those lower levels of government (such as DRC's strategic planning initiative), and through less formal and on-going information exchange that informs future planning and encourages the support of local authorities.'[3]

1.3 OVERALL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Figure 1 shows how strategic planning is a process that addresses issues which remain important over time. It does not usually relate to one-off events or short duration programmes. As such it embodies application of the fundamental quality management principle of continual improvement.

Strategic thinking and planning should be based on an understanding of the context within which activities will take place. The first step of the planning process – understanding the context – is essential. It is only by understanding, describing and analysing the context that an appropriate, feasible and acceptable strategy can be developed.

Developing the strategy requires clear division of responsibilities as well as participation by key stakeholders. The plan needs to be accepted and agreed by stakeholders if it is to be achievable and if it is to satisfy the needs of beneficiaries.

Strategy implementation is generally the responsibility of individual operating organisations and agencies, as well as the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA), working in compliance with established standards and policies and in pursuit of targets and objectives. The maintenance and use of an effective information management system (IMS) is critical to ensure that stakeholders are informed about progress and to allow monitoring of operations to confirm that they are appropriate, effective and efficient.

It is important to be clear that an IMS consists of more than a software tool, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). Instead it covers the entire system of identifying information requirements, collecting, validating and analysing data, reporting information and connecting with wider concepts of knowledge.

3 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: DRC* (GICHD 2014)

Information received through reporting, monitoring and evaluation networks is used to measure progress against the strategy and to identify new or changing circumstances that may justify a change to the strategy. While strategic plans should not generally be changed at short intervals, they do require review and, if necessary, adjustment to reflect changes in the surrounding context.

Strategic planning includes the need to delegate responsibility and authority to the lowest appropriate level, while retaining control over the general direction of the programme. Effective strategic plans include clear communication of what is expected from whom.

1.4 PHASES OF A NATIONAL MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

Strategic planning is necessary throughout the life cycle of a MAP, as the context, constraints and perspectives associated with a strategy change and evolve over time. Typical phases associated with a programme's life include:

- conflict;
- immediate post-conflict stabilisation;
- reconstruction;
- development; and
- transition/sustainable capacity to address residual threats.

The Guide to Mine Action (GICHD 2014) provides further details of the typical phases in the life cycle of a mine action programme. In addition, *The Guide on Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership (GICHD 2013)* highlights key issues and presents recommendations with regards to transitioning mine action programmes to national ownership.

EXAMPLES FROM NATIONAL MINE ACTION STRATEGIC PLANS

Vision

Lao PDR: The vision guiding this strategy is a Lao PDR free from the threat of unexploded ordnance (UXO), where individuals and communities live in a safe environment contributing to development and where UXO victims are fully integrated into their societies and their needs are met.

South Sudan: The vision presented in this 2012 – 2016 strategic plan corresponds to a South Sudan free of the threat of landmines and ERW, where all landmines and ERW victims enjoy equal access to age and gender-sensitive assistance and services, are fully integrated into society, and where the mine action programme contributes to the adoption of safer behaviours, and to the creation of a safe environment conducive to development.

Goals

Tajikistan: The Government of Tajikistan is in a position to comply with its international obligations related to landmines and Explosive Remnants of War

Sri Lanka: Establish and maintain institutional structures for the effective implementation, coordination and control of the mine action programme in Sri Lanka.

Tajikistan: All mine victims, boys and girls, men and women, have equal and proper access to adequate medical and physical rehabilitation and psychosocial support as well as to socio-economic and legal assistance.

Objectives

South Sudan: South Sudan and the parliament develop and adopt all necessary national legislations related to mine action activities.

Lao PDR: Reduce the number of UXO casualties from 300 to less than 75 per year

South Sudan: By 2016, the number of new landmine and ERW victims in South Sudan is reduced through provision of MRE services.

The scope of the strategic planning process is therefore likely to vary over time. The first time a strategic plan is developed (when a national MAP is first established for instance) will undoubtedly require full and careful attention to every aspect of the strategy. Planning needs to reflect the realities of post-conflict situations and, when appropriate, learn lessons from experiences in other countries.

In Mozambique, at the outset of the MAP, it was found that national institutions were weak and mine action operators and their donor partners established

priorities based largely on their own assessments of needs. Over time the situation changed and responsibility for priority-setting became increasingly a centralised responsibility.[4]

Once a programme is well established, an annual review process may only focus on some elements (such as specific action plans). A full strategic planning process may also be appropriate when there is a fundamental change in the nature of what the programme does, or in the scope of its activities: if a programme that has focused on landmine clearance is given new responsibilities for stockpile management for instance.

1.5 ESTABLISHING CONTEXT AND GATHERING STAKEHOLDERS INPUT

MAPs function within a context consisting of both internal and external elements. A strategic plan needs to reflect the influences of both contexts if it is to be:

- suitable (in light of the prevailing circumstances and conditions);
- feasible (within the constraints of the available resources, capacities and capabilities); and
- acceptable to stakeholders (consistent with their expectations, policies and standpoints).

Inclusive planning processes encourage participation and enhance the accuracy of planning documents.[5]

External context

- The programme's external context includes:
- social and cultural factors including local, national and regional ethnic, religious and cultural variations;
- the political, legal and regulatory environment;
- international treaty obligations (APMBC, CCM, CCW, CRPD, UN Security Council Resolutions, action plans (Cartagena and Vientiane) etc.);
- Millennium Development Goals (MDG);

4 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014).
5 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014).

- existing national government strategies (poverty reduction strategy for instance);
- financial, technological and economic factors;
- the natural environment;
- international influences and expectations; and
- relations with, and perceptions and values of, external stakeholders.

The strategic plan must be appropriate to social and cultural norms, practices and expectations of the country and, in some cases, of the different regions and populations with an interest in the programme's performance. The strategic plan must be consistent with political expectations, compliant with applicable laws and regulations, and feasible within financial, technological and other economic constraints. In Lao PDR for instance 'it is noteworthy that UXO action has been mainstreamed into the key National Social and Economic Development Plan.[6]

A strategic plan needs to reflect wider international expectations and influences. This may relate to the relationship with external financial donors, but it can also relate to the way in which the programme will be perceived globally as an indication of the affected country's own aspirations, expectations and commitment to instruments of international humanitarian law (IHL).

ENABLERS AND ENHANCERS IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

A range of political, economic, social and practical factors dictate whether the national mine action strategic plan can be efficiently and effectively implemented. They include:

- Security: continuing conflict, terrorist actions and high levels of crime or corruption all impede or prevent implementation.
- Political will: the MAP will struggle unless there is confidence within the programme, and a clear perception outside it, that it has high-level political support.
- Leadership: confusion and conflict will arise if different actors and stakeholders associated with the MAP have different priorities, perceptions or understandings of the strategic plan.

6 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)

- Funding: enough money is required to pay people, buy and run equipment and maintain systems to allow the MAP to run.
- Transparency: ensures that decision-makers obtain honest and accurate information when they need it, helping them make the right decisions and maintaining stakeholder confidence in the programme.
- Control of corruption: corruption often involves use of incentives to persuade decision-makers to take decisions that are not the most effective, efficient and consistent with the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. It erodes effective implementation of the strategy, reduces the reliability of information and undermines confidence amongst stakeholders.
- Information management and communication: a reliable comprehensive IMS with access to transparent data ensures that the MAP disseminates accurate information and receives details about requests, requirements and preferences from government, donors, beneficiaries, operators and other stakeholders.
- Liability and confidence: a clear, consistent and credible approach to questions of residual risk and liability is one of the most powerful enhancers of any MAP, giving decision-makers confidence to take efficient and appropriate decisions.

The need to comply with treaty requirements, such as when an APMBC Article 5 extension request must be presented, can be an important factor in energising planning processes and engaging the national bureaucracy in a way that simple donor requirements or project reporting could not.[7]

Like any other activity, mine action is subject to a range of trends, developments and ideas of good practice. The sector is itself subject to principles of continual improvement. Strategic planners should take the opportunity to look at lessons learnt by other affected countries, as well as using evaluations of previous plans, and incorporate them into both the planning process and the content of the plan.

7 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)

Internal context

The internal context of a mine action programme may be complex, with a number of government ministries, agencies and departments taking an interest in its structure and performance, as well as operators, NGOs, commercial developers, local political representatives and beneficiary groups.

Key elements of the programme's internal context include:

- governance – how it is directed, who it is accountable to;
- institutional architecture – roles, responsibilities and relationships;
- internal policies;
- capabilities, resources and knowledge;
- information management procedures and systems, information flows and decision-making processes;
- relationships with, and perceptions of, internal stakeholders;
- standards and guidelines adopted within the programme; and
- contracts, memoranda of understanding and other defined relationships.

The importance of information and its management throughout strategic planning processes is highlighted by the observation that 'perhaps the key element in the evolution of Mozambique's strategic planning process is related to the ownership and management of mine action information'.[8]

Analysis tools

ENHANCED SWOT ANALYSIS

The basic SWOT analysis is used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with a programme.

Advanced SWOT analysis raises key questions about the relationship between the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to help inform the planning process.

8 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)

Although the approach is widely used in commercial contexts, the same basic principles apply to the circumstances faced by strategic planners in a MAP.

A range of tools are available to assist with the analysis of internal and external context including:

- SWOT – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- PEST – Political, Economic, Social, Technological (often extended to PESTLE including Legal and Environmental aspects)
- stakeholder analysis
- power/Interest grids
- stakeholder circles

The aim of all such tools is to provide a description of different factors that influence an organisation or programme, and to help planners and managers identify trends, relationships and priorities within a complex environment.

Each tool has its advantages and disadvantages and there is a wealth of material available in literature and on the internet explaining how to make best use of them (e.g. Wikipedia which has descriptions of each tool).

Stakeholder Input

Specific stakeholders associated with individual programmes vary, but all fall within a similar architecture illustrated in **Figure 2**.

FIGURE 2 INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF A MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

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The architecture of most mine action programmes includes elements of five main 'arenas'.

- mine action arena – the authorities, agencies and operators directly involved in mine action;
- government arena – the various ministries and departments with an interest in the performance of the MAP; often providing members to the NMAA;
- local communities arena – including local authorities, organisations and the impacted women, girls, boys and men;
- market arena – including commercial mine action service providers and client organisations, such as oil and gas, civil engineering and minerals companies; and
- international arena – multilateral and bilateral donors and aid agencies, the UN and international institutions.

Stakeholder input can be collected through meetings, questionnaires and focus group discussions as well as a review of other organisations' plans and policies. Stakeholder analysis tools help strategic planners allocate weightings to the preferences, requests and expectations of different stakeholders and inform prioritisation processes.

1.6 GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Strategic planning requires a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of different stakeholders, recognising what can be achieved within constraints of resources and capabilities and identifying appropriate goals and objectives. In any population it is only possible to gain a valid understanding of needs and priorities if gender and diversity aspects are identified, analysed and fully incorporated.

The strategic planning process should reflect the needs and priorities of all gender and age groups, while taking into account diversity, including the specific needs of different ethnic groups, persons with disabilities (PWD) and socio-economic issues, etc. To achieve this, it is essential that gender and diversity issues are reflected within the different stakeholders that participate in the development of the strategic plan. There may also be a need to ensure that relevant documents are translated into different languages.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

'All mine victims, boys and girls, men and women, have equal and proper access to adequate medical and physical rehabilitation and psychosocial support as well as to socio-economic and legal assistance'. *Tajikistan*

'Advocate for the respect for international humanitarian law norms, particularly regarding the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability'. *Sri Lanka*

The development of the strategic plan is itself an important opportunity to incorporate overarching international and national policies and guidelines in relation to gender and diversity. It also allows for setting goals and objectives for how authorities, agencies and operators will ensure gender and diversity considerations are mainstreamed within their own organisational structures, practices and operations.

Successful implementation of any mine action strategy requires an effective approach to identifying and satisfying the different priorities and needs of women, girls, boys and men and of diverse ethnic, religious and affected groups. The importance of mainstreaming gender and diversity aspects during planning, implementation, and within monitoring and evaluation processes, cannot be overemphasised. These issues should be reflected within the strategy itself, and in subsequent monitoring and review.[9]

1.7 IDENTIFYING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The vision and goals of a programme describe its overall purpose and aspirations. They provide stakeholders with an understanding of where the organisation is going and, in general terms, how it wishes to get there.

Goals address long-term intentions and describe the wider, generic framework within which more specific objectives are set.

9 Other sources of information on gender and diversity aspects can be found in the UN gender guidelines, UNSCR 1325 and through the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) website www.gmap.ch

Objectives should always be consistent with goals, but they are usually more specific and address medium to short-term aspects of the programme's work. They are most useful when they exhibit **SMART** characteristics:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime bound

Targets typically consist of quantifiable measures of progress (indicators) towards the achievement of objectives.

'Making our country free of landmines' might be a goal; 'releasing 23 designated suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) during the next twelve months is an objective; and 'clearing 10,000 m^2 per month' is a target. Targets allow managers to monitor progress towards objectives that contribute towards achievement of goals.

Stakeholders should be involved in setting goals to ensure that they are appropriate to the programme and the context; feasible in light of the available resources, capacities and budgets; and are acceptable to stakeholders. In Afghanistan, the planning process 'galvanized the major stakeholders in the programme around operational issues'.[10]

While the highest level objectives (such as setting up a NMAA) may be agreed at the strategic stakeholder level, the setting of operational objectives is usually delegated to those with more direct responsibility for the implementation of the strategy. Targets are normally established once objectives have been set and represent rates of progress, or milestones, en route to achievement of the objectives.

The strategic plan normally only includes details of higher level objectives or aggregated targets; more detailed information about subsidiary operational objectives and field level targets are typically found in organisation or unit-specific work and project plans. The scale of the MAP influences the level of detail in the strategic plan; the smallest MAPS may include a good deal of operational detail in their plans, while larger ones are more likely to show delegation of detail to subsidiary organisations and authorities.

10 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Afghanistan* (GICHD 2014)

Results-based management

Results-based management (RBM) is needed for management of projects and implementation of quality management (QM) where there are multiple stakeholders instead of a simple supplier-customer relationship, and the beneficiaries are neither directly funding the action nor directly planning and implementing it. RBM makes it possible to apply QM methods to the outcomes and impacts that result from activities.

QM objectives are interested in deciding if the RBM objectives are 'fit for the intended purpose'. RBM objectives might, for example, be concerned with the results of making land available to people (such as increased agricultural production, or the construction of a school on released land). RBM is a method or 'toolkit' to manage and to apply QM where planners and implementers are spending other people's money to benefit people that they don't know.

Strategic planning should encompass both QM and RBM objectives. RBM objectives are concerned with medium and longer-term results and may be reflected within the text of a strategic plan. However, their final achievement depends upon the setting of project and programme objectives at lower levels within the MAP. A strategic plan may indicate who has responsibility for the setting of objectives at different levels, and should include appropriate mechanisms to verify the suitability, feasibility and relevance of all operational objectives within the wider strategic framework.[11]

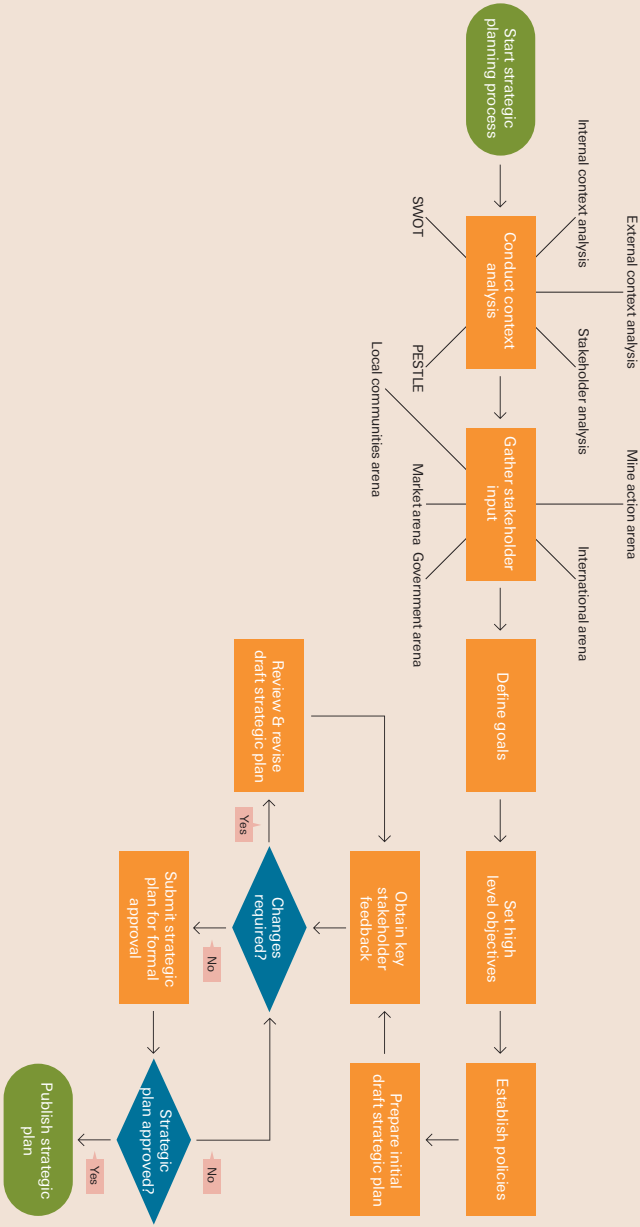
Functional objectives & targets

Objectives and targets, in support of programme goals, are not only set at different levels within a programme and its constituent organisations, but also within different functional divisions and departments. Budgets and cash flow forecasts are set in the financial context, and quality, safety and environmental objectives are typically set by operational elements in the MAP.

Overall goals of the programme, as well as its over-arching objectives, help inform planners and managers when they set objectives at different levels within their own functional areas.

11 Relevance means 'the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor'. *OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance.*

FIGURE 3 DEVELOPING AND ISSUING THE STRATEGIC PLAN



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1.8 DEVELOPING AND AGREEING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The main body of the strategy can be prepared when the context is analysed, stakeholder input gathered and assessed, and goals and objectives set. It is important that the responsibility for drafting the strategy is clearly defined; in established MAPs it is usually the MAC that drafts the plan for formal approval by the NMAA, but programmes at an early stage in their life cycle may not have a national MAC or NMAA. In such cases the strategy may be developed by UNMAS or UNDP or whichever organisation is performing the functions of the MAC and/or NMAA.

Clarity and consistency in the use of key terms and definitions in national planning documents is essential to establishing a common vision and strategic direction (noting that IMAS 04.10 provides agreed definitions of key terms used in mine action). A strategy's worth is not gauged on the basis of the weight of paper required to print it out and its presentation. It must communicate clearly and efficiently to authorities, operators and other stakeholders.

There is no single standard structure for a mine action strategic plan, although an example template is provided with this guide. It is important that the strategy covers all the elements that matter to the programme at its current stage of development and within the prevailing context. The plan should also seek to maintain an appropriate balance between broad direction and detailed management.

The strategic plan requires stakeholder support and buy-in to achieve results. To that end the initial draft is normally circulated to key and primary stakeholders, although it should be noted that this does not mean that every stakeholder should have power of veto over the plan. Key stakeholders are those that have significant influence upon, or importance within, the programme. Primary stakeholders are those affected, positively or negatively, by the programme's actions. In Mozambique it was noted that 'planning should be an inclusive process, involving all major stakeholders to varying degrees but, in particular, demining operators. Disconnects between the viewpoints and experience from the field and the perspectives and priorities of a national coordination body are now being minimised.'[12]

12 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)

If stakeholders request adjustments to the initial draft, those responsible for drafting must decide whether changes can be made without further reference to other stakeholders, or whether there is a need for more collective discussion and agreement.

Achieving an acceptable level of agreement can be a demanding and diplomatically/politically challenging task. The person with ultimate responsibility for drafting the strategic plan must have the necessary skills and profile to be able to fulfil this function.

Once the draft plan is in an accepted form it is normal to submit it for formal approval and adoption by the recognised authority within the country. This is often the NMAA, but may sometimes be a specific department or office within government (such as the Prime Minister or Deputy) or even the parliament. What is important is that the plan, once adopted, has a formal status that brings credibility and suitable power of enforcement.

Chapter 2

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Implementation is the process of converting potential into reality. The success of the process of implementation depends upon:

- identifying and addressing the most important tasks ('doing the right job')
- applying effective and efficient procedures, methodologies and techniques ('doing the job right')

'Doing the right job' depends upon the validity of the strategic plan itself – that it defines the right goals and objectives and correctly identifies the main types of activity within the programme. 'Doing the job right' requires the availability and employment of competent people using effective management systems, procedures and appropriate equipment.

Strategic planners need to have confidence that both aspects are addressed in the plan and are reflected in the capacity and capability of actors at every level.

2.1 COMMUNICATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic plans cover high level questions about what will be done, who will do it and how it will be done. It is common for large numbers of organisations and individuals to be involved at different levels and with different functions in implementing the strategy. A national MAP necessarily relies upon political support (at national, regional and local levels), as well as international engagement and implementer buy-in.

The more that internal and external stakeholders are aware of, and understand, the strategy and their roles within it, the greater the confidence they are likely to have in its suitability, achievability and acceptability. In Tajikistan 'the [strategic plan] was developed in an inclusive and consultative manner. All informants pointed out that they were satisfied with the drafting process and that they felt they had the opportunity to provide input and share recommendations in a meaningful way. A wide range of stakeholders was consulted, including operators, civil society, government ministries, etc.'[13]

13 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Tajikistan* (GICHD 2014)

The strategic plan should be communicated through all appropriate means, such as:

- websites;
- presentations to conferences;
- workshops (in the DRC and South Sudan, for example, the draft strategic plan was presented to stakeholders for endorsement/approval);
- hard copy hand-outs; and
- hard or soft copy mailings to key stakeholders.

Careful consideration should be given to deciding in which languages the plan should be made available. It may be appropriate to provide extracts, executive summaries or other condensed sections of the text to some groups. Establishing communication with key stakeholders also offers an opportunity to open channels for feedback and input during subsequent monitoring, evaluation and review phases.

2.2 COMPETENCE AND CAPACITY

Detailed day-to-day management of operations is normally delegated to operational units (such as the MAC), but there are important questions of management that remain valid at the strategic level. In particular they relate to availability of capable senior managers able to discharge their duties within the programme. The best strategy in the world will have little value if people with the right aptitude, skills and knowledge are not available to implement it.

The capacity needed to implement the strategy consists of both competence (to perform individual functions) and quantity (the numbers of competent people required at each level). At the operational level it is common to develop training management plans (TMPs) that identify competence requirements, training syllabi, logistic support needs and include details of individual courses, lessons and tests. It is less common to bring such a structured approach to the development of senior managers, but it is equally important that their competence needs are adequately addressed.

In a mature programme capacity questions may be limited to responding to changes in the scale of operations, or to the allocation of new areas of responsibility. In a newer programme questions of who will fulfil key functions, how they will be identified, recruited and trained may take on a much greater strategic significance.

Technical assistance is useful, perhaps indispensable to achieve good quality mine action planning, at various stages of a national programme. Some national MAPs have however struggled in the past when inappropriate individuals have been given responsibilities for which they were not well suited. In Mozambique, for instance, 'the fact that the period from 2002–2005 included the greatest concentration of technical advisors with the IND, and the most financial resources, but did not lead to the most constructive phase of planning for the IND, demonstrates that this is not the only factor involved in creating planning capacity'.[14]

Advice, support and capacity development at the strategic level should be carefully defined, described and sourced if they are to satisfy requirements and improve the strategic planning process. In Vietnam, 'mine action officials have also declined offers of technical assistance when they felt it was badly designed or premature'.[15] Similarly in Mozambique, 'national staff are leading key planning initiatives and are supported by technical advice only when required'.[16]

It is common, for instance, to find that victim assistance (VA) responsibilities are allocated to the ministry of health or social affairs. These entities typically have long-standing and relevant competences, but this choice is not universally made. It is important that, whichever entity takes on responsibility either already has the required competences and capacities or that a plan of action is developed to ensure that the required competences are developed, contracted in or otherwise established.

The strategic plan may not include details of how such competences will be assured but it should identify significant areas where there is an existing shortfall in competence or capacity. Departmental or other subsidiary managers can then be tasked with taking action to satisfy the requirement (and in doing so they should adopt a continual improvement approach to understanding the requirement, planning for its satisfaction, checking progress, and taking action in response to new or changing needs).

2.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Different MAPs choose to adopt different structures and allocate responsibilities in different ways, but all need to ensure that there is complete clarity about who takes on which roles and who has which responsibilities. Typical high-level functions that require clear allocation include:

14 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)
15 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Vietnam* (GICHD 2014)
16 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)

Pillars of mine action

The different pillars of mine action (Clearance, Mine Risk Education, Victim Assistance, Advocacy and Stockpile Destruction)[17], as well as emerging areas such as ammunition safety management (ASM), physical security and stockpile management (PSSM), small arms light weapons (SALW) and wider questions of armed violence reduction (AVR) and the use of weapons, need to be the clear responsibility of defined agencies, departments or ministries. Some MAPs choose to place all responsibility under the NMAA and MAC; others decide to separate activities across different agencies (responsibility for stockpile management is often retained by the Ministry of Defence for instance), even when a national MAC exists.

Prioritisation and tasking

Prioritisation of work, and the issuing of task orders to operators, can be one of the most contentious aspects of any MAP. Beneficiaries will be dissatisfied if their preferences are not recognised and their requirements are not addressed. Prioritisation may be a centralised process covering multiple pillars, spanning many regions, areas and provinces, or it may be delegated to different functional authorities and levels of government.

Clear policies on how to prioritise, a transparent prioritisation process and an efficient tasking system are fundamental to effective and efficient implementation of the strategic plan. A strategic plan should not generally include details about individual tasks. It should however include how to ensure that prioritisation and tasking processes are properly managed in accordance with national policies and plans. Further information on prioritisation can be found in the *GICHD Priority-Setting Briefs* available through the GICHD website.

Monitoring and evaluation

Responsibility for the on-going, and predominantly internal, function of monitoring should be established in the strategic plan, and reflected in activity from day one of implementation. Effective monitoring requires integration of operational and information management systems, including a clear understanding of what information is required, why and by whom.

17 www.mineaction.org/issues

Clarity on all aspects of the system including which performance indicators will be monitored and how they will be displayed and disseminated is a key responsibility that may be addressed within separate departments and divisions, or may be run under a unified IMS.

Treaty compliance

The strategic plan should include details of the country's intentions in regard to relevant international conventions (such as the APMBC, CCM, CCW and CRPD). If the country is already a signatory to any of the conventions then the strategic plan should detail responsibilities for compliance.

If the country is not a signatory then the international community will expect a clear statement of the country's position, intentions and plans and responsibility for any associated actions. Any uncertainty in this area may reduce resource mobilisation and the preparedness of some donors to support programme activities.

Accreditation and quality management

Responsibility for accreditation of operators and wider QM is normally given to the MAC, although other government entities may have parallel responsibilities for VA or other specialist functions within the MAP.

At the strategic level it is important to have confidence that the overall quality management system (QMS) is reliable and supports the programme's goals, objectives and policies, and that those people charged with QM roles and responsibilities are competent to perform the task. Further information on the establishment of a national QMS can be found in *10 Steps to a National QMS (GICHD 2014)*.

A number of different QM philosophies can be found within the mine action sector, ranging from those that are based upon distrust of operators (and that rely on intrusive, extensive and expensive inspection and oversight systems), to those that adopt a less intrusive combination of accreditation, monitoring and inspection to maintain confidence in the work quality.

It is important that the adopted approach gains and maintains the confidence of stakeholders. For instance, the strategic plan may be a vehicle for highlighting the preferred balance between quality assurance (QA) through measures like accreditation, and quality control (QC) of operations by actions like monitoring and inspection. This is an aspect of mine action that has received much attention and which can have significant implications for both confidence building and also cost-efficiency.

Operations

Overseeing operations is usually the responsibility of the MAC (or equivalent). Any legal instruments required to support the credibility of the overseeing organisation (such as laws formally establishing the MAC and NMAA) should be identified within the strategic plan. Where such instruments do not already exist the plan may include details of interim measures covering the period before formal adoption of laws or other instruments.

Most MAPs include a range of operators: national military units, national and international NGOs and commercial companies. There may be differences in the ways that operators are funded – direct MAP expenditure, bilateral funding, commercial contracts, etc. The way in which organisations gain permission to work and are tasked often varies significantly.

Clear (and simple) statements of requirements, processes and procedures should be available to ensure that operators know where they stand, what they must do and how they should go about their activities. Not all strategic plans include detail about individual systems, processes and procedures, but they should provide higher-level support to encourage efficient, well-targeted use of operational resources.

Standard-setting

Some MAPs choose to adopt IMAS; others develop their own national mine action standards (NMAS). Bodies responsible for drafting and approving standards should be clearly defined. The plan should also identify activities in relation to standards (such as the review and update of existing standards, or approval of new standards) that are expected to take place during the implementation phase.

It is usual for the NMAA to have responsibility for standards, but specific ministries may have their own relevant responsibilities. In some countries local standard-setting bodies may also be involved (such as STAMEQ – the Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality – in Vietnam). Formal approval of new or revised standards may be provided by the NMAA or there may be a requirement for parliamentary bodies or specific government offices to sign off documentation.

Information management

IM is an essential component of mine action: those pillars dealing directly with mine/ERW contamination are almost entirely IM processes. The importance of getting IM right cannot be overstated. Having a good system is no help if the data

it receives is incomplete, incorrect or gets lost. Equally, it is not enough to collect the right data if the IM system and associated processes do not retain it, secure it, analyse it and make use of it to inform decision-makers and stakeholders.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE

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Sound information management systems and practices are essential for successful strategic planning and effective results-based management. In this context IM is the process of turning data into the indicators required for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the strategic plan. IM processes should be integrated into decision-making at every level. This means establishing a high degree of integration, communication and understanding between information, operational and strategic management structures.

The results of monitoring and evaluation processes should be fed back into the system to inform updates to the strategic plan and to drive continual improvement of information, operational and strategic management processes.

The GICHD study in Lao PDR found that 'the principal issue that impedes strategic planning in the Lao PDR programme is unquestionably the lack of clarity on the

contamination problem'.[18] In Mozambique IND managers lamented the fact that they had difficulty relying on the data that was available. This made any reasonable planning exercise difficult and reduced the accuracy and legitimacy of the resulting planning documents. Not only did flawed data detract from managers' pride in their work, it also made them feel that they faced an impossible task in terms of planning. These two factors were de-motivating for IND personnel and worked against the establishment of a much-needed central planning and coordination role.[19]

IM is a cross-cutting issue. It applies to every level within the MAP, but also to all stakeholders. The importance of IM and its overall purposes and objectives should be made clear within the strategic plan.

Some MAPs choose to adopt specific IM strategies. The importance of IM within any MAP certainly justifies such a step, but it is important to make sure that any IM strategy is consistent with the overall strategic plan.

2.4 LAWS, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

Roles and responsibilities in relation to developing, applying and complying with laws, regulations and standards should be clearly defined within the strategic plan. It is also important that any such laws and standards are appropriate and support, rather than impede, progress within the MAP.

Any MAP is required to comply with a range of existing laws, regulations and standards (relating to labour law, the environment, financial accounting etc.). It may also need the adoption of new laws to support its own operations. Many countries formally establish key elements of the MAP, such as the NMAA and NMAC, through legal instruments. In other countries additional laws may address diverse aspects such as insurance, liability and the handover of land. Implementation of the strategic plan requires that both existing and possible new laws are reflected and addressed. If there is a need for the establishment of new laws then the plan should identify those agencies, departments or ministries that will be responsible for their development.

The MAP must remain aware of changes to laws, regulations and standards that fall outside its direct areas of responsibility. The makeup of the NMAA, with the involvement of various ministerial representatives, can go some way to ensuing that changes in applicable laws (such as for employment or the environment) are brought to the attention of strategic planners. However, it is advisable that

18 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)
19 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)

responsibilities for monitoring changes to the legal and regulatory environment are specifically defined and allocated.

2.5 PRIORITISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Prioritisation

Prioritisation and decision-making processes rely on a number of inputs; one of which is the strategic plan. A strategy should define the broad approach to prioritisation and may identify key criteria to be taken into account.

The strategic plan's requirements need to be clearly stated, understood and accepted by decision-makers for the prioritisation process to work well and for activities to be consistent with the strategic plan's goals and objectives. Potential uncertainties and misunderstandings related to prioritisation need to be identified and addressed as soon as possible in the implementation phase.

Those responsible for prioritisation are often the ones who identify any inconsistencies or impracticalities in the strategic plan; if resources or funding are not available to support planned activities, for instance. It is important that, if such a situation arises, it is brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities so that the strategic plan can be reviewed (as described in Chapter 4) and action taken.

Prioritisation should be consistent with the requirements of the strategic plan. If it is, then it will also support the achievement of strategic objectives and the pursuit of strategic goals. Confirming that this is the case is an important component of monitoring and evaluation systems. Appropriate indicators should be established to maintain on-going confidence during implementation.

In Vietnam the conflict was followed by a 'big push' to clean surface and shallow contamination in populated or productive areas followed by proactive clearance of known minefields. Today, instead of targeting contamination, UXO survey and clearance efforts are focused on areas slated for development (i.e. where there will be a change in land use).[20]

Implementation

Implementing agencies, partners and organisations usually develop their own objectives and targets, relevant to their individual operations. This is to be

20 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Vietnam* (GICHD 2014)

encouraged, but it is important that organisational objectives are consistent with the higher-level objectives and goals detailed in the national strategic plan. The goals and objectives described in the strategic plan and associated policy documents should assist operators and MACs to select and define appropriate objectives and targets.

Operators should establish their own monitoring systems to indicate progress towards achievement of objectives, and to confirm compliance with the strategic plan. Evaluations of organisations, departments and other individual agencies should include an assessment of their compliance with the strategic plan. Evaluations may also consider the suitability, applicability and acceptability of the strategic plan itself. Strategic planners should encourage and welcome feedback, comments and suggestions obtained from such sources. The strategic plan may include a mechanism to facilitate this.

2.6 INDICATORS

Indicators are used to track progress in order to confirm that implementation is in accordance with the requirements of the strategic plan. Indicators can also provide important information for communication to stakeholders.

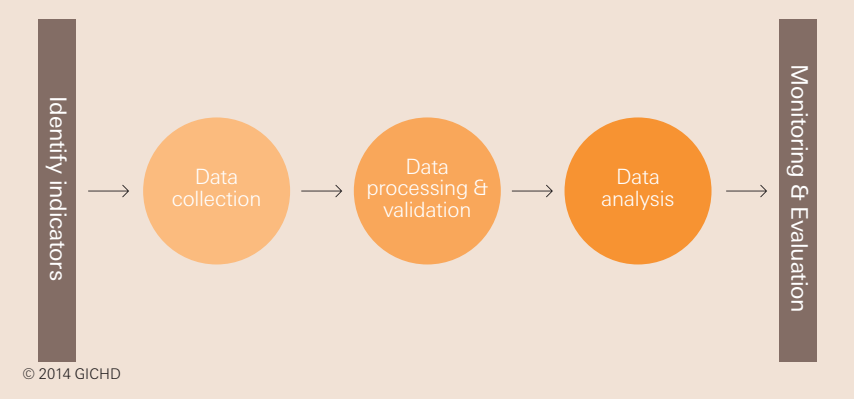
Indicators for programme outputs are typically direct, quantitative (i.e. numeric), easy to measure, objective and clear. They include square metres cleared, UXO destroyed etc. Indicators for outcomes, and especially impacts, are often indirect, qualitative, difficult or time-consuming to measure (e.g. interviews), subjective and opinion based, and it can be hard to get a clear result. They include measuring 'satisfaction', 'behaviour change', 'utility' and similar. It is therefore not surprising that there has been more focus on measuring outputs. However, it is measurement of outcomes and impacts that are more useful in determining overall strategic programme progress, quality and success.

Within the MAP, and the organisations associated with it, there will be many key performance indicators (KPIs) in use, but the point of *key* indicators is to select a small number of performance indicators, for a highly specific monitoring situation, to give a clear overview of performance on a single sheet of paper or a single computer screen. KPIs for a different purpose will be different KPIs that are suited to the specific purpose. Too many performance indicators result in less clarity and comprehension.

At the strategic level there should be a clear understanding of which performance indicators (PIs) are important so that the IMS can be directed to deliver the required information. In many cases strategic KPIs are aggregates of data collected from

a number of organisations, activities and elements within the MAP. They should show how the MAP is progressing towards its higher-level goals and objectives. In Cambodia the national strategy includes KPIs that show how mine action is contributing to poverty reduction and land tenure.

FIGURE 4 INDICATORS, INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & MONITORING & EVALUATION



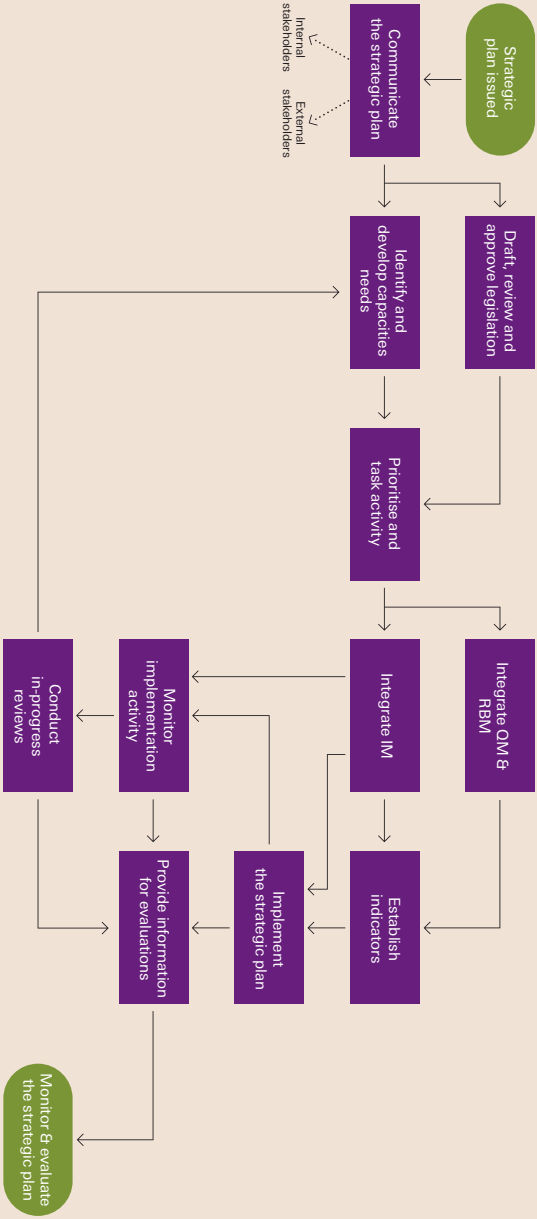
PIs are an important component in the confidence-building process. How they are displayed merits careful consideration. Graphs, charts, maps, tables and other tools are well known, but business intelligence systems (such as MINT, the Mine action Intelligence Tool) offer additional options. In Afghanistan the common impact measuring system used within the Article 5 extension request – the Ottawa Ranking system – is a highly innovative way of measuring the impact of APMBC clearance targets for a mine-affected state.[21]

Key indicators for strategic planners are found in feedback from stakeholders (including beneficiaries, donors and managers/operators) within the MAP. Strategic planners should ensure that appropriate systems are established to encourage, collect and analyse such feedback.

It is a feature of human nature that whenever a performance indicator is established there is a temptation to chase it, by focusing on activity that tends to generate positive data (even though doing so may be detrimental to some other important aspect of the programme), or to falsify data to conceal failure or present an unduly positive picture. Many mistakes can be forgiven in mine action, so long as lessons are learnt and changes introduced to improve the situation and prevent repetition of the error. The provision of untruthful data cannot be tolerated as the consequences of false information are too severe.

21 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Afghanistan* (GICHD 2014)

FIGURE 5 IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN



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Decision-making at every level, including the strategic level, depends on the availability of reliable information. Appropriate standards, monitoring, quality monitoring and enforcement in relation to IM should be a feature of the implementation phase.

2.7 INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive and reliable IMS, functioning throughout the implementation phase, is a pre-condition for the successful implementation of the strategic plan, as well as for its future review and update. IM in MA is more than just IMSMA (although that can be an important tool within an IMS). The tendency to view IM as synonymous with IMSMA has resulted in IM processes with considerable room for improvement.[22] IM encompasses all aspects of the identification, collection, collation, storage, analysis and communication of information relevant to the MAP and its stakeholders.

At the strategic level authorities and stakeholders need to know that an IMS, or more often multiple IMSs, are in place, are being well managed and are receiving the required data, that is then analysed, presented and disseminated. They need to have confidence in the quality of the data used within the IMS.

Strategic confidence relies on having a complete picture of progress and performance across the programme. Decentralised and varied IMSs (often an inevitable consequence of the many different actors involved in a MAP) mean that bringing information together at the higher level can be challenging. Different ways of measuring the same things, different approaches to counting events or resources, and different attitudes towards the importance of information, all combine to create significant problems for strategic planners seeking to understand the performance of the MAP and of the strategic plan.

Appropriate attention and energy should be directed towards questions of IM across the MAP during planning implementation. It can be hard to adjust IM approaches, processes and habits once they are established, risking time-wasting, poor decision-making and the loss of (or failure to collect) important data.

Openness and transparency tend to raise confidence amongst stakeholders and promote efficient operations. Secrecy and suspicion undermine confidence and lead to organisations working at cross-purposes or generate inefficiency as decision-makers find themselves unable to access the information they need, when they need it. The strategic plan is a good place to highlight policies in relation to information and its importance.

Chapter 3

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic planning cycle only works if the feedback loop in the overall cycle (Figure 1) is closed. Developing and implementing the plan are important, but without the monitoring and evaluating parts of the system there is no opportunity to understand what is happening, to make corrections to the direction and structure of the programme and to improve future versions of the strategic plan.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide the main stakeholders with information about the extent of progress, the achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.[23] As such it requires integration of operational and information management functions with clear reporting systems, based on open and honest reporting of data. Monitoring focuses on what is going on and, when managed properly, it can lead to immediate improvements.

Impact monitoring is an important aspect of the process, and analysis of community data represents an important part of its feedback loop. However, the impact of mine action can take a long time to develop (up to several years) and it is often difficult to link specific impact directly to programme outcomes. Impact almost always depends on multiple factors, some of which are linked to the MAP, but other factors outside the control of the programme may also be critical. For example, demining a road may not result in an impact of increased transport until a destroyed bridge is reconstructed to carry traffic. Used with care, impact monitoring allows successes to be identified and duplicated and problems detected and dealt with, thereby ensuring continual improvement of the programme.[24]

The strategic plan should identify key responsibilities for the development and maintenance of monitoring systems and may include details of higher-level performance indicators relevant to strategic review and steering processes (steering in the sense used in the GIZ Capacity WORKS system – it encompasses the concept of steering in the sense of navigating a ship, but also ideas of 'management' and 'governance').[25]

23 Formal definition in IMAS 04.10
24 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)
25 Capacity WORKS, The management model for sustainable development, GIZ, 2011

Evaluation

Evaluation involves assessment, as systematically and objectively as possible, of an on-going or completed programme, its design, implementation and results, to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learnt into decision-making process.[26] The strategic plan may include details of the programme's policy on evaluations – who may conduct them, how often they should be conducted and any overriding questions to be addressed.

The real value of evaluation is only realised if it is used to influence planning, and especially strategic planning. Evaluation is almost always an investment for the future; if results are not used to inform future planning then the cost of the evaluation is a wasted cost. When the results are used properly they help improve longer-term outcomes.

Evaluation is different from monitoring in that it seeks to make a quality judgement based on the results of monitoring; it typically has a broader scope (being concerned with whether or not the right objectives and approaches were chosen); it is usually less frequent (taking place mid-term or on completion of activity); it normally involves external/independent personnel and its results are used by planners and policy makers, rather than just managers.

In Lao PDR, 'the UXO programme demonstrated responsiveness to evaluations in regards to several important issues. Key aspects of the UXO programme that were adapted as a result of external evaluations include the establishment of the NRA and the change from UXO Lao being a coordinating body to solely undertaking a role as a national operator. This responsiveness and resulting changes demonstrated a willingness to adapt and to improve.'[27]

Strategic planners have an interest in monitoring and evaluation at two levels. The first, and most obvious, is the performance of the MAP itself - the extent to which it achieves its objectives, reaches targets and contributes to overall progress towards goals.

The second level is the performance of the strategic planning process and the suitability of the resulting strategic plan. Both aspects are important and both require appropriate attention.

26 Formal definition in IMAS 04.10 and www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation
27 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)

3.1 MANAGING THE QUALITY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

In general terms quality is defined as the extent to which requirements are satisfied.[28] The definition applies when considering what is meant by the quality of strategic planning. The quality of the plan and of the planning process is not the same as the quality of the work carried out under the umbrella of that plan. Both perspectives matter, but they are not one and the same thing.

It is also important to be clear about whose requirements need to be satisfied.[28] Different groups of stakeholders have different expectations. The requirements of a national strategic plan include that it should:

- define goals and outcomes that are consistent with overall national government priorities;
- be achievable within budget, logistic and resource constraints;
- lead to efficient use of available resources;
- result in the achievement of desired outcomes;
- be consistent with applicable policies;
- be understood by managers, stakeholders and other interested parties;
- be updated when necessary in response to changing circumstances and conditions; and
- be reviewed and improved at appropriate intervals.

QM of the MAP itself covers the mass of different activities and organisations typically involved in its day-to-day work. The subject is covered in considerable detail elsewhere[29] and, while it is a subject of importance to strategic planners (who want confidence that the plan will be implemented competently and consistently), it is not directly addressed in this publication.

3.2 PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Results-based management (RBM) is a performance management system used when the client and beneficiary are not the same; this is very often the case in mine action when the party paying for work (donor, UN, Government agency) is neither the direct beneficiary of the work (such as local people and communities)

28 The formal definition in ISO 9000:2005 is 'degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements'.

nor the organisation responsible for planning the work, nor the implementing partner. It provides an extra set of concepts and tools to implement QM when there are different categories of customers to satisfy.

QM typically focuses on the quality of the products or services delivered by an organisation (its outputs). RBM widens the management process's scope to include changes to knowledge and behaviour (the outcomes) that result from the delivery of outputs. It helps address questions about whether a programme or project is making a difference to a country and its people, rather than simply delivering services or products.

A key component of RBM is performance measurement – the process of objectively measuring how well an agency meets its stated goals or objectives. It typically involves:

- articulating and agreeing objectives (as in Chapter 1 of this publication)
- selecting indicators and setting targets (Chapter 2)
- monitoring performance (collecting data on results) (Chapter 3)
- analysing and reporting those results in relation to the targets (Chapter 3)

Results are usually measured at three levels – immediate outputs, intermediate outcomes and long-term impacts. This helps build agreement around objectives and commitment to the performance measurement process. In contrast, in Lao PDR, it was found that 'UXO action results are predominantly presented and communicated in outputs – focusing on square metres cleared and number of women, girls, boys and men targeted for risk education. Despite frequent references to the linkage between UXO action and development, there is a notable lack of qualitative, outcome and impact data.[30]

STRATEGIC PLANS AND RBM

'A key reason for revising the strategic plan was to better align the strategy with the government's development and poverty reduction plans, with a wish to integrate the UXO sector into the broader development agenda'. *Lao PDR*

29 Including in IMAS, as well as *10 Steps to A National Quality Management System* (GICHD 2014)
30 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)

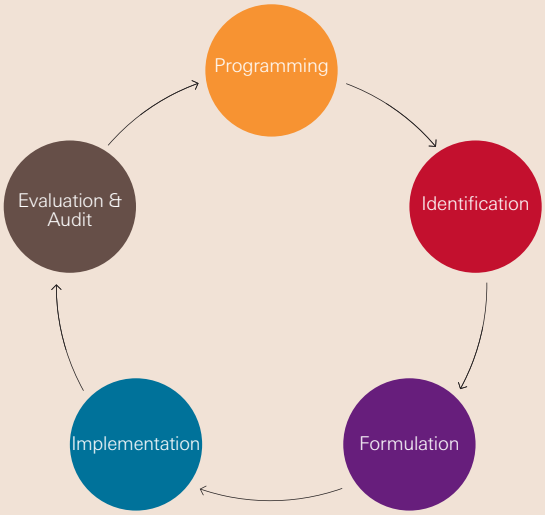
At the strategic level, questions of quality go beyond the characteristics of 'products' alone, and embrace wider questions about results, outcomes and impacts. A number of tools are available to help planners consider how to link practical activity with the achievement of desired outcomes (which should themselves be consistent with strategic goals and objectives).

The available tools all have the common feature of seeking to address quality at every stage of the overall process, through understanding situations and needs, through planning and prioritisation, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation and finally review (sometimes called reflection).

Strategic planners should familiarise themselves with such tools, and draw upon them to support detailed implementation of the processes described in this publication.

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT (PCM)

PCM is used within the European Commission (EC) to support ongoing improvements in the quality of EC development assistance. Quality is defined primarily in terms of the relevance, feasibility and effectiveness of the



programmes and projects supported with EC funds, including how well they are managed. The approach has been in use since 1992 and is now widely understood and applied.

PCM is a cyclical process reflecting many of the same principles outlined in this study and found within RBM and QM. A key feature of the system is the establishment of quality criteria at every stage of the process, taking the concept of quality beyond questions of the delivery of products or outputs into the management of quality at entry into the process and at exit from it, as well as during all internal steps and stages.

PCM includes extensive explanations of the function of monitoring, evaluation and audit.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm

3.3 STRATEGIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation take place at three levels:

- getting the planning process right;
- understanding the extent to which the strategic plan satisfied requirements; and
- checking implementation of the strategic plan.

3.3.1 Getting the planning process right

It is sometimes more difficult to monitor and evaluate the strategic planning process itself than the implementation or results of the plan. Like any process it has inputs (previous plans, context analyses, stakeholder requirements and suggestions, etc.) and delivers a product – the strategic plan. It also expects to lead to outcomes and impacts associated with achievement of its overall goals.

Strategic planning is important, but can also need time and resources, and, if managed poorly, can be disruptive and the cause of dissatisfaction, distrust and delay. Understanding and managing the process effectively and efficiently brings many benefits in terms of management time and effort, stakeholder satisfaction and national and international profile.

The most common indicator used to monitor the strategic planning process is duration and compliance with deadlines (does it take place on schedule?). There are other aspects that also lend themselves to monitoring, such as whether all identified key stakeholders contribute to the development of the strategy. Established QM tools, including the concept of continual improvement (the PDCA cycle), and the overall strategic planning process diagram (figure 1) provide a framework within which strategic planners can consider the quality of the planning process and the various steps within it, as well as identifying results and outcomes suitable for management through RBM, PCM and systems such as Capacity WORKS.[31]

Evaluation of the strategic planning process should be subject to the same standards as for any other evaluation, but its focus is different. In this case the evaluation considers the extent to which the planning process:

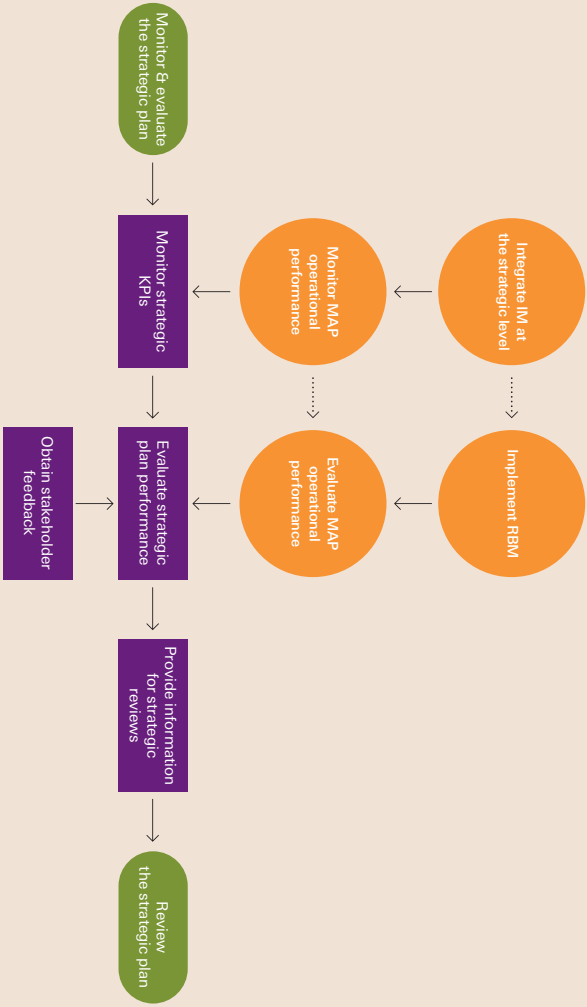
- reflected the prevailing programme context;
- encouraged/achieved participation by appropriate stakeholders and made use of their input;
- developed a strategy that was consistent with wider national objectives and policy and with international obligations;
- mainstreamed gender and diversity considerations and achieved agreement amongst stakeholders;
- identified capacity development needs and included appropriate responses to those needs;
- identified realistic resource mobilisation needs and allocated associated responsibilities;
- established key policies for prioritisation and other facets necessary for efficient and effective implementation of the MAP;
- ensured that monitoring and evaluation systems were established and implemented;
- reflected the results of previous monitoring and evaluation; and
- obtained feedback from stakeholders about the strategic planning process and ways in which it could be improved.

31 'Capacity WORKS® is GIZ's management model for sustainable development. It operationalises GIZ's approach to managing and steering complex projects and programmes. The model delivers effective capacity development support by sustainably improving the performance capability of people, organisations and social institutions with which GIZ cooperates worldwide.' https://www.giz.de/en/ourservices/1544.html

3.3.2 Evaluating the strategic plan

As the primary product of the planning process the strategic plan should be assessed in its own right against the criteria of relevance, fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

FIGURE 6 MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN



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Typical questions include:

- did the plan satisfy stakeholder expectations and requirements?
- was the plan comprehensive enough – were any critical items left out?
- did the plan include unnecessary or irrelevant elements?
- did the plan prove to be achievable?
- were MAP actors and other stakeholders aware of the plan and its contents?
- was the plan followed within the MAP?
- is there evidence of achievement of expected results, outcomes and impacts – is any lack of evidence due to the plan or to weakness in monitoring or IM?
- does the plan need to be changed in light of new circumstances or conditions?
- were the identified goals and outcomes relevant?

Fundamental principles of evaluation, especially of transparency and independence, an ethical approach and capacity development are essential for the delivery of a valid evaluation in the complex, and often challenging, political and diplomatic environment in which strategic planning takes place.

Leadership and political commitment often make the difference between an open, honest and meaningful evaluation process and one that leaves important information hidden to save embarrassment, creating suspicion and anger and leaving inefficiencies in place.

3.3.3 Monitoring implementation

Monitoring of implementation involves collecting, analysing, communicating and making use of information about progress within the MAP. Monitoring systems and procedures should ensure that relevant information is provided to the right people at the right time to help them make informed decisions.

Monitoring should flag up strengths and weaknesses in the MAP and enable responsible managers and authorities to deal with problems, improve performance, build on success and adapt to changing circumstances. In the DRC evaluations have been used to objectively assess performance in the MRE and AV components and to improve the results and impact of future project efforts.[32]

32 Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: the DRC (GICHD 2014)

Monitoring systems typically focus on:

- practical progress and the quality of MAP processes (such as stakeholder participation, local capacity building etc.)
- financial progress (budget and expenditure)
- initial response by target groups to MAP activities
- reasons for any unexpected or adverse response from target groups, and what remedial action can be taken.[33]

The close parallels with IM systems are clear; monitoring relies upon effective and efficient IM systems to provide the information required to inform managers, authorities and decision-makers.

At the strategic planning level the key requirement is confidence that implementation monitoring is taking place and that the results of that monitoring do not call into question the validity of any significant aspect of the strategic plan. Evaluating implementation of the strategic plan should be conducted in accordance with the DAC standards[34] and any relevant MA standards (such as IMAS 14.10 Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions).

The strategic plan may include details of policies with respect to evaluation and provide important background information for evaluators when preparing and conducting their evaluations.

The strategic plan should support and encourage adoption of the widely used DAC standards. Confidence in effective implementation of the strategic plan relies upon appropriate and effective evaluations. Any findings from evaluations or results of monitoring that suggest any shortcomings in monitoring and evaluations systems should be acted upon as a matter of urgency.

33 Adapted from Europaid PCM guidelines 2004
34 http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandardsfordevelopmentevaluation.htm

Chapter 4

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Review is often seen as a necessary but undesirable task, something that takes operators away from the field and managers away from their desks. Poorly structured and managed, overlong and unfocused review meetings do not help.

Review is a critical component (maybe the most critical component) of any cyclical management process. Review is the point when the 'feedback loop' is closed, whether considering QM, RBM, PCM or the strategic planning process. Knowledge gained by checking implementation (through monitoring and evaluation) is then used to learn, adjust and improve the strategy and to drive the programme towards the realisation of its goals. In Lao PDR a key factor that triggered the review of the first strategy was the desire to better align the UXO strategy with key national development plans and strategies.[35]

The review process should receive an appropriate level of attention and effort. It should not be seen as a tick box exercise; something that has to be done quickly before embarking on an update to the strategic plan (something that is itself often more of a rollover of the previous plan than the result of a rigorous consideration of the current situation). The review process should be seen as the engine that drives the whole strategic planning and implementation process forward.

The most effective organisations and programmes tend to be those that are very good at closing the improvement cycle through efficient, targeted review processes. Review need not be excessively time-consuming nor over-frequent, but it represents an essential opportunity to check that the strategy still makes sense within prevailing circumstances and conditions. In Vietnam 'mine action officials have not lost sight of the fact that, while explosives contamination may be reasonably static, the impact of that contamination is dynamic, changing with the pattern of economic growth and socio-economic development'.[36]

4.1 PURPOSE OF REVIEW

A review should consider evidence about the performance and progress of the MAP in order to take decisions about what needs to be done to keep the programme on track, improve it, or adjust it in light of changing circumstances and conditions. The Mozambique national MAP's review of progress under the 2002–2006 plan highlighted many important lessons learned for the programme and these redirected IND efforts during the subsequent phase of planning.

35 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)
36 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Vietnam* (GICHD 2014)

Incorporating this formal review process into the work procedures of the programme was an important advance for the IND and supported progress on various fronts.[37]

In Lao PDR an early revision of the national strategy illustrated a responsive and pro-active approach, adapting to key developments in the international and national contexts. It further indicated that the importance of having a national strategy which accurately reflects the reality on the ground is recognised.[38]

Reviews can be scheduled, planned into the strategic cycle, or they can be reactive in response to some significant event or change in the programme and its context. Any review should identify actions, allocate responsibilities, agree timescales and establish reporting mechanisms to confirm when actions have been completed.

While the strategic plan itself may not be reviewed in its entirety every year, important subsidiary elements such as work plans are normally the subject of more frequent review processes.

Other aspects of the plan may require review when an important part of the surrounding context changes – such as when new legislation is passed that affects aspects of the programme's operations, or when there is a significant change in the security situation.

4.2 REVIEW PROCESSES

Efficient and effective review processes are tightly focused and well controlled. They have clear objectives and agendas, and yield well defined actions that are implemented in a timely manner.

Scope and frequency

The scope of any review should be clearly defined before starting detailed work. Within the strategic planning process examples might include:

- planned mid-term review of the entire strategy;
- scheduled review of the entire strategy prior to drafting a new version;
- planned annual review of MAP workplan;

37 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique* (GICHD 2014)
38 *Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR* (GICHD 2014)

- unscheduled review of the entire strategy following outbreak of conflict in part of the country; and
- review of environmental aspects of the strategy following the adoption of new legislation in the national parliament.

The review process may include a number of meetings when larger groups of participants are invited to provide feedback on the strategic plan.

Strategic plans have a typical duration of three to five years, although in some cases MA strategic plans look forward over ten or even fifteen years. Strategic planners should select a period that is appropriate to the current stage in the programme's life-cycle, reflects other national government planning cycles and that recognises that, the longer the duration of the plan, the greater the likelihood that the strategic context will change significantly.

It is normal to have a formal full review of the plan around half way through its planned duration (so typically between one and a half and two and a half years after its inception) and before preparing the next version of the strategy.

On-going monitoring and intermittent evaluation processes should provide the evidence necessary to understand performance. It is important that the information provided by those processes is not ignored. Interim reviews of key aspects of the programme are a good way to ensure that trends and any need for adjustment of the plan are identified early.

A programme of reviews should be established to ensure that those with strategic responsibilities are kept informed of progress and have the opportunity to take action to adjust the plan if it is necessary to do so.

Major changes in political, economic or other aspects of the programme's context may result in the need for unscheduled reviews to consider whether action is required to modify the strategic plan.

Preparation

Review processes work best when they are well managed and when participants are prepared to contribute to the review and take evidence-based decisions.

Prior to any review the information required to allow participants to take decisions must be made available. IM systems must be able to provide up-to-date, accurate and complete information when it is required. The validity of decisions taken during review processes depends to a great extent on the validity of information used to

support those decisions. Effective QM within the IMS is essential to the reliability of the review process and, by extension, to the whole strategic planning process. As noted earlier in this document, the IMS is not just a computer software product but the entire system that enables the collection, storage, retrieval and analysis of relevant data and information. The IMS includes measures of the relevance, accuracy and reliability of the data.

Information about selected KPIs (including trends over time), the results of evaluations and other feedback from key stakeholders, performance against targets and evidence of progress towards strategic objectives and goals should all be available to review participants.

Preparation should include ensuring the involvement of all critical stakeholders – those whose agreement is required for any decisions to be taken. A clear and focused agenda should be agreed and circulated in advance to participants.

Outputs

The primary outputs of any review process are actions. Details of each action should include who is responsible for the action, what will be done, when it will be done by, and how its completion will be confirmed back to the review body. Review is the point at which the PDCA cycle is closed and the next revolution of the strategic planning cycle starts.

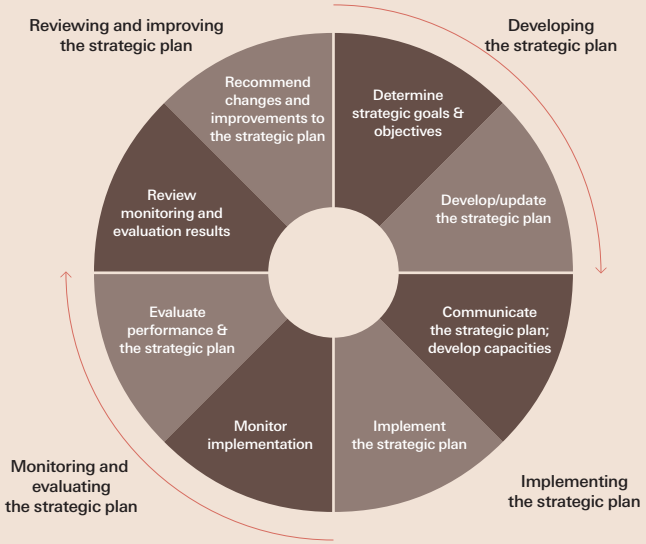
4.3 UPDATING AND IMPROVING AN EXISTING STRATEGIC PLAN

As the review process closes the PDCA quality improvement loop it provides important inputs into the next planning phase (Chapter 1 of this publication). These can be in the form of recommendations, suggestions or in some cases formal requirements. Those drafting the new version of the strategic plan should be aware of the results of the review process and reflect them appropriately in the updated plan.

4.4 CONTINUAL LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

A key feature of any IM, QM, RBM or PCM system is the concept of continual learning and improvement. This concept applies at every level of a MAP and is seen in changes to operational procedures, decisions about buying new equipment and in the development of national capacities. It is equally important in the strategic planning process.

FIGURE 7 STRATEGIC PLAN IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



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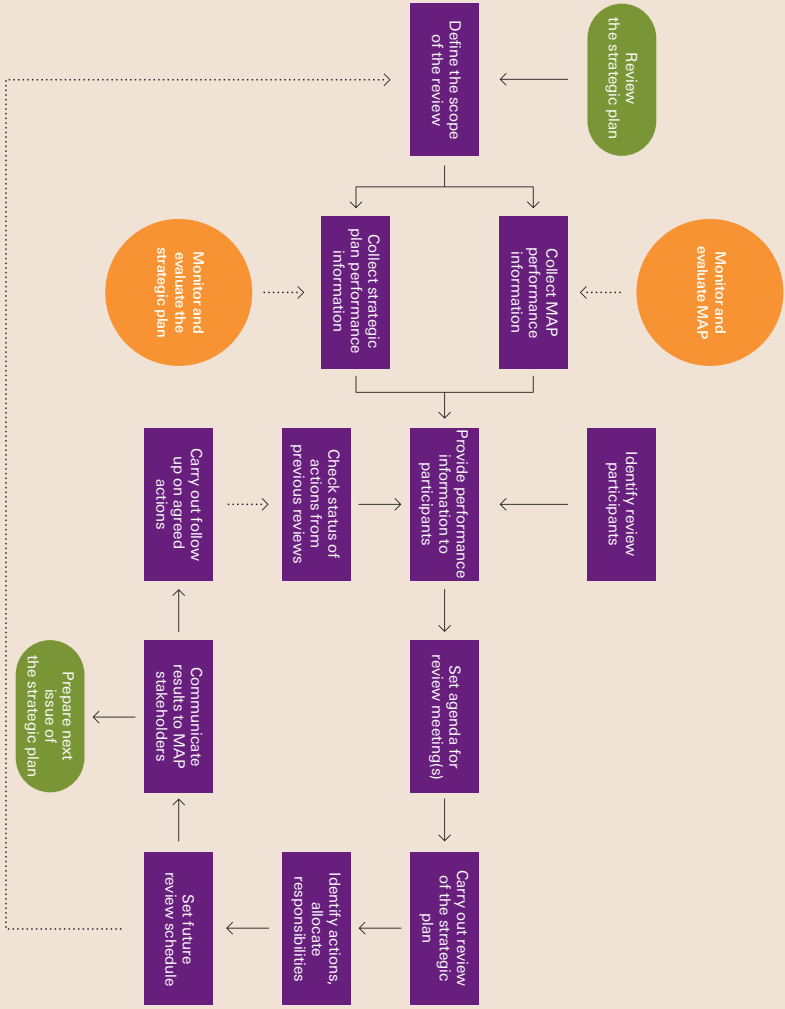
Reviewing and revising the strategic plan should not just involve 'rolling over' the last version with a few minor changes, but should represent a thorough consideration of all aspects of the plan, from its goals, objectives and targets to the approaches, practices and policies it wishes to encourage within the MAP.

Something significant will always have changed during the lifetime of a typical strategic plan – not least because the MAP should have achieved some concrete results in the interim. Strategic plans should not be developed just because it is expected that one will exist, but because they address important aspects of human security and socio-economic development. Strategic plans matter and can have great influence on the efficiency and effectiveness with which funds are spent. Those charged with strategic planning are morally and professionally obliged to develop the best strategic plans they can and to seek out opportunities to improve them over time.

FIGURE 8 REVIEWING THE STRATEGIC PLAN



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A culture of continual learning and improvement is created through strong leadership from the top of the MAP, as well as through the support of political, donor and NGO stakeholders. This culture is also developed through evidence that change can and does take place when it is seen to be necessary.

The strategic plan needs to be clear, credible and consistent, but it also needs room for flexibility as and when circumstances change. Continual learning and improvement in a MAP is established through establishing IM systems to support on-going monitoring, carrying out evaluations at appropriate intervals, and ensuring that reviews take place to consider and act on results and findings.

4.5 RISK MANAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Risk can be defined as 'the effect of uncertainty on objectives'.[39] Strategic planning is all about the identification of goals and objectives and the decision-making necessary to achieve them.

Review processes are often associated with the identification of strategic risks and their management. Risks to effective implementation of the strategic plan can arise from many different sources including:

- political – changes in government intentions; civil war and conflict; insecurity;
- economic – changes in the availability of national and international funds;
- natural disasters – earthquake, drought, famine, disease; and
- management – changes of personnel, shortfalls in capacities, failures of systems.

The suitability of the strategic plan depends to a great extent on the context and environment in which it is implemented. Significant changes in context or environment influence the plan and the programme (for better or worse). The likelihood and consequences of such changes need to be considered by strategic planners to ensure that:

- the plan takes appropriate account of the prevailing circumstances
- changes in context or environment that would require an adjustment to the plan are identified and contingency planning is carried out.

39 ISO 31000:2009 (E) Risk management – principles and guidelines section 2.1

The review process should include the identification and assessment of risks to the MAP and any implications that may require changes to the strategic plan. Review processes may also identify controls (defined as 'measures that modify risk')[40] that can be applied to reduce the likelihood or consequences of changes affecting the MAP. Where the review process identifies important risk controls they should be communicated to strategic planners so that they can be taken into account within the planning process.

The SWOT analysis, and other tools identified in Chapters 1 and 2, can help reviewers and planners bring an objective and thorough approach to the identification and assessment of strategic risk.

40 ISO 31000:2009(E), section 2.26.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strategic planning is a cyclical process that includes developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing the strategic plan.
- Normally a strategic plan has a lifetime of three to five years, although some countries choose longer periods. Strategic planners need to consider what timescale is most appropriate for their own country's circumstances; too short a duration may impose an unnecessary and inefficient burden on MAP staff and stakeholders: too long a duration makes the plan susceptible to changes in the surrounding context.
- The strategic planning process is relatively easy to describe, but can be complex to apply. Many stakeholders, each with their own (sometimes incompatible) preferences, requirements and requests will be involved in the strategic planning process. NMAA or MAC senior managers need to have the experience, credibility and skills necessary to bring stakeholders to an agreed, realistic and appropriate strategic plan.
- Select strategic planners with care; they must command the respect of stakeholders and have the authority and skills necessary to achieve consensus amongst a range of internal and external stakeholder groups.
- Strategic plans should address higher-level aspects of the MAP over the medium to longer term; matters of detail and short term planning issues are better addressed through work plans and organisation-specific plans. The strategic plan provides a framework within which operational managers can take decisions about the implementation of individual projects and tasks.
- The strategic planning process should be participatory; a wide range of stakeholders should have the opportunity to contribute to the planning process; key and primary stakeholders should be directly involved in decision-making about the strategic plan.
- The strategic planning process should be transparent; stakeholders should understand (and accept) the strategic planning process itself, and the rationale behind specific decisions taken within the strategic plan.
- Make sure that there is adequate time to obtain input from stakeholder groups during the discussion and drafting phases of the planning process.
- The importance of mainstreaming gender and diversity issues during planning, implementation, and within monitoring and evaluation processes cannot be overemphasised. Gender and diversity issues should be reflected within the strategic plan itself, and in subsequent monitoring and review.

- The strategic plan must reflect the current national and international context that surrounds it; it must make appropriate allowance for probable, likely and possible changes that may occur within that context during the life of the plan.
- The strategic plan should include mechanisms to 'operationalize' activities carried out within the MAP. A clear vision statement, with appropriate goals and associated objectives should provide managers with a clear understanding of the purpose and aims of their work. Managers need appropriate delegated authority to be able to pursue those aims within their specific areas of responsibility.
- Set SMART objectives against which managers and stakeholders can measure and understand performance.
- The strategic plan should be a living document, not something that gathers dust in a filing cabinet. It should provide on-going guidance to operational managers and give other stakeholders a clear picture of the MAP and its direction.
- Ensure that IMS can satisfy the needs of managers throughout the MAP, including at the strategic level – quality of planning is dependent on the quality of information available to planners.
- Monitor the strategic plan; select relevant and meaningful KPIs and ensure that there are suitable IM procedures and processes in place to update and communicate them. Ensure that the IMS addresses information quality at every stage, from identification of information requirements and collection of data, through its collation and analysis, to the display and dissemination of reports, indicators and other means of communication.
- Computers are useful tools for analysing and displaying data and information. Consider the use of 'business intelligence' type software tools such as MINT, to help managers maintain an up-to-date understanding of how the MAP's performance compares with the plan. If simpler analysis using Excel type spreadsheets can deliver all the required KPIs then there is no need to look for higher performance.
- Evaluate the strategic plan; apply the DAC standards to obtain a reliable understanding of how the MAP is performing and how the strategic planning process can be improved.

- Review the strategic plan; at appropriate intervals during its lifetime, but also whenever the working context changes significantly. Ensure that the plan remains relevant and achievable; do not allow the plan to become out-of-date or irrelevant as changes occur around it.
- Communicate with stakeholders at every stage of the strategic planning cycle; inform them of what is happening, and also seek feedback from them to understand better what is going well and what could be improved within the strategic planning process.

FURTHER READING AND SOURCES

Strategic Planning, case studies and examples of Strategic Plans

- National Strategy for Mine Action in Sri Lanka (*Ministry of Economic Development, Government of Sri Lanka,* 2010)
- BiH Mine Action Strategy 2009-2019 *(Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers,* 2008)
- Plano Nacional de Accão Contra Minas 2008–2014 *(Republica de Moçambique, Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros e Cooperação, Instituto Nacional de Desminagem)*
- Plan Stratégique National De Lutte Antimines en République Démocratique du Congo 2012–2016 (*Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité,* August 2011)
- South Sudan National Mine Action Strategy 2012–2016 (*Office of the President, South Sudan Mine Action Authority,* February 2012)
- Socialist Republic of Vietnam, National Mine Action Plan Period 2010–2015 (*Office of the Prime Minister,* April 2010)
- National Strategic Plan for the UXO Sector in the Lao People's Democratic Republic 2010–2020 'The Safe Path Forward II' (*Vientiane* 2009)
- Tajikistan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2010–2015 'Protecting Life & Promoting Development' *(The National Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law, The Tajikistan Mine Action Centre,* February 2010)
- A Guide on Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership (*GICHD,* 2013)

Case Studies

- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Afghanistan (*GICHD,* 2014)
- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Tajikistan (*GICHD,* 2014)
- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Lao PDR (*GICHD,* 2014)
- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Mozambique (*GICHD,* 2014)
- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Vietnam (*GICHD,* 2014)
- Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: DRC (*GICHD,* 2014)

Gender and diversity

- Gender and Mine Action Programme: www.gmap.ch
- UNSCR 1325 (2000): Participation of women at all levels of decision-making; protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, prevention of violence against women through the promotion of women's rights, accountability and law enforcement; the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in peace operations
- UNSCRs 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009)

Project cycle management (PCM), decision-making and results-based management (RBM)

- Europeaid Aid Delivery Methods Project Cycle Management Guidelines March 2004.
- Decision Tools Manual, Humanitarian Mine Action Projects *(James Madison University Mine Action Information Centre)*
- Results based management handbook (*United Nations Development Group,* October 2011)
- The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (*OECD,* 2006)
- Quality Standards for Development Evaluation *(OECD)*
- Capacity WORKS, the Management Model for Sustainable Development (*GIZ,* January 2011)
- Evaluating peace-building activities in settings of conflict and fragility – improving learning for results (*OECD,* October 2012)

Prioritisation

- GICHD priority-setting briefs (www.gichd.org)

Action Plans

- Cartagena Action Plan 2010–2014 Ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines *(Second review conference of the States Parties to the convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction, 2009)*
- Vientiane Action Plan (adopted 12 November 2010)

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