



7. Facilitated development session: **Organisational planning**





Introduction

This governance development session is in two parts:

1. a short working session to briefly review the role of the board or management committee in strategic direction setting and to prepare for the development of an organisational plan
2. an organisational planning session. This is a full-day program that can be broken into smaller working sessions. The aim of this session is to develop the future directions for the organisation and develop the main components of an organisational plan. Attached is a draft agenda and guide to running this session.

Ideally, this development session should be facilitated by a person with a good understanding of planning processes relating to the governance role. This may be an experienced person within the organisation or an external facilitator.

Timing of this program: 1 hour

FACILITATOR'S NOTES: Preparing for a planning session

30 min

1. The role of the board or committee in strategic direction setting

Briefly review the governance role of the board or management committee, emphasising the importance of the board or committee providing strategic leadership.

Cover the following points:

Governance, or corporate governance, is the process by which an organisation:

- is provided with direction
- has its activities monitored and controlled
- has its personnel held to account.

It is the government of an organisation.



- ❑ **The governance role.** The role of the board of management is to:
- **lead:** providing leadership, forward planning, and guidance to the organisation, particularly in terms of developing a strategic culture for the organisation
 - **care:** custodianship or stewardship of the organisation, with the responsibility of 'shepherding' and safekeeping the organisation on behalf of its members or constituents, particularly in terms of ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated purpose and remains viable
 - **control:** providing monitoring and oversight of the management, maintaining authority and accountability, ensuring good management practices and appropriate 'checks and balances'.

Bradfield Nyland Group, *Info Sheet: Board Basics*, 2004

Ask the group how strategic direction setting and planning is currently achieved in the organisation:

- What type of planning has been done in the past?
- What has the board or management committee role been?
- What has the staff role been?
- What would they like to be able to do with planning? How do they see planning working for them?

30 min

2. Preparing for a planning session

Work through the steps involved in preparing for a planning session:

1. **Scope of the planning session:** Before a formal process of planning commences, decisions need to be made about the scope and purpose of the plan to be developed, the type and level of input needed from various stakeholders, and the background information (including review and evaluation evidence) that will be needed to inform the process.

For a template, see *Tool: Planning — Preparation*

2. **Analysis of the current context:** There are several areas of an organisation's operations and environment that need to be considered, reviewed and analysed prior to a planning session. These include the current activities, services and operations of the organisation, and the changes or trends that might affect the organisation. These issues should be researched in advance so that accurate information and evidence can be provided to the planning session.

For a template, see *Tool: Planning — Current context analysis*.



3. Organising the session: The following checklist covers the main tasks involved in organising a planning session. Use this to organise the details for the planning session.

Item	Things to consider	Details
Dates	Timing of a planning session needs to allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the date by which the final plan is required periods of heavy workload or other planned activities (e.g. end of financial year) holiday periods. 	
Time	Planning can be done in one single session (usually a full day is needed for a major planning exercise) or over a series of shorter sessions.	
Participants	Planning should involve those who can make a useful contribution and those who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan. Board or management committee members should be involved in planning that sets the broad directions for an organisation.	
Venue	The venue needs to be comfortable, well lit and ventilated. A venue away from the work place can assist staff to avoid other work-related distractions. Make sure you have space for small-group work if required.	
Equipment	You will need an electronic whiteboard or flip charts to record information that can then be taken away for writing up. You may also need overhead projection for information that is to be presented.	
Catering	There may be fewer disturbances to the session if refreshments and lunch are provided at the venue.	
Facilitation	An external facilitator may assist the session to remain focused.	

References

- *Tool: Planning — Preparation*
- *Tool: Planning — Current context analysis*



FACILITATOR'S NOTES: Running a planning session

Timing of this program: 5–6 hours

A planning session for an organisational plan (strategic plan, business plan or annual service plan) should aim to cover the following:

- 1. Review of the organisation's purpose and identification of desired results:** For longer term plans such as strategic or business plans, an organisation usually needs to review the purpose of its work and the focus and scope of its core business to ensure that there is a common understanding and agreement. In any planning exercise, the results or outcomes that the plan aims to produce need to be identified.
- 2. Review of the core business:** Taking into account the information gathered from an analysis of the current context, identify what action the organisation wants to take in terms of:
 - continuing existing activities without any change
 - changing the scope, focus or processes of existing activities
 - developing new activities or initiatives.

All proposed activity should have priorities assigned that indicate whether an activity is high, medium or low priority in terms of its implementation, and indicative timeframes for implementation.

- 3. Analysis of the resource implications of new or changed activities:** What are the financial or time and labour costs? Are the planned activities feasible to implement, and is it necessary to seek additional resources or reduce some existing activities in order to accommodate new activities?
- 4. Analysis of other implications for the organisation:** Will the proposed changes have any other implications for the organisation — for example, the mandate or core business of the organisation, any existing long-term plan, results for clients or constituents, existing contracts and obligations.

Following is a draft agenda and guide to running this session.



Template for a draft agenda for a full-day planning session

[Insert organisation name]
PLANNING SESSION

[Insert date/s]

Suggested time allocation: **15 min**

1. Welcome and introductions

Welcome people and conduct introductions if people are present who do not know each other.

Provide participants with an explanation of the purpose of the planning session and an overview of what will be covered.

Suggested time allocation: **30 min–1 h**

2. Analysis of the current context

Present the findings from any background research and analysis that has been conducted, particularly regarding any external or internal factors likely to affect the organisation. (For a template for this analysis, see *Tool: Planning — Current context analysis*.)

Allow for some discussion and further analysis of the effects of external or internal factors.

Suggested time allocation: **45 min**

3. Review of the organisation's purpose, and identification of desired results

Using the template provided in *Tool: Planning — Direction setting and impact analysis*, discuss the following:

- What is the main purpose of the organisation and why does it exist?
- Who are the clients/constituents?
- What is the organisation's core business and how does it work towards its purpose?
- What results does the organisation want and what is it trying to achieve?
- How would this benefit clients/constituents?

Suggested time allocation: **1 h**

4. Review of the core business

Using the template provided in *Tool: Planning — Direction setting and impact analysis*, discuss the following:

- What activities and areas should continue unchanged?
- What areas or activities need to have changes or improvements made?
- What are these changes for each area of activity?
- What new directions or initiatives could be pursued and why?
- What are the general implications of any proposed changes in activities or operation?
- What priority does each proposed change or new activity have?
- What is the preferred timeframe for each proposed change or new activity?

Suggested time allocation: **45 min**

5. Analysis of the resource implications of new or changed activities

Using the template provided in *Tool: Planning — Direction setting and impact analysis*, discuss the following:

- What will be the effect of proposed new or changed activities on resources (financial resources, staff resources, equipment)?
- Are the proposed activities feasible to implement?
- Will it be necessary to seek additional resources? If so, what type of resources will be needed and from where could they be sought?
- Will it be necessary to reduce some existing activities in order to accommodate new or changed activities?

Suggested time allocation: **30 min**

6. Analysis of other implications for the organisation

Using the template provided in *Tool: Planning — Direction setting and impact analysis*, discuss the following:

The mandate, purpose or core business of the organisation

- Is the organisation proposing to shift direction or expand its mandate or purpose?
- Have relevant key stakeholders been consulted?

The existing long-term plan

- Do the proposed directions require changing an existing longer term plan?



Outcomes

- What outcomes or 'key result areas' will the proposed plan produce?
- Will these benefit the constituents or clients of the organisation?

Existing contracts and obligations

- Will the proposed plan affect any existing contracts or obligations?
- Will it require the organisation to enter into any new contracts or agreements?

Suggested time allocation: **45 min**

7. Finalising the plan

Using format provided in *worksheet one*, summarise the actions that the group has decided to proceed with. For each of these, note:

- the result or outcome that the action aims to produce
- the resource implications that need to be accommodated in implementing the action
- the level of priority assigned to the action
- the name or position of the person who will take responsibility for it
- the timeframe for the action to be completed.

References

- *Tool: Planning — Current context analysis*
- *Tool: Planning — Direction setting and impact analysis.*

**WORKSHEET ONE: PLANNING SESSION TEMPLATE**

Actions	Result/Outcome	Resource implications	Priority	Responsibility	Timeframe