How to Prepare
Strategy and Strategic Plans:

Guidelines and Checklist for Practitioners

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FOREWORD

The Guidelines for drafting a Results-Framework Document (RFD) for 2009-2010 contains some mandatory success indicators. One such mandatory indicator with a weight of 2 percentage points is as follows:

"Finalize the Action Plan to make the Strategic Plan for next 5 years"

The main purpose of these Guidelines is to summarize the existing body of knowledge on the art and science of strategy formulation. While no two strategies are alike, there is a growing consensus among experts on the core components of any effective and useful strategy. This document captures this consensus among experts, with the knowledge that it is a work-in-progress. We hope that together we shall continue to improve this document over time.

For us a strategy is a practical tool for achieving our Vision. We believe that strategic thinking about key issues facing a ministry / department is more important than any particular approach to strategic planning. Thus, we urge the readers to use this document only as a guideline and as an aid to innovative strategic thinking. It should be a starting point for work on a strategy and not the final word on its format or methodology.

A Strategic Plan presupposes existence of a strategy. Indeed, it is a more detailed action plant implement the agreed strategy. Hence, this document contains guidance on both the design of a strategy and the accompanying implementation framework.

The Results-Framework Document (RFD) is an instrument to get the "things done right." The Strategy and the corresponding Strategic Plan tell us the "right things to do." We need both if we are to to the right things and do them right.

How to Prepare Strategy and Strategic Plan: Guidelines and Checklist for Practitioners

1. PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST

These guidelines are merely a good starting point. In fact, it would defeat the very purpose if these were taken as inflexible and rigid instructions for making strategies. Using these guidelines as a foundation, we expect others to innovate and expand the frontiers of creativity. Thus, these guidelines should be treated as a living and growing document. Future contributions from other practitioners will contribute to further enhancing its usefulness.

Thus, the main purpose of these guidelines can be summarized as follows:

> ➢ Summarize the national and international experience.

> ➢ Provide a convenient starting point for those making strategies and strategic plans in government agencies (ministries / departments).

> ➢ Create a shared understanding of various terms and concepts related to strategy formulation.

> ➢ Provide a common framework for reviewing and evaluating strategies.

2. WHAT IS A STRATEGY?

According to the famous Webster dictionary, the word "strategy" means "*artful means to some end*." Thus a strategy is essentially about discovering "artful" or "imaginative" means to achieve our "ends" or "goals."

The concept of strategy originated from the lexicon of armed forces, where strategy implies the science of planning and directing large-scale military operations, (as distinguished from tactics) of maneuvering forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy. Like many concepts in modern management, the concept of strategy was first adopted by the private sector in its pursuit to win commercial battles with its competitors. Later, it trickled down to the public sector and is being applied by governments to win their wars against poverty, underdevelopment and social injustice.

At the most fundamental level, a strategy is about creating **clarity of purpose**. When everyone in a government agency or system is clear about its

fundamental purpose or purposes, improving performance is far, far easier. This no doubt appears very simple and obvious. Yet, it is also very rare. Most government agencies around the world have multiple goals, some of which even conflict with each other. This leads to lack of clarity about what is most important. When they are asked to improve performance, they charge off in different directions.

Using a strategy to manage an organization or an economy is called "Strategic Management". It helps governments define their Visions and core purposes – the outcome goals that are most important to them – and aim their entire system at fulfilling them.

A strategic management system gives leaders the ability to anticipate future trends, define the future they want, and allocate their resources and staff to the task of creating that future.

Strategic management is also important because it **eliminates the need for many rules, procedures, and internal controls** in government organizations. When government managers and employees are clear about the vision, mission, goals and strategies chosen by their leaders, they require fewer rules to stay on the course. These tools give leaders the leverage they need to steer effectively, without overly constraining the method chosen by managers and employees to row the boat.

A **strategy** and a **strategic plan** based on this strategy are both part of strategic management. It is not possible to have a strategic plan without a clear strategy. As you can see from Figure 1, a strategy is at the heart of a strategic plan.

The above diagram shows that a strategy is made up of decisions regarding where we are now, where we want to be, and determining how we get there. Where we are now is a product of a *current Vision* aided by our SWOT analysis and identification of current challenges. Where we want to be is a product of a *revamped Vision* and our goals, objectives and proposed action plans. How do we get there is a product of our goals, objectives and our SWOT analysis. The strategic plan is a more detailed action plan and an elaboration of "how we get there."

However, one must read this and other diagrams in the proper spirit. They are conceptual depiction of a broad and flexible management concept. They are not to be treated rigidly or dogmatically.
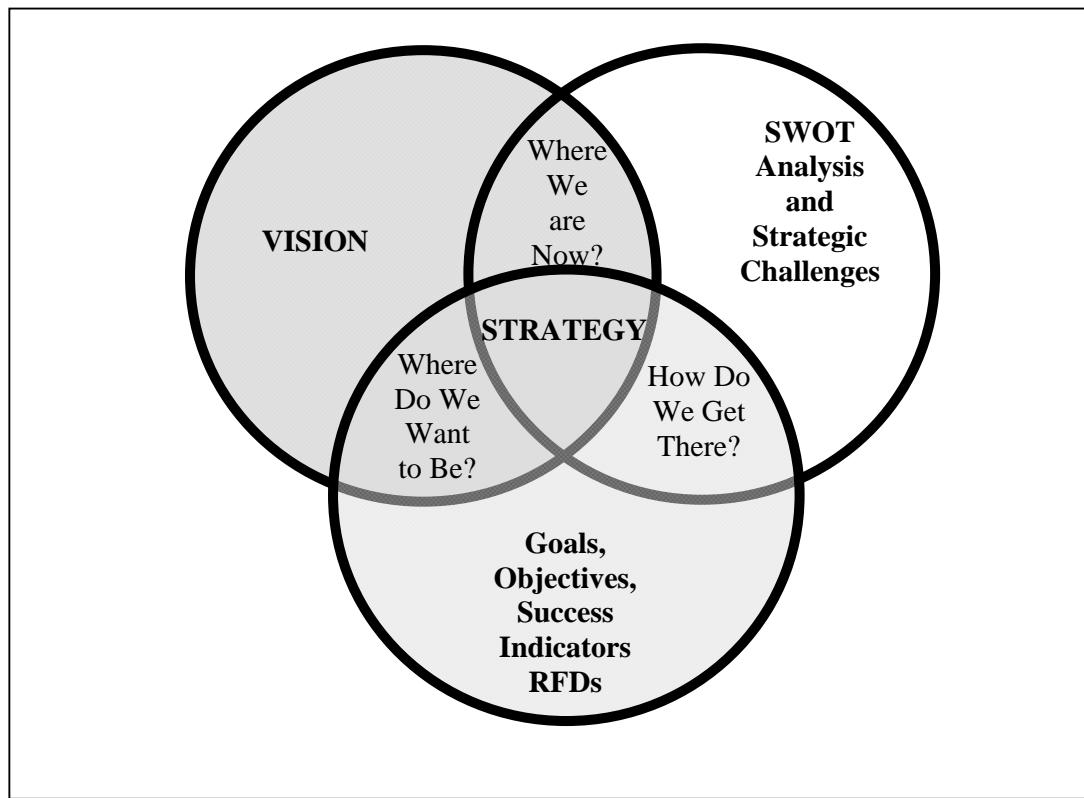
Figure 1: Relationship between Strategic Plan and Strategy

3. GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE STRATEGY

No two strategies have exactly the same format. The format of the strategy document and its presentation style depend on the audience and the nature of the topic. A national Long-Term Economic Strategy is likely to be different from the sectoral strategies dealing with health, education and water. However, it is possible to identify a set of **core components** that any useful and effective strategy is likely to have. How these core components are organized is a matter of individual preference.

> **Core Component 1:   A clear statement of the purpose of the strategy and the strategy document**

It is important to mention the objectives of the strategic exercise. It must clearly and explicitly acknowledge the change that is taking place.

It is important for the government agencies to state the method of doing business thus far and what factors have led to the need to undertake a strategy formulation exercise (besides the mandatory requirement of doing so).

Core Component 2:   A clear statement of the Vision

Visioning is a process for achieving agreement on the kind of future a community or an organization wants to create for itself – and a shared commitment to creating that future.

Even the Greek philosopher Aristotle acknowledged that "the soul never thinks without a picture." However, Visioning is about far more than painting a picture of the future a community wants to create. When Visioning focuses not on one organization but on the future of an entire town, city, region, state, or nation, it must be informed by careful analysis. It should involve community members, inspiring them while winning their allegiance. It needs to give some indication of how they can realize the Vision – what priorities they must pursue – and thus act as a springboard for outcome goals and strategies. Unlike an organization, a community is not usually cohesive enough to be motivated and aligned by a Vision alone. You have to start moving it towards action. A good Visioning exercise has real power. It can:

- Help leaders step outside their current mindset and think anew about their community's condition, potential, and strategic priorities.

- Help both leaders and stakeholders (including community members) internalize a new under- standing of the challenges they face, a Vision, and a new path to achieve that Vision – a new "road map."

- Help leaders from different institutions and sectors agree on a common Vision and goals.

- Set the direction for organizational change

- Act as a "magnet for collaboration," inspiring thousands of people to work together to achieve a common purpose.

- Simplify thousands of decisions and avoid months of needless discussion by providing a guide that can help people figure out what to do and what no longer needs to be done.

- Create a new vocabulary that can reshape public perceptions.

An effective Vision statement is:

- Outcome-based. The Vision is stated in terms of end results.

- Inclusive. It resonates with a majority of its target community.
- Vivid. It creates a picture of the desired future.
- Clear. It is easily understood.
- Communicable. One of world's leading management professors, Kotter, suggests this rule of thumb: it "can be successfully explained within five minutes."
- Unique. It differentiates your community from other communities.
- Inspiring. It appeals to the public spirit.
- Challenging. It includes audacious goals and has the power to motivate.
- Realistic. It does not require miracles; it builds on the cards you have been dealt.
- Credible. People believe they can bring it to life.
- Focused. It is specific enough to provide guidance in decision making.
- Widely shared. It is embraced across party lines and in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

There is no ideal length or language for a Vision. Each ministry / department has to devices a Vision with which they are comfortable.

Core Component 3: Define long-term outcome goals and results that are required to achieve the Vision

The outcome goals define the long-term results we need to achieve to realize our Vision. They are our compass: they tell us whether we are going in the direction we want to go in. In fact you can set out without an explicit Vision; indeed, Visions are often implicit in the work of the ministries and departments. But if you do not articulate explicit outcome goals and measure your progress against them, you will not know whether you are on the right path.

In setting goals and targets, it is important to pay attention to the following guidelines derived from experience:[1]

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[1] There is a lot of debate about the definition of "goals" and "objectives." **Goals** are supposed to be broad statements of intent. They are general aims towards which the agency directs its efforts, based on issues that have been identified as priorities. **Objectives**, on the other hand, are clear, measurable, tactical statements of a goal that can be achieved by those people responsible for its execution. However, in this document we do not want to use too many terms that do not add to the substance of strategy. Hence, we are using goals and objectives under one category called goals.

➤ **Set realistic goals.** Enthusiasm is wonderful, but if goals cannot be reached, people will become discouraged with the process. Sometimes the goal should simply be improvement, rather than an arbitrary number picked because it sounds good.

➤ **Measure not only how you are doing against your goals but also how comparable countries and agencies are faring**. Otherwise, you often will not really know whether you are succeeding or failing.

➤ **Check to confirm that relevant stakeholders agree with the basic priorities and values expressed by your outcome goals.** Otherwise your goals will not have power for long. In the U.S. state of Oregon, the Progress Board took its draft Benchmarks to 20 different communities around the state, using electronic voting at community meetings to get feedback. After the first version of the Benchmarks was published, the Oregon Business Council did a survey to see if they were on target-and found that they were.

➤ **Make the goals and indicator data readily accessible, in a user-friendly format.** If people cannot find or understand the data, it will not do much good. Publish progress reports periodically, distribute them to the media and the public, and put them on the World Wide Web. The U.S. state of Vermont even televises an annual interactive program to report on its Community Profiles and statewide Well-Being Report, which has 51 indicators. When important and newsworthy pieces of data come in, send out press releases. And always try to present data graphically, using some form of charts.

➤ **Refresh your outcome goals periodically.** The Benchmarks in the state of Oregon were developed following the campaign of a person who ran for governor using the slogan of "the Oregon Comeback." Subsequently, there was a complete turnaround of the economy and people got worried about managing the problems of rapid growth. So you have to constantly refresh and revise, and make sure the benchmarks continue to be relevant to current problems. A strategy is thus a living document in this sense. It is based on the best judgment and information at a given point in time.

➤ **Don't have too many outcome goals.** For most agencies and strategies, it is important to keep the number of goals at a manageable level so everyone in the community can focus on what is most important. The fewer you have, the better. If you have too many, none will have much power, because there will be so many of equal

urgency. And so much measurement will be needed that the system may collapse under its own weight.

Experience suggests that there will always be pressure to have too many goals. If the process is taken seriously, every division within the department and every interest group will want to come up with at least one key outcome goal. But if they all get an outcome goal, then no goals will stand out. Setting outcome goals is about picking the few critical outcomes the community wants to achieve over the next 10 to 20 years. It does not mean that nothing else should be done; it means nothing else is quite as important.

We recommend deciding on the number of long-term outcome goals you want before you begin the process of choosing them. If you can agree in advance on a number, you will have much better discipline – even if you decide in the end to exceed the number by two or three.

> **Don't ignore areas for which there is no data.** Some of your goals will not be measurable, because no relevant data exist for those outcomes. For example, in Oregon and elsewhere, improving literacy rates is a crucial outcome goal. Yet no one measures literacy rates – and as Oregon discovered, doing so is quite expensive. In such cases, the temptation is to eliminate the goal. If you succumb to this temptation, however, you will let the task of gathering data drive your goals, rather than the other way around. You will end up telling everyone to work hard to achieve certain goals simply because they are measurable, while ignoring others that are more important. We recommend that you keep the goals you want and work to convince decision makers to appropriate the money to measure them.

| **Core Component 4:** | **Undertake a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis** |

Preparing a strategy is an art as well as a science. Experts often differ on definitions of various terms used in this context as well as the contents. Yet, there is complete unanimity among them about the need for a thorough SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is a prerequisite for understanding the situation and also ensuring that the proposed options respond to the elements of the SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis must have the following attributes:

   a. It must be done with reference to the Vision.

b. It must be a very frank and honest portrayal of the situation.
c. It must be comprehensive.
d. It must reflect the consensus of policy-makers and citizens.

The careful SWOT analysis is the key source for identifying the obstacles to the journey towards the Vision. Once again, there is no uniformity in terminology in this area. These obstacles are referred to variously as problems, strategic issues and strategic challenges.

Core Component 5:   Summarize proposed solutions and policy options

Once the key challenges to the proposed Vision have been identified, it is logical to find ways to overcome them. In fact, this is where the heart of the strategy lies. A strategy is not an academic exercise to write a good looking document. It is supposed to be a tool to solve problems (challenges) facing the society or government organization.

This is where the success of the strategy is ultimately determined. Thus, it is worth spending a great deal of time on its tools and implementation mechanisms. However, this does not imply re-inventing the wheel. The first step should be to take stock of existing work on the problem. Examine the solutions that have been proposed. Add or delete as required, but do not start from scratch.

If the ideas already exist, ask yourself why these suggestions were not implemented in the past. This will provide new insights on modifying these ideas and the associated mechanisms for better results in the future.

In designing new options, make further use of the SWOT analysis. In particular, ensure that proposed solutions leverage the strengths and opportunities identified in the SWOT analysis. At the same time, try to minimize the risk posed by threats.

Core Component 6:   Prioritize proposed solutions and policy options

Once the solutions have been identified, they need to be prioritized. Effective prioritization is another cardinal element of any strategy. It is not possible for the most well-intentioned among us to do all things simultaneously (though much we would like to). Thus, we need to prioritize, prioritize and prioritize!

The following three dimensions for prioritizing have been found to very useful.

i.   Level of Priority:

We can classify recommendations for action (policy options) on the basis of their impact on the objective. We can use three categories for this purpose: HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW. The basic message is that we should not worry about the low priority recommendation at the cost of the high priority recommendations.

ii.   Degree of Influence

Government agencies do not have the same degree of influence on all areas of public policy. In some areas all actions are within the scope of their powers. In others, they can only play a facilitating role as a catalyst. We can again use a three way classification here: HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW. High implies those areas of public policy which are fully within the control of the government. Medium and low imply lesser degree of influence.

iii.   Sequencing

Sequencing of policies is as important as the policy itself. For example, it is often advisable to allow competition and privatization after implementing a transparent and effective regulatory framework. Also, it is advisable to not attempt everything at the same time. This again requires sequencing various actions and programs to get the best results in the shortest possible time.

If we put these three dimensions together, we get the matrix shown in Figure 1. This matrix is three-dimensional and thus the total number of cells is 27 (= 3 x 3 x 3). Each cell in the matrix has three attributes. For example, Cell # 1 represents high priority, high degree of influence and need to implement the policy in the short term.

In most cases, this classification is a matter of judgment on the part of experts and policymakers making the strategy. It is not written in stone. Rather, it is indicative of the collective experience as understood by us at the time of writing. This matrix is a signaling device for those charged with implementing the strategy.

Priority Level					
		HIGH	**MEDIUM**	**LOW**	
Degree of Influence	**HIGH**	1	10	19	**SHORT TERM**
		2	11	20	**MEDIUM TERM**
		3	12	21	**LONG TERM**
	MEDIUM	4	13	22	**SHORT TERM**
		5	14	23	**MEDIUM TERM**
		6	15	24	**LONG TERM**
	LOW	7	16	25	**SHORT TERM**
		8	17	26	**MEDIUM TERM**
		9	18	27	**LONG TERM**

*(Right side of table labeled vertically: **Sequencing**)*

A strategy that does not prioritize its policy recommendation is likely to be ineffective in achieving its Vision. Thus, it is a must to prioritize recommendations. However, the style of presentation is a matter of choice. The same matrix can be presented in other formats as well. The example in Table 1 represents another alternative presentation style. Also, it may be necessary to add more dimensions to achieve the prioritization. For example, one dimension could be the budgetary implications of the proposed policy options. Thus, the three dimensions suggested above represent the minimum necessary for prioritization.

Core Component 7:   Propose an implementation Framework

Many people would rank implementation and effective execution of public policies and programs as the biggest challenge for all strategies. They would argue that only if we could implement all the recommendations of various symposia and seminars on the topic under consideration, we would already be close to achieving our Vision in that area. Most of the issues and potential ways to tackle them have been discussed in the past for most topics. Yet, there is a widespread perception that the rate of generation of ideas is far ahead of the rate of implementation of ideas. Therefore, we believe that all strategies should make implementation a core component of their strategies.

There is a virtual implementation revolution taking place globally. All countries and international institutions have realized the importance of effective implementation. The tools and techniques for promoting and ensuring implementation are growing at an exponential rate. Today, more than ever, the technology to ensure effective implementation exists. We are not just talking of hardware and software, but rather, analytical methods and conceptual frameworks to promote implementation.

Thus strategy should review and consider the following issues with regard to implementation:

    i.   How many good ideas regarding policy options have been around for some time?

    ii.   What was the reason for not implementing them?

    iii.   What needs to be done to ensure that they are implemented this time around?

    iv.   Has this policy been implemented in any other agency? Why? Has this policy been implemented in any other country? What can we learn from their experience?

    v.   Are we assigning clear responsibilities and deadlines for action?

    vi.   Are there any consequences for non-compliance and poor implementation?

    vii.   Have we designed an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system?

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE PROCESS OF STRATEGY FORMULATION

According to Henry Mintzberg in his path-breaking work on strategic management, entitled "**The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning,**" if strategy development is "overmanaged," it may lose its creativity. According to him "to manage this process is not to preconceive strategies but to recognize their emergence and intervene when appropriate.... To manage in this context is to create the climate within which a wide variety of strategies can grow (to establish flexible structures, develop appropriate processes, encourage supporting cultures, and define guiding 'umbrella' strategies) and then to watch what does in fact come up."

Table 1: (Illustrative) Prioritization of policies for sustainable development of water resources

		PRIORITY	INFLUENCE	SEQUENCING
	Demand Side Measures			
1	Results-oriented conservation drive	LOW	LOW	Medium Run
2.	Tariff reform	HIGH	MEDIUM	Short Run
	Supply Side Measures			
3.	Introduce performance-based O&M contracts	HIGH	HIGH	Medium Run
4.	Revive benchmarking of water utilities	HIGH	MEDIUM	Short Run
5.	Form a professional association of water authorities for knowledge sharing	LOW	MEDIUM	Long Run
6.	Update master plan for water and wastewater	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Medium Run
7.	Increase PSP in water and wastewater sector (including dams)	HIGH	MEDIUM	Medium Run
8.	Actions to rationalize water use in agriculture	MEDIUM	HIGH	Short Run
9.	Survey of available (renewable and non-renewable) water resources	HIGH	MEDIUM	Short Run
10	Ensure continuous monitoring of water resources	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Long Run
11.	Increase the reuse of water resources	HIGH	LOW	Medium Run
12	Clear statement of water policy to decrease the depletion of non-renewable water resources	HIGH	HIGH	Short Run
13	Pollution control for groundwater resources	MEDIUM	LOW	Medium Run

In other words, organizations that are good at strategy development provide a lot of room for learning. They play with different options and examine their possible results, piloting some to see what happens. Their leaders encourage the Visionaries on staff to experiment and analyze, and then nurture continued conversation about what is working and what might work. They listen carefully to what their Visionaries have to say. As Mintzberg argues, "An overemphasis on planning – in fact, a belief that strategies can be created through formal procedures – tends to drive out" both Visionaries and organizational learning. The trick is to create a forum in which strategy development can occur when opportunity strikes, without forcing everyone into a strategic planning calendar. There is no one ideal way to organize this process. We have seen many forums used: steering organizations, policy staffs, sub-cabinets, temporary task forces, retreats, design labs, search conferences, and so on. All can be effective, if they are not over-formalized. "The experience of governments shows that there is no intrinsically optimal way to organize the policy-making process," the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded after studying the matter.

These caveats notwithstanding, the following list summarizes the lessons of experience regarding the process of strategy development.

➢ *Use both hard and soft data.* You need all the quantitative, hard data you can get, but it will never be enough. As Mintzberg points out, "Hard information is often limited in scope, lacking richness and often failing to encompass important non-economic and non-quantitative factors... That is why a conversation with a single disgruntled customer can sometimes be worth more than a major marketing research report." Hard data also tends to arrive too late to be useful, and "a surprising amount of hard information is unreliable." Hence good strategists use both quantitative and non-quantitative data—and both analysis and intuition.

➢ *Find ways to get outside the box*. Strategy development is most creative when participants drop their assumptions and think in new ways. Any number of techniques can help people do this:

- Bring in outside experts with a broader perspective, who can push people outside their boxes.
- Use a facilitator who is skilled at helping people look at things in new ways. One can get these facilitators from management institutes or leading consulting firms.

- Lead site visits to places that are using strategies your people have never considered, or bring people from those sites in to talk with your group.

- Use exercises: for example, have all members of the group define the givens in the relevant policy arena, then decide which ones they can discard.

- Use a checklist of alternative strategies, to see if you have considered all of the possibilities.

➢ *If possible, involve senior officials, policy staffs, and line managers.* You will need the support of senior officials (Secretaries, Special secretaries, Additional Secretaries, and Joint Secretaries) to implement many strategies, and the best way to get that support is to involve them in creating the strategies. Policy staffs (Economic Advisors, Domain Experts, and Consultants) should play a key role in managing any strategy development process. And line managers are the eyes and ears of the organization; they know what is actually happening on the front lines, what works, and what doesn't.

➢ *But don't expect senior officials to engage in lengthy strategy de-velopment processes.* Very few senior leaders in the world have the patience for this kind of process. If your managers do not have the time, get your marching orders from them, round up an appropriate team, develop your strategies or strategic options, and present them to the senior officials. Involve them at the front and back ends, but don't expect them to be involved deeply throughout the middle.

➢ *Don't bother doing strategy development work on an issue unless senior officials feel a pressing need for it.* If those who have the power to implement a strategy don't feel any need for it, they probably will not support you. Many officials have found their ideas falling on deaf ears because they have worked on issues the key executive or department head does not care about.

➢ *Don't fall into the ivory tower trap.* Make sure your strategy develop-ment team is in touch with other concerned ministries and departments agencies and the outside world. Keep their eyes and ears open through regular site visits, conferences, lunch discussions, e-mail networks, and the like.

➢ *Don't succumb to paralysis by analysis.* You will never have enough re-search or data; you will always want more. At some point, you have to go with what you have got.

➢ ***Don't invite all your stakeholders into your strategy development forum.*** Stakeholder meetings can provide useful ideas and input, or feedback on proposed strategies, as a reality check. But if you bring them into your strategy development sessions, you run a real risk of getting watered down, and ending up with lowest-common-denominator solutions. Most will be in the room only to protect their constituents' interests. Once you have developed a strategy you will need to get their reactions, their buy-in, and, hopefully, their help in implementing it. But do not expect them to help with your out-of-the-box thinking. Develop the strategy first; then try to build consensus around it.

➢ ***Don't assume that strategy formulation means strategy adoption.*** The flip side of the previous advice is that you must consider the feasibility of implementation as you develop your strategies. If you come up with the most elegant conceptual approach in the world but every interest group hates it, you will not get far. That is one reason why you will need input from stakeholders – to test the feasibility of the ideas you are developing. You will also need to assign someone or some group to think through the politics of getting your strategy adopted. Perhaps senior ex-government people who can speak their mind more easily could be involved in this exercise.

➢ ***Don't forget to link strategy development to budget decisions.*** Too often, new strategies are created but never funded adequately because the strategy development process is so divorced from the budget process. You have to find a way to link them.

5. CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING A STRATEGY

The following checklist is based on the discussion in the previous sections of this document. For details, please consult the relevant sections.

5.1 CHECKLIST FOR THE FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE STRATEGY

As mentioned earlier, there is no ideal format for the presentation of a strategy and its contents. However, experience suggests that any effective strategy will need to include the following core components:

Core Component 1:   State the purpose of the Strategy and the Strategic Plan

Core Component 2:   State the Vision

Core Component 3:   Define long-term outcome goals and results that are
required to achieve the Vision

Core Component 4:   Undertake a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities and Threats) analysis

Core Component 5:   Summarize proposed solutions and policy options

Core Component 6:   Prioritize proposed solutions and policy options

Core Component 7:   Propose an implementation module

The checklist for the format and content of a strategy has been organized under
the above seven headings:

Core Component 1:   State the purpose of the strategy and the strategy document

1. Is the objective of the strategy stated clearly?

2. Does it highlight the proposed change in method of doing government business?

3. Does the strategy explain the need for change?

Core Component 2:   State the Vision

4. Does the strategy contain a clear statement of the Vision?

5. Is the Vision stated in terms of end results?

6. Does the Vision resonate with a majority of its target community?

7. Does the Vision create a picture of the desired future?

8. Is the Vision easily understood?

9. Can the Vision be successfully explained within five minutes?

10. Does it differentiate your community from other communities? Is the Vision India-specific or generic?

11. Does the Vision appeal to the public spirit?

12. Does it include bold goals and has the power to motivate?

13. Can it be said that the proposed Vision does not require miracles and builds on the cards we have been dealt?

14. Do people believe that they can bring it to life?

15. Is the Vision specific enough to provide guidance in decision-making?

Core Component 3:	Define long-term outcome goals and results that are required to achieve the Vision

16. Have we set realistic goals?

17. Can we measure not only how we are doing against our goals but also how comparable countries and agencies are faring?

18. Has it been confirmed that stakeholders agree with the basic priorities and values expressed by our outcome goals**?**

19. Are goals and indicator data readily accessible, in a user-friendly format?

20. Is there an explicit system to refresh outcome goals periodically?

21. Is the number of outcome goals reasonable? We should not have too many outcome goals.

22. Have important areas/aspects ignored because of lack of sufficient data?

Core Component 4:	Undertake a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

23. Does the strategy contain a SWOT analysis?

24. Has the SWOT analysis been done with reference to the Vision in the strategy document?

25. Does the SWOT analysis draw a frank and honest picture?

26. Is the SWOT analysis comprehensive?

27. Does the SWOT analysis reflect a consensus view?

Core Component 5:	Summarize proposed solutions and policy options

28. Did the team take stock of all existing work in this area?

29. How many ideas are brand new and how many ideas are from previous work?

30. Has the team analyzed why the existing ideas were not implemented?

31. In suggesting solution and policy options, have we taken account of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats mentioned in the SWOT analysis?

Core Component 6:	Prioritize proposed solutions and policy options

32. Does the strategy include an explicit prioritization of the proposed policies?

33. Are the policies prioritized according to the level of priority (viz. High, Low and Medium)?

34. Are the policies prioritized according to the degree of influence government has in implementing these policies?

35. Are the policies prioritized taking into account the sequencing?

36. Are the policies prioritized according to the degree of impact on the strategic challenges?

Core Component 7:	Propose an implementation module

37. Does the strategy contain an explicit module on implementation issues?

38. How many good ideas regarding policy options have been around for some time?

39. What was the reason for not implementing them?

40. What needs to be done to ensure that they are implemented this time around?

41. Has this policy been implemented in any other agency? Why?

42. Has this policy been implemented in any other country? What can we learn from their experience?

43. Are we assigning clear responsibilities and deadlines for action?

44. Are there any consequences for non-compliance and poor implementation?

45. Have we designed an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system?

5.2 CHECKLIST FOR THE PROCESS OF STRATEGY FORMULATION

46. Have you used both hard and soft data in preparing the strategy?

47. Did the team make a conscious effort to think outside the box? (including improving on these guidelines)

   a. Did you bring in outside experts with a broader perspective, who can push people to think outside their usual boxes?

   b. Did you use a facilitator who is skilled at helping people look at things in new ways?

   c. Did you visit places and government organizations that are using strategies your people have never considered, or bring people from those sites in to talk with your group?

   d. Did you use analytical exercises during the strategy formulation process?

   e. Did you use a checklist of alternative strategies and options, to see if you have considered all of the possibilities?

48. Did you involve senior officials, policy staffs, and line managers in the strategy formulation exercise?

49. Was the strategy development team in touch with other concerned line agencies and the outside world?

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