A PLANNER’S GUIDE TO ACTION PLANNING

Methodology developed by the staff of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies - IHS, The Netherlands. It draws from the work of Pal Baross (1991); Forbes Davidson (1989, 1995); Bep Fritschi, Monique Peltenburg, Hans Teerlink, Harry Mengers, Carley Penink (1995); Claudio Acioly Jr. (1996) and others; it also draws from the work of Goethert and Hamdi (1988).

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Head Capacity Building
UN-Habitat
1. Changing the way we think and work in cities.

Paradigm change affecting cities and the way we plan and manage them.
From Emphasis on Statutory Planning - Master Plans Rigidity

To Strategic & Action Planning Urban Productivity Flexibility
3
Government Provides! State Provision

4
Government Enables! Market Provision Privatization & Partnership
Central Government Decides!

Local Government decides!

Decentralization
Physical Development
Spatial Planning
Regulatory

Financial & Economic Planning
Technical Feasibility
Institutional basis
From Technocratic & top down planning

To Civil Society Participation & bottom-up planning
Relationship
regulatory/statutory - normative plans and city-development strategies

Based on F. Davidson, 1997
Envisioning the Future of Rotterdam
Creative Inventory in Arnhem’s strategic planning process

Resident handing in her views for “Arnhem 2015”.
Citizen consultation:
Developing a common vision and a strategic vision for Arnhem 2015
Creative Inventory & public debate in support to Arnhem’s strategic planning process: a vision for 2015.
STRATEGIES

Strategic thinking & strategic planning is needed to make things happen!
WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND FOR STRATEGY?

- The method and way to accomplish goals and targets.
- A process through which planning and organizational objectives are defined.
- A way to utilize the available means to achieve a determined end.
- A set of tactics
2. Action Planning: a bottom-up problem-solving oriented approach

Focusing on local problems.
AN APPROACH TO NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

TO BUILD LINKAGES

CENTRAL NEEDS

- Policies
- Development Programme
- Strategies

CONSENSUS

LOCAL NEEDS

HUMAN SCALE COMMUNITY BASED LOCAL ORIENTED NEIGHBOURHOOD

PRIORITIES & COURSE OF ACTION

PROGRAMS & PROJECTS
ACTION PLANNING

1. Problem
2. Legitimacy
3. Time bound
4. Resources bound
5. Learning
6. Solutions
7. Innovative

The Problem
Objectives
Planning

focus
ACTION PLANNING
what is it?

1. Actions to approach the problem within limited period of **time**
2. Refers to a well defined area/site - **tangible!**
3. It is not a routine process - **innovative!**
4. Assumed by those involved - **legitimacy**
5. The problem is legitimately indentified - **who owns the problems!**
6. Refers to the existing **resources** and means in a realistic way
7. Those involved learn and **aprehend lessons** from the process itself
8. Emphasis on **people and institutions involved**
9. Selects questions and strategies in which atention is **focused**
3. Surpassing limitations of our conventional thinking.

The way forward: from conventional-statutory-comprehensive planning to flexible and strategic planning.
CONVENTIONAL / ANALYTICAL PLANNING PROCESS

I. PREPARATION PHASE
- DATA COLLECTION
- DEFINITION OF PROBLEMS
- SETTING OBJECTIVES
  - FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES
    - SELECTION OF ALTERNATIVE(S)
    - APPROVAL OF OPTIONS
    - IMPLEMENTATION
    - EVALUATION
  - ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES & FEASIBILITY

II. ANALYTICAL PHASE

III. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Claudio Acioly Jr. / IHS
12/22/97
Is our thinking so impregnated from “Rational Planning” that makes changing so difficult?
Planning Process

Action Planning

- SWOT
  - Problems
  - Institutions & Stakeholders
  - Goals & Objectives
  - Resources

- Data Collection
- Potential Actions
- Appraise & Prioritize
- Implement
- Monitor & Evaluate

Conventional Planning

- SWOT
- Data Collection
- Analysis
- Develop Alternatives
- Appraise & Prioritize
- Prepare Plan
Process to develop action plan

SWOT ANALYSIS

Identify problems

Set and analyse objective

Force-field analysis

Develop Options

Analyze impact/prioritize

Choose/decide

Plan action

Communicate, get support

Implement

Operate & maintain

Monitor & Evaluate

Ongoing revision
GENERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

AN OPERATIONAL MODEL
to support the planning and design approach

PRESCRIPTIVE ACTION
rather than
PRESCRIPTIVE PLANNING
A FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

BOTTOM-UP

PROBLEM SOLVING

POLICY
AND
PROGRAM LEVEL

PROJECT
AND
GRASSROOTS LEVEL

COORDINATION
MANAGEMENT

TOP-DOWN
Red Cross Project Cycle

Project Design Cycle

Final Evaluation
Dissemination
Application of Lessons Learned

Needs Assessment
& Stakeholder Analysis

Problem Analysis

Selecting Project Interventions

Design Framework:
Logframe/Results Framework
Includes M&E

Proposal Writing

Project Implementation,
Monitoring & Management

Source: Project Management Institute and the International Institute for Learning,
Assessments versus Analysis

Idea for a Project

Source: Project Management Institute and the International Institute for Learning,
Note: MIS: Management Information System
DSS: Decision Support System
SOP: Standard Operation Procedure
MES: Monitoring and Evaluation System
Source: Strategic Planning & Community Strategy Mapping for Public Health Systems & Agencies, Jack Moran, Public Health Foundation, Paul Epstein, Results That Matter Team
4. Situation auditing: an institutional x-ray

Disclosing bottlenecks, actors, opportunities and threats in the local development arena.
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 1: SWOT ANALYSIS

Development Scenario

• It helps defining the development scenario.
• The development scenario guarantees that actions designed by a short-term plan are not implemented in isolation but interconnected with future actions planned under the guidance of a medium-term strategic plan.
actions designed by a short-term plan are not implemented in isolation but interconnected with future actions planned under the guidance of a medium-term strategic plan.
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 1: SWOT ANALYSIS

• Impact of future and present trends
• Review of main areas/questions
• Analysis of the linkages between the decision areas
A technique largely utilized to formulate important questions on which planning takes place.

Nothing sophisticated, only asking and responding to fundamental and sometimes difficult questions.

Awareness about the Weaknesses and Strengths of the organization.

Awareness about the Opportunities and Threats external do the organization but influencing it.
Both environments - internal and external - must be assessed as a context for planning.
Stakeholders Mapping & Analysis

People, individuals, institutions, enterprise or government bodies

- Relationship with Problem
- Relationship with Solution
- Relationship with Project

- Different roles & responsibilities
- Access to & control over resources
- Different part in decision making
- Different areas & sectors of activity
Analysis Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Analysis</th>
<th>Illustrative Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Analysis</td>
<td>Venn Diagrams, RASIC Charts, Stakeholder Analysis Matrix, SWOT Analysis, Spider Diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Analysis</td>
<td>Problem Trees, Force Field Analysis, Mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives Analysis</td>
<td>Objective Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives Analysis</td>
<td>Organize and Analyze information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Project Management Institute and the International Institute for Learning,
What is a Stakeholder?

STAKEHOLDERS - Individuals or institutions that may – directly or indirectly, positively or negatively – affect or be affected by the project or program.

Source: Project Management Institute and the International Institute for Learning,
Mapping Stakeholder Relationships

**Beneficiaries**

Those who benefit in whatever way from the implementation of the project. Distinction may be made between target groups; final beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries.

**Stakeholders**

Individuals or institutions that may – directly or indirectly, positively or negatively – affect or be affected by the project or program.

**Project Partners**

Those who implement the projects (who are also stakeholders, and may be a target group.)

Source: Project Management Institute and the International Institute for Learning,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder and basic characteristics</th>
<th>Interests and how affected by the problem</th>
<th>Capacity and motivation to bring about change</th>
<th>Possible actions to address stakeholder interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. Unveiling the problem and its ramifications

Searching for the real causes.
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 2: Problem Analysis

RELATIONSHIPS

The Need to Focus!

ACTION
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 2: Problem Analysis

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS-OBJECTIVES-GOALS

1. **GOAL** relates with the mission of the organization what it must accomplish

2. **PROBLEMS** mean something is wrong obstructing the objectives to be accomplished - they are within its scope of action - defined as the legitimacy of the problem area. The organization owns the problem!

3. Analysis of the **PROBLEM** or **OPPORTUNITY** must be understood as the foundation of the planning process

4. To think seriously at this stage allows the opening of lines of action potentially efficient

5. At this stage, not easy to maintain separated the potential solutions from the problem definition BUT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DO SO!
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 2: SELECTION OF THE “FOCUS”

• Necessity to select a PROBLEM in which to concentrate the attention - the FOCUS
  • Important to limit the PROBLEMATIC AREAS with criteria
  • Possible to achieve that through a participatory city consultation - the SCP approach
• A question can be a PROBLEM or an OPPORTUNITY

HOW?
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 2: Problem Analysis

A systematic method to define the problem

The Focus

The Complexities
ACTION PLANNING
Technique 2: Problem Analysis & the Problem Tree

**WHAT is the problem?**

**WHY is it a problem?**

**Whose problem is that?**

**The WWWWWWH questions!**

Is it a **problem** or a **symptom** of the problem, or a **solution**?

**When is it a problem?**

**Where is it a problem?**
Relations between problems

The Problem Tree

Core Problem

Effects

Effects

Effects

Effects

Effects

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes

Roots or Causes
Examples:

Problem Tree Analysis

Ethiopia, Philippines, Vietnam
The BUS Example

Loss of confidence in bus company

Effects

- Passengers hurt or killed
- People are late

Core problem

Frequent bus accidents

- Drivers not careful enough
- Bad Conditions of vehicles
- Bad road conditions

Causes

- Vehicles too old
- No ongoing maintenance
ACTION PLANNING

Technique: Analysis of the Problem Tree

CONSEQUENCES

PROBLEM

CAUSES

effects

causes
A good analysis of the problem(s) establishes the basis for an efficient planning.

It is worth spending time in the analysis of the problem(s) since it usually leads to creative and innovative actions.

The analysis of the problem or opportunity is not easy to realize because it requires changes in the way of thinking.

Do not throw up solutions, they will be developed further on during the process.
• Difficulties to DEFINE what is really THE problem and thereafter THE objectives, and later to discover what is the crux of the matter!

• What causes this and what are the effects originated from this?

Individually, note the problems in separated sheets and organize them in a logic sequence.

Discuss with the members of the team.

Plenary session to debate the results of the teams - similarities and differences.
Why to spend time on Defining THE problem & Set THE objective?

1. Experience shows that project failure is associated with poorly defined problems it wants to resolve

2. Unclear and poorly defined objective is a guarantee for difficulties in project implementation

3. Unclear objective adversely affect project success
SUMMARY in preparing the project:

1. Problem Identification
2. Formulation of the Strategies to deal with the Problem
3. Agree with the options, and choose the plans of actions!
4. Planing the Implementation
PICK UP YOUR PRODUCTIVITY, ARNOLD!!

I'M NOT ALLOWED TO LIFT ANYTHING - HEAVY!!!
5.

Formulating the feasible target

Searching for a tangible and measurable objective.
Technique 3: Defining the Objective(s)

A way to develop clear objectives which will help to develop effective lines of action.

SMART criteria

Problem Identification ➔ Output is the defined OBJECTIVE ➔ Force Field Analysis to test the OBJECTIVE(s)

ACTION PLANNING
Steps for Action plan

*It is better to have a smaller number of clear but achievable objectives than a large number that are not followed through.*

Source: Iceland 1-2 November 2010, Helene Brewer, City of Umeå, Sweden
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 3: Defining the Objective(s)

SMART criteria

- **S**pecific in place
- **M**easurable in performance / output terms
- **A**ttainable in view of your means and resources
- **R**ealistic in view of existing obstacles and chance of success
- **T**ime feasible to achieve concrete results within the development framework
ACTION PLANNING

Technique 3: Defining the Objective(s)

SMART objective

- Sustainable
- Manageable
- Action oriented
- Replicable
- Technically feasible
How To Begin:

Define the Current Horizon – where are we now?

Source: Jack Moran, Paul Epstein, www.RTMteam.net
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preserve</th>
<th>Achieve</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Competencies</td>
<td>Success Factors</td>
<td>Mistakes Pitfalls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What do we carry over?
- What do we leave behind?
- What lessons did we learn?
- What new approaches should we try?
- Should we try for incremental or transformational change?

Source: Jack Moran, Paul Epstein, [www.RTMteam.net](http://www.RTMteam.net)
Strategic Plans Can Be Important Parts of Performance Management Systems

The *Plan-Do-Check-Act* (PDCA) model of QI can also be the basis for an organization’s performance management system, as in the City of Austin’s approach to “Managing for Results”

Source: Jack Moran, Paul Epstein, www.RTMteam.net
Power of Strategic Alignment from Balanced Scorecards, Primarily from Strategy Maps

Strategy Maps and BSC to improve the Alignment and Execution of Strategies

No Strategic Alignment

Execution Gap

Health Dept
Other Public Agencies
Hospitals
Nonprofits

Schools
Community Groups
Faith Communities
Families & Individuals

High Level Goals

Public Health Outcomes

Source: Jack Moran, Paul Epstein, www.RTMteam.net
Is this your organization?

Source: Jack Moran, Paul Epstein, www.RTMteam.net
6.

Analysing the various forces & phenomena that may strengthen or block my actions

Understanding existing forces in the local development scenario.
Technique 4: Force Field Analysis

**DRIVING FORCES**
- Political Will
- Policy in Place
- Financial Resources
- Organized Communities
- Coordination institutionalized

**RESTRAINING FORCES**
- Low salaries
- No planning framework
- Lack of experience
- Divergent interests among public agencies
- Low motivation of staff
Technique 4: Force Field Analysis

**ACTION PLANNING**

**Filtering the Forces**

**Driving Forces**
- Policy in Place
- Organised Communities
- Co-ordination institutionalised

**Restrainting Forces**
- No planning framework
- Lack of experience
- Divergent interests among public agencies
- Low motivation of staff
Setting Implementation Priorities

- **Strategic Importance**
  - Low
  - Medium
  - High

- **Difficulty of Implementing**
  - Low
  - Medium
  - High

The diagram illustrates the relationship between strategic importance and difficulty of implementing, with areas shaded to represent priorities.
DEFINING THE OPTIONS AND THE PLAN OF ACTION

Problem Formulation

Defining the Objectives

Identifying the Forces

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

Selecting Forces Viable to be Influenced

Developing Potential Actions

Brainstorm

SWOT ANALYSIS

Develop Tasks & Duration

Develop & Test Strategies

ACTION PLANNING

Technique 4: Force Field Analysis
Analytical Phase

1. Situation Analysis
2. Stakeholders Analysis
3. Participant Analysis
4. Problem Analysis
5. Objectives Analysis
6. Alternative Analysis
7. Strategy Analysis

Results

Design Phase

1. Defining the project elements
2. Defining Tasks & Activities
3. Defining Responsibilities
4. Defining Costs
5. Assessing external factors - risks
6. Developing indicators

Results
Technique 4: Activity Oriented Planning

**Action Planning**

- **Objective**
- **Strategic Options**
- **Forces**
- **SWOT**
- **Potential Actions**
- **Tasks & Activities**
- **Responsibility**
- **Means**
- **Time**

Design of the Strategy

The project
Objective Oriented Project Planning Process - OOPP

Activity Oriented Project Planning Process - AOPP

Process Oriented

- Learning
- Defining course of action
- Linking problems, objectives and strategies
- Strategising

Product Oriented

- Project Document
- Budget
- Time & Output

Stakeholders Participation & Consultations

Project Logframe

PCM

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12/22/97
Prepare Activity Schedule

List the main activities
Break activities down into manageable tasks
Determine activity sequence /dependencies
Estimate the start-up, duration and completion
Identify process indicators or milestones
Define expertise required to undertake activities
Allocate tasks among the project team

Example - work breakdown activities

- Carry out needs analysis
- Train trainers in use of new equipment
- Develop new curricula
- Train trainers in new methodologies

  - Conduct training
    - Needs assessment

  - Formulate a training programme

  - Prepare training manuals in identified areas

  - Conduct workshops

  - Organise training aids

  - Inform participants
  - Organise venue
  - Contact trainer

Specifying the inputs

Checklist for Preparing a Cost Schedule

- List means required to undertake each activity
- Put means into cost categories
- Specify units, quantity and unit costs
- Specify funding source
- Allocate cost codes
- Schedule costs
- Estimate recurrent costs
- Prepare cost summary tables

Based on Ian Sommerville (2004) "Project Management", Software Engineering,
The Project Scheduling Process

Scheduling Problems

I Estimating the difficulty of problems and hence the cost of developing a solution is hard.
I Productivity is not proportional to the number of people working on a task.
I Adding people to a late project makes it later because of communication overheads.
I The unexpected always happens. Always allow contingency in planning.

Bar charts and activity networks

- Graphical notations used to illustrate the project schedule.
- Show project breakdown into tasks. Tasks should not be too small. They should take about a week or two.
- Activity charts show task dependencies and the critical path.
- Bar charts show schedule against calendar time.

Gantt Charts

Named after Henry Gantt.
Around since 1st World War.
Commonest graphical representation of plans.
Can show critical path.
But not great at showing precedence.
Easy for novices to construct and interpret.
Other charts/views are available in MS-Project.
### Task Durations & Dependencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration (days)</th>
<th>Dependencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>T1 (M1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>T2, T4 (M2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>T1, T2 (M3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>T1 (M1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>T4 (M5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>T3, T6 (M4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>T5, T7 (M7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>T9 (M6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>T11 (M8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity network

Activity timeline


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Staff allocation

Preparing a project package with PCM-Project Cycle Management Methods & Techniques

Searching for a sound project proposal doc
Project Cycle - 6 Phases

1. Programming
2. Financing
3. Identification
4. Formulation
5. Evaluation
6. Implementation

Project Cycle Management - PCM
### The Logframe Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objective</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Verifiable indicators</th>
<th>Sources of verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Project purpose |
|------------------|----------------------|
|                  |                      |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: As each part of the matrix is formulated, the logic of other parts should be tested and refined/revised, as required. An ‘iterative’ process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Specification of inputs and costs</th>
<th>Overall Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>the immediate benefit for the beneficiaries, explaining why the project is needed by them</td>
<td>Project Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>the services that will be delivered to the beneficiaries by the project</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>the project intends to achieve the results by the project</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>external factors are important for achievement of the objectives</td>
<td>Assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>achievement of objectives can be measured</td>
<td>Objectively verifiable indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>it is possible to find the data necessary for evaluating the project</td>
<td>Means/sources of verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>the project costs</td>
<td>Specification of inputs and costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity and Resource Schedules

Logframe

Results-based Activity Schedule  Results-based Resource Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Project fiche/outline (1)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Project name, location, duration</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rationale (stating needs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Organisation’s priorities, funder’s priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Target group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>General aim</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Concrete/specific objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Methodology/strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Plan of activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project fiche/outline (2)

9. Main outcomes
10. Expected results
11. Added value of the project
12. Evaluation criteria, technique
13. Sustainability, multiplicatory effects
14. Resources: financial (budget), material (budget), human (team and partners)
15. Publicity
16. Information about the organisation (contact info)
THE END