Excellence in Activity Planning

Master Template
for
Category 3 Government Entities

Revised, May 2005

Transparency & Accountability Office
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Activity Planning Workshop

Goals of the Workshop:

- Ensure each participant understands the components of the activity planning process
- Ensure each participant is provided with the tools to facilitate the process
- Ensure each participant has the opportunity to clarify the organization's mandate
- Ensure each participant understands the client base
- Provide the opportunity to write goals for a specified time frame.

Activity Planning Worksheets

1) Strategic Directions
2) The Activity Planning Process
3) Primary Clients and Related Expectations
4) Mandate
5) Vision
6) Mission
7) Values
8) Goals and Objectives

1. Strategic Directions: For Government Entity use
(to be included in government Entity's Activity plan)

Strategic Direction - the articulation of a desired physical, social or economic outcome that would normally require action or involvement of more than one government entity.

Government's Strategic Direction (as communicated by the responsible department)	Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is/was		
		Not being implemented at this time (rationale included in the plan)	Addressed only in specific sub-areas (rationale included in the plan)	Addressed in the activities plan

2. The Activity Planning Process

Direction: Please note who was involved in each phase of the last activity planning cycle, what they did and why things were done in that way.

Step	Who (position)	What	Why
1. Interpreting the department's vision			
2. Interpreting the department's mission			
3. Determining whether the public body demonstrates the values set for the responsible department of the provincial government			
4. Interpreting the mandate			
5. Setting goals			
6. Setting objectives			
7. Performance measurement			
8. Drafting the activity plan			
9. Reviewing/ approving activity plan			
10. Implementing, Monitoring and Reporting			

3: Primary Clients and Related Expectations

Client: Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or services

Who Are Our Clients (Consider both internal and external clients)	What They Need from us	How They Influence and Judge us	Do Our Clients Think That We		
			Meet their needs	Sometimes meet their needs	Rarely satisfy their needs

Comments:

4: Mandate

1. If there is a mandate, please identify exactly where the mandate is stated.

2. If there is no defined mandate, what is the rationale for doing the current activities?

3. Describe aspects of the entity's mandate which need to be discussed and refined.

4. Are there other players who should be involved as we discuss and clarify our mandate?

5. Does our mandate enable us to meet the needs of our clients?

5. Vision

A vision is a short statement describing the ideal state an organization is striving to achieve in the long term for its clients. It is a statement of destination which is written within the context of the province, the relevant department, and the governing body's regional/provincial context.

The vision statement provides guidance by articulating what the governing body wishes to attain. It serves as a signpost, a goal-oriented mental construct that guides people's behaviour, establishing standards of excellence. It transcends the status quo bridging the present and the future.

Please review the vision statement of the Department and determine if the entity can contribute to its achievement.

Our Contribution:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Mission Statement (inputs ° programs/services ° outputs ° mission)

A mission statement is an output oriented statement which systematically diagrams the vision by answering the questions who, what and why. It must be realistic and achievable in approximately two cycles of business planning and should indicate how it will be measured. It should tell the ultimate output desired in the near future. It should be brief and memorable, and support the direction required by the organization to which it reports. It is not a descriptor of the programs and services or what the organization is about and it does not answer how it will be achieved.

Please review the mission statement of the Department and determine how the entity will contribute to its achievement.

Our Contribution:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do any of the Measures and Indicators require the entity to complete specific activities
" Yes   " No

If the answer is "yes" please identify the specific Measure(s) which requires your support and list it (them) below:

_____
_____

If the answer is "yes" please identify the specific Indicator(s) which requires your support and list it (them) below:

_____
_____

7. Values

Question	Response		Action
	Yes	**No**	**If no, fill in these sections?**
1. Are we familiar with the values set for the department? If yes, proceed to the next question.			
2. Can we describe how those values are manifested in our actions? If yes, please proceed to Worksheet # 7. If no, complete the Action column.			Describe what we must do to demonstrate that these values are evident in this entity.

8a. Goal AND OBJECTIVES

1. Goal (for 3 years): (Note: Not all entities require goals. Where goals are applicable, please move to question 5).

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Where applicable: Is this goal achievable:
      A. in 3 years   Yes____   No ____
      B. within current fiscal realities   Yes____   No ____
      C. given the current resource allocations   Yes____   No ____
      D. using current internal business process   Yes____   No ____
      E. within our mandate   Yes____   No ____

3. Measure(s) and indicators we believe would tell us when this goal is met:

_____
_____
_____

4. Actions we will need to take to ensure we are able to fulfill the goal include the following:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

These actions could be completed in 3years Yes_____   No_____ Unsure_____

If No or Unsure please list the barriers

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Should the goal be revised   Yes_____   No_____

If yes please revise below

_____
_____

5. Objectives

1._____
_____

Measure:

_____

Indicator(s):

_____

2._____
_____

Measure:

_____

Indicator(s):

_____

3._____
_____

Measure:

_____

Indicator(s):

_____

8B. Objectives and Actions for Year 1

1. Goal # __
2. Objective #1
3. Actions necessary to address Objective 1

Actions	Costs	Time	Who				Time Frame/ How are outputs to be reported
			R	A	C	I	

R = responsible for collecting data; **A** = accountable for the outputs; **C** = must be consulted/ involved along the way; **I** = who will need to be informed of the outputs

Can we commit the time and resources necessary to complete these actions?
" Yes " No
If yes, please proceed. If no please modify the objective to ensure it can be accomplished in one year and the goal to make sure it can realistically be completed in three years.

Terminology

Under no circumstances shall the terminology used conflict with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The terminology provided below supersedes any previous issuances. Some of the terms are accompanied by examples and/or explanations. In other cases subsets of the terms are provided and are indicated by the numbering system. These terms support the information contained in this document and all other documents of the Transparency & Accountability Office.

Accountability
Accountability is the ownership of conferred responsibilities, combined with an obligation to report to a higher authority on the discharge of those responsibilities and the results obtained.

Accountability Framework
An accountability framework encompasses a broad range of related components of a transparent and accountable structure which include performance-based planning, monitoring, performance-based reporting, and feedback. It would be supported by the issuance of guidelines and policies which consider the legislative and strategic directions of government.

Activities
Activities are the actions that are completed to fulfill an obligation outlined in an assigned mandate.

Benchmarks
Benchmarks are the standards against which performance will be measured. Those benchmarks, which are points of reference, can be determined by the entity or the Province. They can be based on: the ideal set by the entity; the best in the field for the programs and services of a particular type. Benchmarks established should support the direction established by the provincial government.

Consumption
Consumption is the process of using inputs.

Goal
A goal is a specific statement of the desired results to be achieved over a specified period of time.

Impact
An impact is an intended or unintended consequence of policies, programs, services or products, which is either positive or negative.

Indicator

An indicator is a particular value or characteristic used to measure activities, outputs or outcomes. It is important that indicators are comparable. Comparable indicators are a specific set of common quantitative or qualitative data for the aspect of performance under consideration. There are two types of indicators:

> 1) *Indicator of Well-being*
> An indicator of well-being is quantitative data that indicates changes in physical, social or economic states. It is multidimensional (i.e. expressed as a ratio or percentage). Indicators should be a fair reflection of the things the entity can reasonably control and of those things which have a logical connection to the information which the entity desires to report. Indicators of well-being should meet the criteria specified in this document.
>
> 2) *Indicator of Process*
> An indicator of process is qualitative or quantitative data that is used to indicate progress toward a desired objective, goal and/or mission. The indicator can be uni-dimensional (i.e. expressed as a data point that is a number or categorical value). Examples of process indicators include: taught XX number of students in 200?; the committee met 5 times and has a policy document drafted; outcomes have been established for 10 of 20 program areas.

Information

Information can be of two types: baseline data or governance information:

> 1) *Baseline Data*
> Baseline data are quantitative information collected preferably before a program/service/ activity commences, for the purposes of making future comparisons.
>
> 2) *Governance Information*
> Governance information is qualitative information collected by a minister or a governing body before a process or activity commences that provides evidence which will be used to make future comparisons.

Inputs

Inputs are the resources used to carry out actions.

Lines of Business

Lines of business are discrete and coherent sets of programs, services and/or products that represent what the entity delivers to its external clients.

Measures

Measures provide specific information used when indicators are combined to assess the extent of accomplishment of results (activities/outputs/outcomes). Various types of measures are listed below:

1) *Effectiveness Measures*
   Effectiveness measures are the different ratios which tell if a planned result was accomplished.
   Example: cost per client.

2) *Input Measures*
   Input measures are used to quantify the amount of resources used to complete the activity and produce the outputs.
   Example: human resources utilized to complete an activity or produce the outputs.

3) *Outcome Measures*
   Outcome measures are used to provide qualitative and quantitative information indicating the degree to which an entity can be credited for the achievement of its planned objectives. There can be measures of well-being or process outcomes.
   Example of well-being: reduction in the number of citizens dependent upon income support compared with the total population.
   Example of process: number of cases settled compared with the number heard.

4) *Output Measures*
   Output measures are used to tell the amount produced as a result of the inputs used in a program or service.
   Example: number of applications processed compared with the inputs.

5) *Process Measures*
   There are three types of process measures designed to monitor the organization's activities: efficiency measures, activity based and unit cost measures:
   a) *Activity-based measures*
      Activity-based measures are used to quantify how busy an organization is and enable the organization to determine the use for a specific program or service.
      Example: phone calls handled per employee.

b) *Efficiency measures*

Efficiency measures are ratios of outputs to inputs. They tell how well the organization used its resources to produce the programs and services.

Example: number of individuals ticketed per police officer.

c) *Unit costs*

Unit costs are the ratios of outputs to input expenditures.

Example: number of cases handled compared with fiscal investment.

6) *Proxy Measures*

Proxy measures are used when direct measurement of a specific outcome is not possible. They are a surrogate or substitute data used when costs, complexity or timeliness prevent a result from being measured directly. There are cases where departments of the provincial government and Category 1 entities will have to use proxy measures.

Example: obesity rates are not available for a certain geographical area of the province therefore body mass index is used.

Mission

A mission statement is an outcome oriented statement which systematically diagrams the vision by answering the questions who, what and why. It is essential that it is realistic and achievable in 6 to 8 years (approximately 2 cycles of planning), tell the ultimate result of your work, answers who will do what and why they are striving to achieve this end, and is memorable.

Objective

An objective is a measurable statement or incremental milestone which specifies a change or benefit that the entity hopes to achieve as it strives to achieve a specific goal. Success in meeting the objectives can be readily evaluated using qualitative and quantitative measures.

Outcome

An outcome is a change as a consequence of specific policies, programs and initiatives undertaken by entities. There are three types of outcomes: immediate, intermediate and ultimate. An immediate outcome could be a change in attitudes. An intermediate outcome could be a change in behavior. The ultimate outcome would be a lower or higher incidence of a specific result (e.g. lower- disease, drop out rate, unemployment, accidents) (e.g. higher- year-around employment, literacy, retention of qualified workers, students completing career paths).

Well-being outcomes
Well-being outcomes are external physical, social or economic changes as a consequence of policies, programs and initiatives undertaken by an entity.

Process outcomes
Process outcomes are internal or external changes that result from a defined course of action as a consequence of the objectives and goals undertaken by an entity. These changes are often required if the well-being outcomes are to be eventually achieved.

Outputs
An output is what is produced as a direct result of transforming resources through an activity or process (series of activities) undertaken using the inputs (resources).

Performance
Performance refers to actual results measured against defined standards.

Performance Framework
Performance framework is used to define the steps of the process to be completed as a component of the planning process.

Performance Measurement
Performance measurement is a quantitative and qualitative process to assess if the entity has completed its intended activities or achieved its desired outputs or outcomes in the most cost effective and timely manner possible.

Performance Report
A performance report is a summary of the organization's activities (Category 3), outputs (Category 2) or outcomes (Category 1) which provides a clear linkage between its plan and the results actually obtained using the specified performance measures.

Policy
A policy enables or restricts actions as a means of specifying outputs, outcomes or parameters. It provides specific information about the ends the entity desires to achieve, direction for the CEO and staff, and governance/operational level processes.

Process
A process is a set of activities which are aimed at planned outputs.

Production Activity
A production activity is the process which transform inputs (resources) into outputs (usually services in the case of the public sector).

Program
A program is a set of projects, services or events intended to meet a public need.

Result
The result is the accomplishment, desired or unintended, which arises from any process or operation. It may take more than one result to achieve a desired outcome.

Social Audit
A social audit is an independent review of the social and economic well-being of communities. It is a means of ensuring that government's programs and policies are meeting people's needs.

Strategic Issue
A strategic issue is the most significant internal and/or external change which the organization must manage to realize its vision and the capacity of the organization to effectively manage the impacts of those changes.

Strategy
A strategy is a systematic plan of action that an organization intends to take in order to achieve its objectives. Strategies are dynamic and may need to be modified based on new knowledge or changing circumstances.

Target
Targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound changes/benefits the organization intends to achieve.

> Example: By 200?, increase scores of NL rural 15 year olds in reading, science and mathematics to the national average, as measured by the *Program for International Student Assessment.*
>
> Example: Increase full-time employment by 2% within five years.

Values
Values are the fundamental principles, which can be described as actions that guide behaviour and decision making.

Vision
A vision is a short statement describing the ideal state an organization is striving to achieve for its clients or the ideal state that an organization sees for society. It answers the question, "What is the outcome for the citizens of the province if the entity achieves its mandate?