

## Module 2: Planning for implementation

Guidance material	2.2.1 How to create a strategic action plan
What is the purpose of this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support school leaders in co-constructing a strategic action plan to plan how the SCF will be implemented in their school.</li> </ul>
When to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the School Implementation Group (SIG) has been formed</li> <li>This activity can be undertaken after school leaders are familiar with the SCF and are ready to plan for implementation in their school.</li> </ul>
With whom to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School leaders</li> <li>Leaders/Head of Faculty /teachers responsible for implementing the SCF in the school</li> </ul>
Have you considered these materials first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.2 <i>Strategic Action Plans</i></li> <li>2.2.2 <i>Strategic Action Plan template</i></li> <li>2.2.3 <i>Strategic Action Plan exemplar</i></li> </ul>
How to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The activity instructions below outline the steps to co-construct a strategic action plan.</li> </ul>
What resources or equipment are needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post it notes</li> <li>A whiteboard and whiteboard pens</li> <li>Hard and soft copies of 2.2.2 <i>Strategic Action Plan template</i></li> </ul>
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan how you will finalise your draft strategic action plan.</li> <li>Share your draft strategic action plan with staff.</li> <li>Review your strategic action plan regularly using the guidance material 2.3 <i>Undertaking school review</i></li> </ul>

## 2.2.1 How to create a strategic action plan

### What is a strategic action plan and why do we need one?

Before you start action planning it is important that the school leaders involved know what an action plan is and why one is needed for successful implementation of the SCF. To support this please read and discuss as a group the following SCF guidance material:

- 2.2 *Strategic action plans*
- 2.2.2 *Strategic Action Plan template*
- 2.2.3 *A strategic Action Plan exemplar*

If the headings of an action plan use the SMART goal setting framework, then an action plan is considered to be a strategic action plan. Whatever targets you aim for you should first ensure that they are SMART. For more information on the SMART target framework see SCF guidance material 2.2 *Strategic action plans*



#### 1. Discuss previous experience in action planning

Before you start creating your action plan it is important to share as an implementation group your previous experiences in developing strategic action plans. Senior leaders (e.g. the principal) may be very experienced in writing action plans (such as school development plans) while middle leaders (e.g. heads of department) may not have experienced being part of this process previously. Talking about that process and how it can help you write the SCF action plan is useful. Discuss the possible format of your action plan. If your school has its own action plan format then use that or you may choose to use the action plan template described below (also see guidance material 2.2.2 *Strategic Action Plan template*).

#### 2. Brainstorm specific targets (also known as key performance indicators (KPIs) or goals)

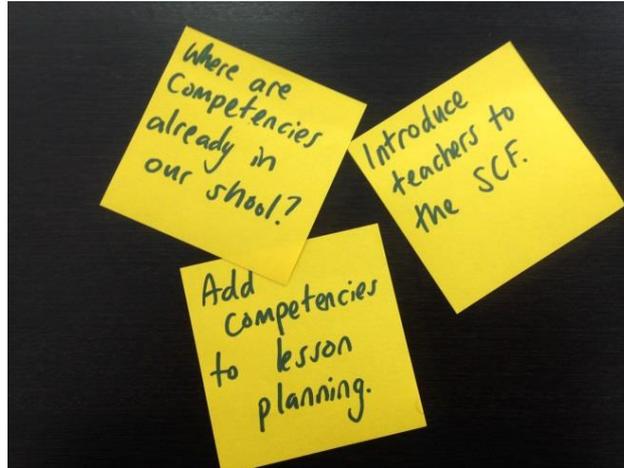
Once the school's implementation group has undertaken the review of the SCF Evaluative Rubric (see 2.3.1 *SCF Evaluative Rubric*), Gap analysis strategy and/or the Plus, Minus, Delta activity outlined in guidance material 2.2. *Strategic Action Plans*, then it is time to begin developing your own school's strategic action plan.

The school's implementation group will have different ideas about what should happen and when. The following "post-it-note" activity is an effective way to collate and prioritize these ideas.

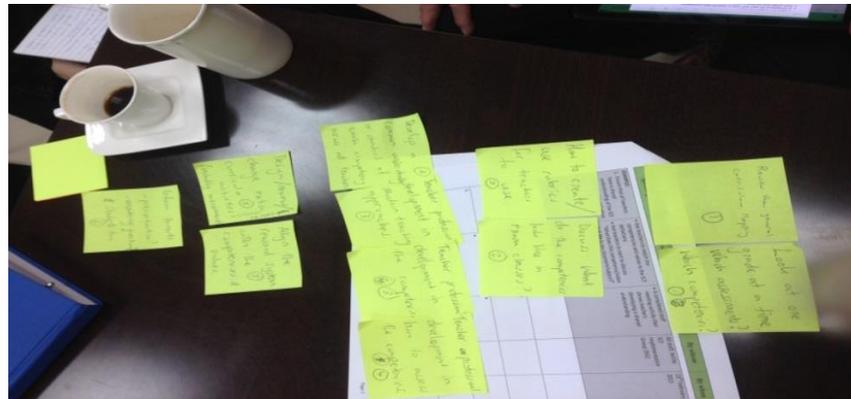
#### Post It Note Activity Instructions

- Give one person (the leader) a small pile of post-it-notes.
- Ask the group to think about **"What targets/activities/tasks will we need to undertake to implement the SCF in our school?"** Encourage them to share their ideas with the person sitting beside them (think, pair, share strategy).

- c) Ask each pair group to share as many ideas as they can, **BUT** to write **ONE** target/activity/task/idea per post-it-note.



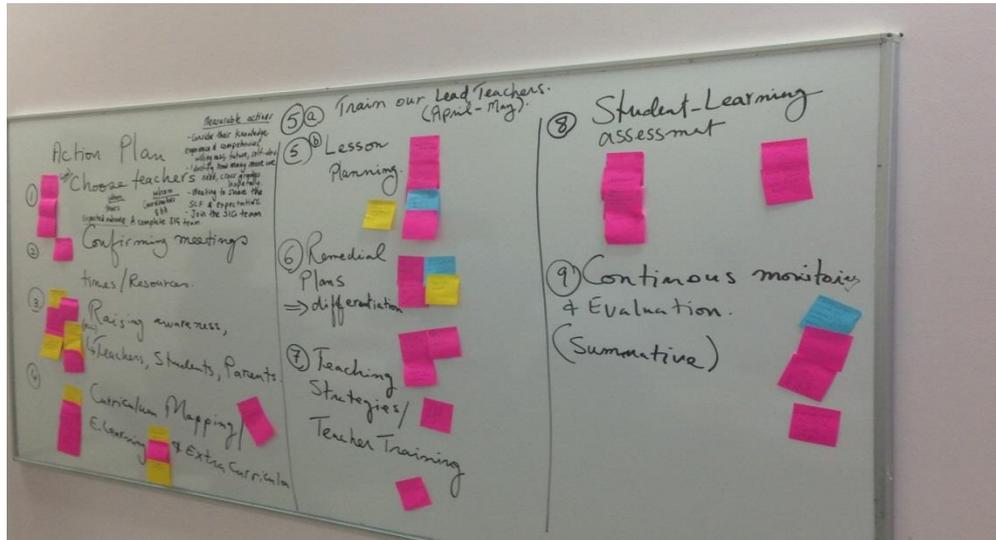
- d) Once the pairs has written their ideas, collect the post-it-notes and stick them onto a whiteboard. It is likely that several ideas will have been repeated by different pairs; place these post-it-notes together on the whiteboard as this visually shows the group their common topics.
- e) Talk about each topic as you stick it on the whiteboard. This will ensure that everyone has a similar understanding of the topics. At the same time encourage the team to write more ideas as they hear what their colleagues have shared.



*Bring similar targets (post-it-notes) together.*

- f) Some post-it-notes will be large targets and some will be specific tasks that need to be undertaken. Make a decision with each post-it-note: **Is this a target or is this a task?** See step three below for more information on the difference between specific targets and tasks. For now, organise any tasks underneath the target they belong with.
- g) Now ask the team to put their ideas into chronological order: Which targets will we focus on first? What will we do next? Encourage the team to physically move the post-it-notes around the whiteboard. This is a good

time to start talking about possible deadlines for each target while they put the targets in order.



Put targets (post-it-notes) in chronological order.

### 3. Turn specific targets into tasks

Once there is agreement with regard to the priority of the targets then the team can begin with their first target and identify the specific tasks that need to occur to achieve that target. Tasks should be measurable and attainable activities that leaders/teachers can carry out. For example:

If the specific target is to:	Then the tasks might include:
Change our lesson planning templates to include the SCF values and competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out how other schools are including the competences in their lesson plans.</li> <li>Have a department meeting with teachers to brainstorm different ways to include the competences in lesson plans.</li> </ul>

### 4. Identify the expected outcome(s)

The team needs to decide what the outcome of each target will look like when that target is achieved. An expected outcome might be a document (e.g. a mathematics curriculum map), a meeting (e.g. a staff meeting to introduce teachers to the SCF) or an event (e.g. a SCF presentation to parents). For example, if the specific target is to *Change our lesson planning templates to include the SCF* then the expected outcome would be *an updated school-wide lesson plan template*.

### 5. Allocate tasks to group members

Each task needs to be allocated to a team member. When allocating tasks, keep in mind each person's role in the school, their strengths and workload.

### 6. Set deadlines for each task

Give each task a timebound deadline when it will be completed.



### 7. Decide, evaluate/next steps

The final column of the action plan provides an opportunity to record how you will evaluate this specific target or task. For example, if the specific target is to *Change our lesson planning templates to include the SCF* then the evaluation/next steps might be *Review the new planning templates each term*.

### 8. Continue steps 4 to 7 for each specific target

To complete the action plan repeat steps 4 to 7 with each specific target. This might be done by just some of the team who then share their draft version with the larger team at a later date.

### 9. Review and confirm the action plan

Once all specific targets have been planned for (including tasks, expected outcomes, by whom, by when and evaluation/next steps) the draft action plan needs to be reviewed and confirmed by the team. The action plan, and especially the deadlines, should be realistic for your school. However, the action plan should also be demanding enough to keep momentum. Keep in mind that the aim of this action plan is to provide direction for implementing the SCF in your school.

### Conclusion

An effective action plan should be reviewed and updated regularly. The plan will be added to and deadlines will shift. This is a sign that your action plan is providing direction. Read the guidance material 2.3 *Undertaking school review* for further advice on review processes.

