

Module 2: Planning for implementation

Guidance material	2.2 Strategic Action plans
What is the purpose of this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This material introduces the concept of strategic action planning It is a similar process to the writing of School Development Plans or Irtiqa'a Improvement Plans
When to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the school's implementation group (SIG) has been appointed. This is one of the first activities that the school's implementation group undertakes.
With whom to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders and Heads of Faculty Teachers on the implementation group who are not familiar with the School Development Plan writing process
Have you considered these materials first?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each member of the implementation group needs to be familiar with the SCF SCF Strategic Action Plan guidance materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1 <i>How to create a strategic action plan</i> 2.2.2 <i>Strategic action plan template</i> 2.2.3 <i>Strategic action plan exemplar</i>
How to use this material?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As prior reading to undertaking strategic action planning
What resources or equipment are needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This guidance material
What next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having read this guidance material you may select to use 2.2.3 <i>Strategic action plan exemplar</i> and modify it for your own school's use.

2.2 Strategic action plans

What is action planning?

Action planning is the process of writing a detailed planning document. It helps you decide what steps you need to take to achieve goals and actions you may have over a given period of time. As a written document it is available to be shared with staff and other stakeholders. It will contain the targets to be achieved with the specific tasks and activities that need to be undertaken. As a strategic document it is future – focused setting out the plan of what has to be achieved to ensure that the *ADEC Student Competence Framework (SCF)* competences and values have been mapped and implemented across the school.

The development of a quality action plan takes time but is an important foundation to the effective implementation of the competences and values across the school. The action planning process is similar to the process used to develop the School Development Plan, or in developing an Irtiqa'a Improvement Plan.

What makes the plan a *strategic action plan*?

An action plan is considered to be strategic if the goals are written as SMART goals. Each goal must be: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timebound. These SMART criteria are outlined further later in this document.

Why use an action planning approach?

In *ADEC SCF Document, Design Considerations (page 9)* reference is made to the importance of action plans in assisting the school's implementation group to work through staff concerns with regard to what they may perceive as another innovation. As the diagram below outlines, strategic action plans form part of the matrix for the successful implementation of an innovation.

Without a strategic action plan, the project will face a number of challenges and will not succeed in embedding the desired goals.

The more detailed a strategic action plan can be, the more likely that it will be successfully followed and achieved. A vague plan is unsatisfactory and cannot be implemented with success.

Innovation implementation

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plans	Success
	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plans	Confusion
Vision		Incentives	Resources	Action Plans	Anxiety
Vision	Skills		Resources	Action Plans	Slow Change
Vision	Skills	Incentives		Action Plans	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources		False Starts

Fig. 1 **Five elements of successful change management and Innovation Implementation**

(adapted) Jacqueline S. Thousand & Richard A. Villa, *Managing Complex Change*; 2001

The role of the school implementation group (SIG) in action planning

It is recommended that each school create an implementation group to undertake the planning and work that is required to implement the SCF. The strategic action plan sets out the actions that the school will undertake to implement the SCF competences and values into school activities and class programmes.

The implementation group consists of those who have the authority to make school wide change (heads of school, principal, academic vice-principals), those with curriculum responsibility (heads of faculty, curriculum coordinators,) and lead teachers who are able to pilot and trial materials as they are developed. Ideally the implementation group should have between six and eight members.

In developing a strategic action plan for the SCF the implementation group is responsible for:

- the mapping of the competences and values to their academic curriculums by grade level
- the mapping of the competences and values to their extra-curricular programmes and
- the implementation of the competences and values into school activities and class programmes for all students.

By having the full implementation group write the strategic action plan everyone has a clear understanding of what is required to be completed and by when. The development of an implementation group is further outlined in the *ADEC Student Competence Framework for Private Schools, Guidance for schools, page v.9-v.11..*

School planning – Key aspects

Aspect	School Level (Owner, Principal, Senior Management Team)	Faculty/Subject Level (Head of Faculty/Subject/ Grades/Cluster)	Teacher Level (Individual Teachers)
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ overall responsibility for effective implementation of framework ■ development of a whole school Framework Implementation Plan ■ establishment of an Implementation Group ■ whole school policy on framework implementation developed ■ provision of resources/training opportunities for teachers ■ ensuring parents are made aware of and support the framework initiative ■ liaison with ADEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ embedding of framework competences in the subject curriculum ■ mapping of framework competences to subject curriculum (and identifying gaps) ■ delivery of school Implementation Plan for the framework ■ identifying training needs for teachers ■ development of effective cross-curriculum projects and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ planning of competence development in students in programmes of study and individual lessons ■ identify personal training needs for effective competence delivery ■ participate in effective cross-curricular projects and activities

The Strategic Action Planning process

The process of strategic action planning has a number of specific steps that need to be followed. Once the school's implementation team has been formed and introduced to the SCF, their first step is to create a draft action plan. Read the guidance material 2.2.1 *How to create a strategic action plan* to deepen your understanding of the action planning process.

Once drafted the action plan should be distributed to staff and other stakeholders for their consultation and input into the targets and tasks that need to be completed. This will lead the implementation team to adopting a final strategic action plan for their guidance.

Action plans are open to review and at each meeting of the school's implementation team time should be allocated to review the strategic action plan, to:

- record those tasks that have been achieved,
- identify new steps that need to be added and to
- check on the completion dates of future tasks.

Action planning strategies

The following three strategies are activities that a school's implementation group may undertake among themselves, or with the whole school faculty, before beginning to develop their strategic action plan.

1. Review the SCF Evaluative Rubric (Guidance material 2.3.1)

The SCF Evaluative rubric sets out a series of criteria for the successful implementation of the SCF across the school. By reviewing this rubric as a group you will develop a common understanding of your school's strengths and what the next steps you will need to undertake.

Focus 1: Preparing for SCF implementation				
Rubric dimension	Rubric indicators			
	Weak	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding
School Implementation Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation group has school leaders that represent some aspects of school life • The implementation group meets occasionally • Some members of the implementation group created a SCF strategic action plan • School owners/ board are yet to be informed of the SCF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation group has school leaders that represent most aspects of school life • The implementation group meets regularly • The implementation group has co-constructed a SCF strategic action plan as a team and it is reviewed regularly • School owners/ board have been informed of the SCF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation group has school leaders that represent all aspects of school life • The implementation group meets regularly and they have created systems to ensure their advancement as a group (e.g. agenda, meeting minutes etc.) • The implementation group has co-constructed a SCF strategic action plan that provides clear direction that is informed by regular review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation group has school leaders that represent all aspects of school life including student and parent members • The implementation group meets regularly and they have created systems to ensure the advancement of the SCF across their school (e.g. school development plan, policies) • The implementation team has further co-constructed a SCF strategic action plan with input from their wider school community
Evidence could include: SIG members list, SCF meeting agendas/minutes, SCF strategic action plan, plans/agendas for parent/community SCF meeting's, SCF policies, SCF timelines / calendars,				

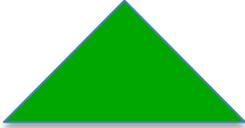
2. Gap analysis activity

To what extent are the competences evident in our school?		In which areas of our wider school life are the competences evident?	
Competences	Discussion	Competences	Discussion
Communication Initiative/self-direction Entrepreneurship Self-confidence Leadership and responsibility Collaboration/ Teamwork Digital competence Problem Solving Creativity Critical thinking Independent learning Global and environmental awareness Cultural awareness/ citizenship		Communication Initiative/self-direction Entrepreneurship Self-confidence Leadership and responsibility Collaboration/ Teamwork Digital competence Problem Solving Creativity Critical thinking Independent learning Global and environmental awareness Cultural awareness/ citizenship	
Which competences are not evident in our school?		Which competences do you consider we should develop first?	
Competences	Discussion	Competences	Discussion
Communication Initiative/self-direction Entrepreneurship Self-confidence Leadership and responsibility Collaboration/ Teamwork Digital competence Problem Solving Creativity Critical thinking Independent learning Global and environmental awareness Cultural awareness/ citizenship		Communication Initiative/self-direction Entrepreneurship Self-confidence Leadership and responsibility Collaboration/ Teamwork Digital competence Problem Solving Creativity Critical thinking Independent learning Global and environmental awareness Cultural awareness/ citizenship	

مع الشكر لمدرسة العين التمهيدية لتوفيرها هذا النموذج

With thanks to the Al Ain Juniors School for this template.

3. Plus, minus, delta activity

		
<p>ما هي نقاط القوة في عملية تطوير كفاءات طلابكم؟</p> <p>What are your current strengths in developing student competences?</p>	<p>ما الذي لم يُنفذ حتى الآن؟</p> <p>What isn't currently happening?</p>	<p>ما هي الخطوات التالية في رأيكم؟</p> <p>Next steps from your point of view.</p>

Developing SMART targets

Just as the Irtiqa'a Improvement Plan process uses SMART targets it is also an important aspect of any strategic action plan process. If the headings of an action plan use the SMART target framework, then an action plan is considered to be a strategic action plan.



Specific targets aim to achieve particular objectives.

For example: *Develop a school implementation group that represents each curriculum area of the school.*

Measurable targets can be quantified so you can assess if your target has been met.

For example: *The mathematics lead teacher will map the competences onto the mathematics curriculum for grades 4-7.*



Attainable targets are those you have the capacity to achieve with the resources and time available.

For example: *The mathematics lead teacher will identify one teacher from each grade level 4-7 to assist them in undertaking the competence mapping.*

Relevant targets are those which meet the needs of students, parents and the wider school community.

For example: *The mathematics competence map for Grades 4-7 will be shared with the mathematics teams working at Grades KG -3 and Grades 9-12.*

Time-bound targets are those which set specific timelines for the work to be undertaken.

For example: *The mathematics curriculum mapping will be completed by 01.05.16¹*

Conclusion

Some action plans can consist of a long list of tasks that need to be completed, but do not add to the overall improvement of outcomes for students. If a series of tasks do not add to the quality of the teaching and learning in the school, then the role of the monitoring person on the implementation team is to bring this to everyone's attention.

Equally where there is evidence of changed school and teacher practice, and improved outcomes for students, this evidence needs to inform the review process.

Further reading

For further reading on action planning consider reviewing the following resource:
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/skillsactionplanning.htm>

¹ Adapted from Irtiqa'a (2013) Improvement Plan process in Private school SEF Irtiqa'a Guidelines, p.67.
المادة التوجيهية: 2.2 ما هو التخطيط الإجرائي الاستراتيجي؟
الوحدة 2: التخطيط من أجل التنفيذ