

PN-ADC-897

**STRATEGIC  
PLANNING &  
ACTION PLANS  
FOR  
ASSOCIATIONS**

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*Strengthening Egypt's  
Processed Foods  
Export Industry*

**TOOLBOX**

**For a Trade &  
Business  
Association  
Workshop –  
January 23, 2002**

**Prepared by  
Agriculture-Led  
Export Businesses  
(ALEB) project**

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**Funded by  
USAID/Cairo  
Under Contract No:  
263-C-00-99-00011-00**

**USAID Cognizant  
Technical Officer:  
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# **TRADE AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS**

## **The Strategic and Action Planning Process**

### **An ALEB Project Workshop**

**JANUARY 23, 2002**

**Based on materials prepared by:**

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**and**

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**and**

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Director of Trade Association Services (TAS) team**

## **TAS WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**2:00 PM – Trade Association workshop participants registration.**

**2:00 PM – 2:20 PM – Trade Association participants complete “Trade Association Situation Analysis” questionnaire for the TAS team.**

**2:20 PM – TAS team collects all questionnaires or gets a commitment from associations as to a firm date when they will be faxed back to ALEB.**

**2:30 PM – TAS presentation on STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**3:00 PM – TAS presentation on SWOT analysis**

**3:30 PM – break (drinks and snacks)**

**3:45 PM – Working in Groups: Trade Associations work in groups to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**

**4:30 PM – Working in Groups: Trade Associations work in groups to begin to identify concrete steps to take – actions – when and by whom - to take advantage of their strengths, overcome their weaknesses, seize opportunities that they have and meet any threats to their success.**

**5:00 PM – Voluntary Presentations by Trade Associations of the preliminary results of their SWOT and Action Plans – examples of success**

**5:30 PM – Next Steps by TAS team and Adjournment**

# **TAS Strategic Planning & Action Plan Tool Box**

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## **WORKSHOP Purpose**

To train participants about the basic concepts and skills of strategic and action planning including how to conduct a SWOT analysis.

## **WORKSHOP Objectives**

As a result of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- **Complete a SWOT:**  
Any organization, such as a trade or business association, or private company needs to know its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strategic Plans and Action Plans to improve association performance should be based on a SWOT so that the association is poised to establish the conditions for success and then acts effectively and accordingly.
  
- **Prepare an Association ACTION PLAN for implementation:**  
The Association ACTION PLAN should be a living document that identifies WHO does WHICH action, by WHAT means, by WHEN and then tracks the progress of each action to reach a measurable result or objective of that association.
  
- **And, Identify probable areas for the ALEB TAS team to provide hands-on technical assistance and advice to your trade or business association:**  
The ALEB TAS team is prepared to provide specific technical assistance to help your trade or business association to implement the ACTION PLAN and to meet with your staff and association members or committees to help energize them to volunteer and assist in the work of their association.

# Strategic Planning

## Strategic Planning

Is

**Bringing the future into the present**

So

**you can do something about it.**

**"You can either take action, or hang back and wait for a miracle to happen."**

**- Peter Drucker**

## **Conditions for Success**

In order for a Trade or Business Association Action Plan to be successful, there are certain conditions that must be present at your trade or business association:

- **A compelling (non-emergency) need**
- **Management (The Board) is committed**
- **An effective Board of Directors and CEO/Managing Director**
- **Involvement of the Members – such as through being volunteers on Committees**
- **An analytical and valid process that involves all parts of the association – Board, staff and members**
- **A qualified facilitator**

# Overview of the Trade or Business Action Planning Process

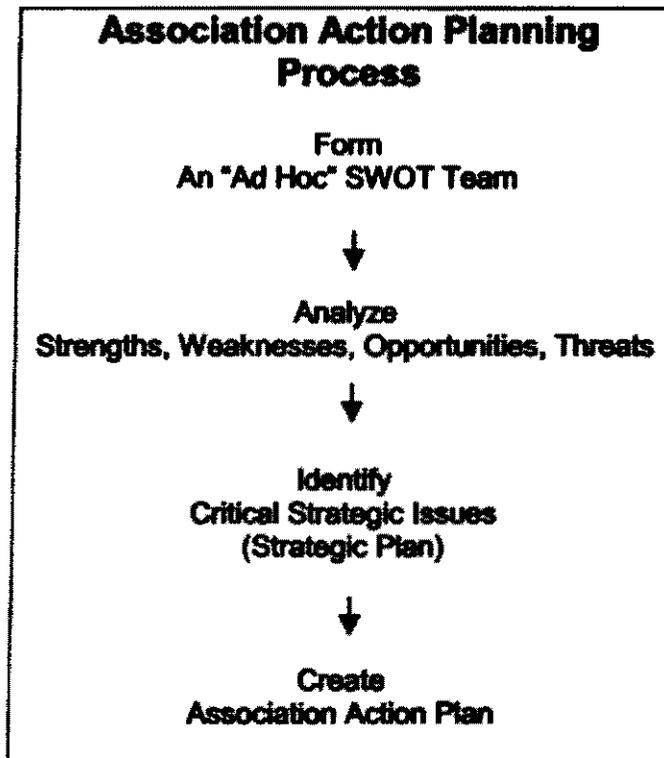
Decide  
To Plan



Plan  
The Process



Create  
Mission / Vision



Meet with the Board of Directors -  
The Association Improvement Team



Implement and Monitor  
The Association Action Plan

**AGRICULTURE-LED EXPORT BUSINESSES (ALEB)**

CAT. NO. A-300.001TB

**THE SWOT ANALYSIS TOOL BOX**

**Analyzing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats in Your Association**

**Preparing & Conducting a SWOT Analysis**

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- **Why Conduct a SWOT Analysis?**
- **Business Concept**
- **Conducting a SWOT Analysis**
- **Strengths**
- **Weaknesses**
- **Opportunities**
- **Threats**
- **Action Plan**

**Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)**

Every trade or business association, no matter how large or small, no matter its position in the economy and no matter its location in the world, has its strengths and weaknesses and enjoys opportunities whether they are recognized or unrecognized. Moreover, a trade or business association is almost always faced with threats, either from within the association itself or in the economy or by external factors that can also affect the performance of the trade and business association – such as the government, competing trade or business associations, etc.

The SWOT Analysis is a method of formally identifying and stating issues by association participants that play a key role in the management and function of the association and who are on "the front line" and exposed to these issues on a daily basis. Recognition of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is the beginning point to resolving these issues, involving the people – Board, staff and members - within the association itself.

**The Business Concept**

The ability to gather functional and key employees, along with volunteer members, in a setting to discuss the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in your association, and to analyze the threats that could have an adverse impact on your trade or business association, both internally and externally, is a healthy and integral exercise to managing change. Change is a certainty in the life of any organization – including trade and business associations.

Whenever an organization makes a change, its people have to deal with, first, an ending; then with a time in between the old and the new that is called the "neutral zone"; and then with a new beginning.

It is important to distinguish between *change* and *transition*. *Change* is situational: the new office, the new boss, the new team roles, and the new policy. *Transition* is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Change is external; transition is internal. Unless *transition* occurs, *change* will not work. That is what happens when a great idea falls flat. .

There are many methods used by managers worldwide to manage or implement change - to help management, employees, volunteers and members of associations cope with these changes. One tool that managers use is called a **SWOT Analysis**. The SWOT Analysis is a method to collect data on those factors that will influence the ability to compete successfully. The SWOT Analysis can be conducted as a meeting or series of meetings where personnel are encouraged to be open and candid. It is an opportunity for a frank and full exchange of ideas and discussion on the "State of the Association". It is held with the intention of identifying and putting into action plans and policies that manage the change process.

This process typically involves, in an association, the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager and the Treasurer, the staff, the Board of Directors and volunteers from the membership. It may be helpful, for example, for the heads of the various association Committees to hold their own "mini-SWOT Analysis" within their Committee before conducting the full trade association SWOT Analysis. In a small association, where just about every member fills a key role or function, it may be helpful to involve everybody in this exercise.

### **Conducting a SWOT Analysis**

It is recommended that this process be held away from the office setting where interruptions are less likely to interfere with the conduct and success of the meeting. It is also critical that consensus is reached between all parties if change is to be implemented and managed. Once a SWOT Analysis is held, it is important to record all the input from each participant under each category. A monitor is necessary to conduct the session and a recording secretary is necessary to record all of the input. It is most helpful if the recording of the input is written on a large piece of paper, such as a Flip Chart, where all of the meeting participants can see each item. This encourages follow-up discussion or may engender additional ideas. These papers should be saved for future reference.

One of the processes of conducting the meeting to ensure input from all participants is to focus on one category at a time - Strengths, then Weaknesses, etc. Give each participant the opportunity to report or suggest items to be discussed under each category. Perhaps this can be in the form of allocating a certain amount of time by the monitor to each participant in the meeting, which gives each person equal time to contribute. Initially, this time may only be a minute or two, and is called a "round". But as the list grows under each topic, it may generate more ideas or the opportunity to get "deeper" into a subject matter and another round is held. As long as there is contribution to the subject heading by any participant, the topic matter should not be closed.

If discussion is required to reach a consensus on whether or not an item belongs on the list, it is recommended that a round be held to obtain input from each participant as to why or why not the item belongs on the list. This is the process of reaching consensus. This is not the time to resolve the issues that are presented, unless a quick agreement and decision can be made. A SWOT Analysis is used to identify and gather issues. A meeting can become slowed down and the process of analyzing issues can become cumbersome and overwhelm the process of identifying issues that require action. The resolution of these issues comes at a later stage (See Action Plan).

In order to prepare an Action Plan, the first order of business is to list the categories to be discussed, identifying them in a clear and concise manner as to avoid any confusion over the objectives and their pertinence to the overall Action Plan. These are:

## **Strengths**

The topic of Strengths is usually a good starting subject for a SWOT Analysis. Strengths are usually quickly identified and are the "ice-breaker" to a SWOT session. It begins a forum that every participant is quick to contribute to and becomes a platform to build on. Once all the strengths of an association are determined, it becomes easier to see how the other subject matter - weaknesses, opportunities and threats - can have an impact on the trade or business association and how they can be dealt with.

Strengths can consist of anything that contributes to the success of the association. In the case of an agribusiness or food processing association, this include: a strong, vibrant export-oriented economy with financially strong companies that are members or that can be recruited as members, physical resources such as the office itself and office equipment and furniture, a strong, dedicated membership base with volunteers serving on Committees, strong ties to donor-funded organizations and projects that can provide technical assistance and training for the staff and the members, strong ties to the relevant Ministry that enables the association to bring petitions for policy, legal or regulatory change to that relevant ministry or to the national Assembly, members with special skills or abilities who are willing to donate them to the association, organizational capabilities or systems, special support from others outside the association including but not limited to bankers, government officials, and other special relationships, etc.

## **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are problems. Every association has them. Unless they are recognized, discussed and resolved, they continue to grow and become larger problems, reducing the potential for success. They can keep an association from growing and they can even make on become smaller until it is irrelevant to its members, no longer serves a purpose and becomes moribund.

Weaknesses must be confronted and dealt with. It is no embarrassment to have weaknesses. It is an embarrassment not to deal with them.

Weaknesses can consist of insufficient operating capital, poor organizational structure, poor internal management policies, procedures and controls, poor or no employment policies - including clear organization charts with scopes of work for staff and Board members, rumors within the association that adversely affect morale, the wrong person in the wrong job, lack of initiative to take risks, lack of a marketing campaign to attract new members, lack of a system to survey existing members in order to ensure that you are meeting their needs and demands on an annual basis, the wrong service for your members, expensive production costs for a NEWSLETTER that comes out too late to be meaningful to your members, lack of communication channels, a poor management policy that does not encourage up and down communication, insufficient physical resources such as office furniture, an office, and office equipment to get the job done, a financial plan to raise revenue and spend what your association can raise, etc.

Weaknesses are generally internal to any organization or association. It takes courage to identify them and it will take courage to act to correct them.

When identifying weaknesses, be sure to use examples why and how these affect the association. Examples are easily dealt with. Describing problems in a general manner, such as, "we lack members" is much more difficult to deal with and solve than to say, "we only have 100 members who pay 2000 LE to be members so we do not have enough funds to hire the staff we need to start to deliver the new service our current members are demanding." Specific, concrete examples help focus the problem.

## Opportunities

When asked, almost every staff member or association member could probably suggest an opportunity that may or may not have been thought of by management. These can range from simple operational improvements that can increase efficiencies or reduce costs, to identifying a new or improved member services. Opportunities can consist of: a more effective way to get the same job accomplished, a new service that will differentiate your association from the competition, a new logo, a new way to utilize your web site and link it to your members, a new way to raise non-dues income through advertising, strategic alliances or other innovative and untried methods that are appropriate for the Egyptian economic and cultural environment, a new service that could attract new members to join the association, buying supplies in volume to save money, a new financial system that would give more current and better information to the Treasurer, the Board or the CEO, recreating the organizational structure to improve efficiencies or reduce costs, etc.

## Threats

Threats exist in every business and economic environment and they can adversely affect trade and business associations just as they can affect the individual companies, the business, of your members.

Threats are not the same as weaknesses.

A threat describes exposure by the association to some potential factor that will negatively affect the success of the association. These are usually externally driven and represent pressure from the government, from competing trade and business associations, economic pressure themselves that weakens your members' own businesses, etc. Threats may even consist of government policies, procedures, laws and regulations, such as the NGO law that governs what trade and business associations can and cannot do in Egypt, member preferences, social threats and risks, etc.

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## The Action Plan

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### Taking Action

Now that you have a SWOT Analysis, what do you do with it? Problem resolution requires commitment, responsibility and the ability to measure results. Management – which includes the Board of Directors and the CEO - should reach agreement that change is necessary and they must commit to implementing it.

One way to start implementing change is to: 1) Summarize the topics by section, 2) Prepare an Action List of every topic that is decided by consensus to resolve, 3) assign association Committees to further define the problem if necessary, 4) suggest several approaches to resolving the problem and then 5) reach consensus on the approach to take to resolve the problem.

The Action List should be divided into the four sections - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Further, it may be helpful to divide these into an "Internal" and "External" sub-section under each section or heading. This helps to focus team

selection and provides for some "quick wins", which is critical to measuring progress and keeping teams actively involved.

A very important element to successful change is to illustrate to all staff and members of the association some immediate improvements ("quick wins"). This reinforces everyone's commitment and sets the future course for the association.

The Internal sub-sections consists of projects within the association or that can be resolved internally, and the External sub-sections consist of projects that impact the association from outside or must be resolved, to a larger extent, with some external input.

Once the Action List is composed and areas that require attention for the association are defined, work should commence on a scheduled basis. We recommend that a set time be devoted for this project on a once a week basis until all the projects for the association that arise out of the ACTION PLAN are completed. Each project must have a timetable and a responsible "project manager," which may be the head of the relevant Committee or a relevant staff member of the association. Holding meetings on a regular basis provide a means to monitor progress on each project or issue.

### **Preparing The Action Plan**

Some areas may require more time and resources to resolve. In this case, it may be necessary, as a management tool, to prepare an Action Plan.

### **Definition of an Action Plan**

*An Action Plan can be described as a written definition for implementing the trade or business association objectives as determined by the results of the SWOT Analysis, wherein certain major issues were identified as needing resolution or improving on strengths and opportunities.*

It is best to divide the topics from the Action List into functional organizational or reporting areas within the company, such as:

- Financial and Budgetary Management, Reporting and Controls
- Managerial & Human Resource Development
- Member Services Improvements
- Membership Recruitment and Retention
- Operational Improvements and
- Strategic Alliances for providing services to members.

This helps further define the topics needing resolution. To be effective, the situation should be restated, potential solutions listed, the individual team members responsible for working on the problem should be named, completion dates established to measure progress and, of course, the measurable, expected conclusion.

It is critical that this process result in the association having quantifiable targets or goals so as to ensure the success of the implementation. Objectives are established, programs planned, resources allocated and work is performed. It is also important to identify additional or external resources, especially if specialists, consultants or additional revenue is required. Determine the human and financial resources available to the association to implement the Action Plan.

Anything can be put in the Association Action Plan that requires ACTION. If there are identified strengths & opportunities that can be built upon, add it to the Action Plan. REMEMBER, an Action Plan is not categorized as Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities & Threats. The SWOT is a process to get the association to FOCUS in these areas & to define issues on which the association can BUILD. In order to obtain sustainability in resolving these issues, who's going to be ultimately responsible for the measurable result, i.e., implementing it? The FUNCTIONAL AREA in the trade or business association – or the relevant Committee - will be!

Generally, the QUICK WINS - The "Low Hanging Fruit" - that builds morale and keeps everyone bought into the change process that an association is going through, is the identification of weaknesses & threats that can be quickly resolved. Obviously, these are matched with the association's strengths & opportunities that have been identified and agreed upon. This is where Strengths & Opportunities play a part in your Association Action Plan: State the Situation. Define the resolution while keeping the association's Strengths and/or Opportunities in mind. These can usually be short to medium term resolutions.

If the association has a problem or threat that is not offset by a corresponding strength or opportunity, then usually it's a much longer term to fix it, if at all. This is a very general statement. There are obviously exceptions to it. But when one thinks of it in these terms & imparts this to the participants in the SWOT process, it usually starts a whole new round in thinking about their real strengths & their real opportunities. This round of thinking and further involvement usually occurs no sooner than the second day of a SWOT, whether it is an association or a Committee SWOT or a Board of Directors SWOT – that is, a "mini-SWOT".

Do not prepare an Action Plan with objectives which are not clearly attainable using the presently available human and financial resources or using resources that the association may not be able to obtain in the immediate future.

As actual performance is compared to the plan, feedback is generated to adjust workloads and the allocation of resources.

If you do prepare an ACTION PLAN that is not matched with or supported by the financial and human resources to implement the plan and achieve concrete measurable results, then all you will do is be laying the groundwork for failure and disappointment which ultimately will harm your association. So, be realistic. Be specific. And do not raise expectations or the disappointments will cause members to lose faith in you, your leaders and ultimately the trade or business association itself.

#### **Preparation of a Chronogram of Activities, or a Departmental Action Plan**

While the association Action Plan – the "Master Document" - has a column for the completion date, bear in mind that this is the final completion date when the Solution of the Key Need is resolved. This is the date one expects to see Measurable Results. However, it is useful, and almost essential, to develop a "Committee" or "mini" action plan. Why? Because you will probably delegate the solution to a specific Committee or Task Force of the association – that is, the very people or members who have a vested interest in seeing concrete results.

And because there are always a number of "mini steps" taken to accomplish a task or a series of tasks in order to resolve a key need, it is almost imperative to create a chronogram by task. This enables the Association Improvement Team (usually the Board of Directors) to delegate further responsibilities and actions accordingly.

Reaching down into the ranks of the association staff and the membership itself, through delegating authority and responsibility for achievements and results, this exercise in itself helps to develop accountability and pays dividends in helping to strengthen the association itself and expand its membership. Simply by integrating all staff and the membership into the process of becoming involved in the actual success of the association itself, you develop a team that is united in one common purpose – to have a strong, member-oriented association.

So, once the objectives and budget of the Action Plan have been confirmed, prepare a Chronogram of Activities (tasks), stipulating the timeframe for accomplishing each activity. This is simply a summary of the salient points of each section and the date to accomplish certain benchmarks. The timeframe should identify the objective, person or persons responsible and the deadline for completion. The chronogram is a valuable tool to use by the various committees, SWOT Teams or Association Improvement Teams (usually the Board of Directors) that are charged with resolving the stated Situation or problem.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of the Action Plan begins. The Chronogram is a "living document". The chronogram is designed for the purposes of identifying the tasks and monitoring the steps required to accomplish your goals. It is best to break these tasks down into "babysteps" – easily achievable tasks in a relatively short time. Then as they are accomplished and the team meets, the tasks can be checked off and the next steps to be accomplished are added. The chronogram – or "Committee action plan" if you prefer to call it that – is a document that you keep adding to and redistributing to the assigned team members until you meet the specific goal(s) of the Action Plan. It is a very useful tool to keep the team "on track", specific benchmarks in sight and for monitoring progress along the way in a timely manner.

You may wish to keep the tasks on the chronogram after you accomplish them, rather than deleting them. While this will require the document to grow to more than one page, you will find it useful to be able to look back to see what tasks and specific people have accomplished (or not accomplished) as prescribed.

The Association Action Plan should be thought of as a "living document" as well. If it is not, your association is either in trouble - because it is not dealing with its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – or it is perfect, and the latter is not possible! Get in the habit of monitoring your Association Action Plan and keeping it updated as you encounter or plan for changes in your organization.

Finally, while there is a lot of "buzz" in MBA (Masters of Business Administration) circles about "reinventing the corporation", or "reinventing the organization," but you and your association should not feel compelled to do this UNLESS you are losing money – because you are not increasing your membership, you are losing members or you cannot raise enough revenue to do the things or offer the services that your members really want. The best you can possibly do for your association is to renew it, rather than "reinvent" it. Utilize your existing human and financial resources – your capital equipment, your knowledge capital and your Good Will. Plan to utilize them. Plan the plan – the Action Plan. Implement the Plan. And plan again.

### **Selection of the Association Improvement Team**

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Usually, the Board of Directors of a trade or business association will recognize that the association is facing problems, that it has weaknesses and that there are threats to its existence or continued vitality. Hopefully, in such cases, the Board will act quickly and decisively to do a SWOT and develop an ACTION PLAN that will revitalize the organization.

However, if the whole Board does not recognize the importance of a SWOT or if the full Board is not committed to conducting a SWOT, we recommend that the CEO or Managing Director or key Board members act to identify those Board members who realize the importance revitalizing the association and get the "go ahead" to do a SWOT and make a plan that can be presented to the full Board and approved for action. Then, the Board would become the Association Improvement Team. However, it – the Association Improvement Team – could also be drawn from highly committed members who are willing to volunteer their time and resources to help achieve concrete realistic results for the association, along with the CEO or managing Director and a few key staff.

Knowing that most trade and business associations in Egypt rely on volunteers, we realize that most associations will have Association Improvement Teams that are composed entirely of volunteers who come from the general membership as well as the Board.

Recognizing these realities, the following is a guideline for establishing an Association Improvement Team to implement and complete each Action Plan:

The CEO or Managing Director of the Association or the Chairman of the Board establishes an internal association improvement team with representation from all major service areas or Committees of the association, including but not limited to: membership recruitment and retention, policy advocacy or government relations, finance, publications, market information services, technical services, etc.

**Member selection criteria - Members should:**

- Be interested in the role of the team / project goals
- Have high credibility within the organization
- Have high energy / results orientation
- Be able to meet project deadlines
- Have a collaborative consulting style
- Have solid analytical / conceptual skills.

**Association Improvement Team – The role of the team is to:**

- commit to project objectives
- assume ownership for achieving project objectives
- willing to conduct organization diagnosis throughout the association
- willing to tabulate diagnostic data / determine improvement priorities
- willing to design and implement an organization-wide association
- monitor the improvement plan to ensure results or, if needed, to take corrective action.

Once the Action Plan is initiated, carry it through to its logical conclusion. Efforts and time spent will be well rewarded!

**Action List Template (Example)**

**Association Name**  
**Action List**

**Action                      Team                      Leader                      Tasks & Timing                      Status**

**Weaknesses - Internal**

1			Define Mission & Prepare Mission Statement by (date)	Ready for review by Board of Directors
2.				Transfer to Action Plan, Operations Section
3.				Transfer to Action Plan, Financial Section
4.				Transfer to Action Plan
5.				Org. Structure redefined, Ready for Board review. Transfer implementation to Action Plan
6.				Transfer to Action Plan, Financial Section
7			Create Employee Policy Handbook (policies, pay scales, review)	Transfer to Action Plan, Operational and Production Section. Special Committee to be appointed
8.				
9.				

## Template for Association Action Plan

### I. Functional Area: Financial Management, Reporting and Control

#### **Problem Statement:**

Lack of sufficient internal controls, recording and reporting (accounting) system to manage association revenue and expenditures.

Key Needs	Solution Identification & Formulation	Execution of the Solution (Team Members Responsible)	Completion Date (d/m/y)	Measurable Results
-----------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------

1) Association's financial records are insufficient to analyze and predict association revenues and expenditures on an annual basis.

1) Develop & implement full set of bookkeeping records in order to compile a Revenue & Expenditures Sheet - or a Balance Sheet, including:

- a) Chart of Accounts
- b) Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, & Payroll Journals
- c) Customer Ledgers
- d) Vendors Ledgers
- e) Payroll Ledgers
- f) General Journals
- g) General Ledger

(set a date)

Full set of financial controls is implemented & operating. Monthly reporting underway.

#### Comments

## Template for Association Action Plan (Chronogram)

Internal Document - Not for distribution

### Egyptian Trade or Business Association

Action Required	Team Assigned	Feb 2002	Mar 2002	April 2002	May 2002	June 2002
<b>I. Financial</b>						
Design & implement financial accounting system		30				
Train accountant				15		
<b>II. Operational</b>						
Contact industry & scientific institutions for information & preliminary cost data (enterprise budget)		15				
Project parameters (Quantify & Qualify)		15				
Compile proforma budget			10			
Identify current forms for tracking costs			20			
Implement new forms for tracking operational and service to members costs			30			
Train key employees in use of forms				20		
<b>III. Membership Marketing</b>						
Research market data for new members potential - by industry sector			15			
Identify potential members demands for services			30			
Identify resources needed to meet any new demands for services				1		
<b>IV. Services for members through Strategic Alliances</b>						
Compile information or data base of service providers in the area				1		
Meet and discuss resources that your association can offer to strategic alliance partner and what resources or services of theirs you want to add					10	
Meet with the Board and discuss methods to leverage more services through specific alliances					30	

# **Let's Get Started!**









## **NOW LET'S RECAP THE SWOT!**

**Date of SWOT:**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Position in Association</b>	<b>Contact Points (Tel - office and mobile) (Fax number)</b>

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1.	1.	1.	1.

**ASSOCIATION  
NAME:**

**Association Action Plan - By Functional Area**

**25-08-04**

**Mission/Vision**

**Improvement Objective Areas**

- 1) Financial Management, Reporting and Controls**
  
- 2) Managerial Improvement & Human Resource Development**
  
- 3) Operational or Member Services Improvements**
  
- 4) Membership Recruitment and Retention**
  
- 5) Policy Advocacy or Governmental Relations**

I have read and reviewed this proposed Association Action Plan and agree with the vision and strategic outline in principle. I agree that as these strategic objectives progress, that I will undertake due diligence to accomplish and implement these steps in a timely and professional manner.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Association Improvement Team Membership**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Committee or Assoc. Objective</b>	<b><u>Tel/Fax Nos.</u></b>
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I. Functional Area: **Financial Management, Reporting and Controls**

Problem Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Key Needs</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results</b>

Comments

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**II. Functional Area: Managerial & Human Resource Development**

**Problem Statement:**

<b>Key Needs</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results</b>

**Comments**

III. Functional Area: Operational Members Services Issues

Problem Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results

Comments

**IV. Functional Area: Membership Recruitment & Retention**

**Problem Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Key Needs</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results</b>

Comments

**V. Functional Area: Policy Advocacy or Government Relations**

**Problem Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Key Needs</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results</b>

Comments



**TOM stopped here for Jan 2002  
workshop**

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## **Appendices**

## **Strategic Planning - An Overview**

### **Introduction**

"Where do you want to go?" the Camel asked Maha, who was trying to make her way through the maze of the desert. "I don't know," Maha nervously responded, to which the camel said, "Then any road will get you there."

Managers are often no less at a loss to deal with the maze of their "deserts", and in attempting to cope with their myriad options, forces, pressures, and opportunities. For this reason, strategic planning has emerged as a promising - even essential - discipline of almost every organization interested in surviving and thriving. In fact, increasingly the key role of top management is defined as a creating direction for the organization. Strategic planning provides the mechanism for doing that.

There exist many different schools of thoughts, some more esoteric than others, on how strategic planning should be conducted. This paper will provide a basic definition of strategic planning, describe a generic strategic planning process, cite the conditions for successful planning, identify potential pitfalls, and identify resources that are available to managers for receiving strategic planning services.

### **What is Strategic Planning**

In simple terms, strategic planning is the process whereby an organization decides what it wants to become and how it will go about becoming that. While very simple in concept, a successful strategic planning process will draw on all of the organization's capabilities in:

- Analyzing its current reality
- Forecasting significant opportunities and threats
- Creating an organizational vision
- Analyzing strategic issues needing to be addressed to close the gap between current reality and vision.
- Developing action plans to resolve strategic issues, and
- Maintaining ongoing focus on the plan, making needed adjustments.

The tangible product in strategic planning is a document that integrates the direction of the organization. On a more fundamental level, strategic planning results in a management group that is more strategically focused, and when done well, to support the achievement of the organizational vision.

### **Who Does Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is generally seen as the province of the top management group; without their intense involvement and commitment, the strategic plan runs the risk of becoming a paper exercise. In fact, all too often plans sit on the shelf due to lack of management buy-in.

In some cases, a committee that is formed to prepare the plan for top management does strategic planning. However this is done, there must be a strong linkage between the SPC and top management to ensure ongoing communication and support for the product.

## **Association Action Plan – Workshop Appendices**

In addition to the committee, the strategic planning process relies on the use of a consultant or facilitator who can attend to the ongoing process of the planning, thereby freeing up the group's leader to participate more fully in the process of the planning.

### **How Is Strategic Planning Done**

There are basically eight steps involved in a strategic planning process. (See diagram "Overview of the Strategic Planning Process"(p.8):

#### **1. Decide to Conduct Strategic Planning**

Management must consider the reasons for investing in strategic planning and the costs/commitments required for success. On the basis of this assessment, a clear decision must be made as to whether or not to proceed.

#### **2. Plan the Process**

Before initiating strategic planning, an overall framework must be established for the process including:

- Who will be on the strategic planning committee
- What steps will be involved
- How will stakeholders be included
- What will be the final product
- What will be the time-frame
- Other issues as appropriate

#### **3. Form the Company Improvement Team (CIT)**

Whether this is the top management group or a separate SPC, the first step is the orientation of the group about the strategic planning process, their role, the expected products, and the process for preparing the plan. There may also be a need for some team building in order to establish a climate of openness and honest communication that is critical to a successful SPC effort.

#### **4. Formulate a Vision**

Based on the SWOT, the CIT identifies a picture of what the organization would be if it were to have reached its desired state. A vision will answer the question, when this organization has been successful:

- What will the organization have achieved;
- How will the organization be functioning;
- How will the organization be perceived by its stakeholders

The CIT must create a compelling vision that serves as a context for the SWOT analysis; it must be a vision to which they personally can commit and which the organization as a whole can commit.

#### **5. Conduct a SWOT Analysis**

A rigorous analysis is done of the existing strengths (S) and weakness (W) of the organization, along with a forecasting of anticipated opportunities (O) and threats (T) with which the organization may need to contend. This analysis may be done by the CIT alone. However this is often a time when additional data gathering is conducted

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through the use of focus groups, interviews, and analysis of existing data and documentation, and other means.

### 6. Identify Critical Strategic Issues

Once the vision is created, the CIT then assesses the gap between current reality and the vision and identifies the most critical issues which must be addressed in order to move from the present state to the Vision. These critical strategic issues are prioritized so that the organization can commit to addressing a manageable breath of concerns. Each of the issues is analyzed in terms of what is the current reality concerning that issue, what are the desired changes to be made, and what goal should be set for resolving the issue.

### 7. Create Action Plans

For each goal, a plan of action is identified which specifies the major actions that will be taken to address the issue, the person(s) responsible for taking the actions, the time-frames, and the resources requirements. These plans will become the primary focus for implementation.

### 8. Implement/Monitor

A focus is maintained on the strategic plan during the implementation phase through a monitoring mechanism. The CIT, on a regular basis (e.g., quarterly) meets to review progress on the plan. Successes are celebrated and deviations from expected results are addressed.

Throughout this process, there may be a parallel process of involving, communicating with, and managing external stakeholders to ensure their support for and cooperation with the final plan.

While these are the basis building blocks of strategic planning, there are a variety of processes that organizations use to conduct their planning processes.

### What are the Conditions for Success

In order for a strategic planning process to succeed there must be:

- **A Compelling Need:** Strategic planning is in vogue; any good manager will do it. There are, in fact, many reasons why a manager would initiate strategic planning—but doing it because it is the “in” thing to do is not one of them.
- **Management Commitment:** The strategic plan will become the basis for steering the organization, and therefore management must be fully committed to use it in this way. All too often plans end up sitting on the shelf gathering dust, and thereby feeding an overall sense of organizational inertia that can be widely felt by employees. The basic tenet is, if you don't want it, don't do it.
- **An Effective Planning Committee:** Ultimately, the members of the planning committee will determine the quality of the plan. The members must be appropriate to doing the job, legitimate in the overall stakeholders' eyes, and capable of communicating and working effectively in a collaborative team approach.

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- **Stakeholders' Involvement:** One of the key factors that differentiates strategic planning from traditional planning is the pivotal role that stakeholders, inside and outside the organization, play in influencing the plan. Stakeholders are those who have significant interest in the outcome, and whose support is needed to ensure the success of the plan. Stakeholders typically include employees, interest groups, sister organizations, and funders. Stakeholders are usually included in strategic planning either through: direct involvement in the planning committee; sources of data for preparation of the plan; or as reviewers of drafts prepared by the committee.
- **A Valid Process:** While this document provides a generic process, most organizations will need to modify and elaborate this process to meet unique requirements and conditions. Further, the process must be one that establishes and maintains enough momentum to enable continuity and focus to the effort. Finally, it must allow sufficient time within sessions for they're to be genuinely thoughtful deliberation, and sufficient time between sessions to enable the gathering and analysis of critical information.
- **A Qualified Facilitator:** The facilitation of strategic planning requires the planning of the overall process, planning each individual session or meeting and managing discussions during the meeting. While most strategic planning committees have a leader, they are seldom advised (or want) to play the part of facilitator. The major reason is that by attending to facilitation needs, they often lose the chance to be substantive contributors to the plan. Instead, leaders often work with a facilitator, orienting and guiding them in their preparations, debriefing after the session, and managing the organizational follow up to the strategic planning meetings.

Paying attention to these success factors will enable most organizations to avoid pitfalls, and ultimately ensure the availability of a valid and useful plan. Facilitators for strategic planning generally have backgrounds in Organization Development (OD) theory and skills, including team building, group process and organizational change. Selecting a facilitator generally involves finding OD practitioners who have strategic planning experience, and who would be a good organizational "fit".

**AGRICULTURE-LED EXPORT BUSINESSES (ALEB)**

CAT. No. A-TB-3-99

**Change Management**

***Nine Steps to Successful Transformation and Change***

**1. Establish a Sense of Urgency**

- ◇ 50% of companies fail in this first phase
  - ◇ when is urgency rate high enough? If 75% of management believe that business as usual is unacceptable
  - ◇ the Managing Director is key
  - ◇ change requires a new system which in turn demands leadership
  - ◇ problems occur with too many managers and not enough leaders
  - ◇ need frank discussion about reality and unpleasant facts
- ⇒ **Team Objectives: Examine market and competitive realities, identify and discuss crises, potential crises or major opportunities.**

**2. Create a Powerful Guiding Coalition**

- ◇ the change group needs to have power
  - ◇ the group has to work as a team - three to five people during the first year
  - ◇ eventually coalition needs to grow to 20 to 50 people
  - ◇ use off-site retreats for 2-3 days
- ⇒ **Team Objectives: Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort.**

**3. Analyze Market Environment**

- ◇ the environment is the world the company exists in
  - ◇ change is made in this environment and so it should be carefully studied
  - ◇ the group has to work as a team - three to five people during the first year
- ⇒ **Team Objectives: Use SWOT analysis to check environmental constraints and opportunities:**

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**S = Strengths**

**W = Weaknesses**

**O = Opportunities**

**T = Threats**

### 4. Create a Vision

- ◇ based on SWOT analysis, the management must create a new vision
  - ◇ the vision must be easy to communicate
  - ◇ a strategy to achieve that vision must be developed
  - ◇ failed transformations have plenty of plans and programs but no vision - a vision is more than a plan
- ⇒ **Team Objectives: Create a vision that can be communicated in five minutes. Develop strategies to achieve that vision**

### 5. Communicate the Vision

- ◇ Employees need to believe useful change is possible
  - ◇ important if employees are required to make short-term sacrifices especially if job losses
  - ◇ if downsizing is needed, successful visions should include new growth possibilities
  - ◇ include commitment to fairly treat laid-off employees
  - ◇ company documents and newsletters have articles about the vision
  - ◇ use every channel to communicate
  - ◇ behavior of managers must be consistent with words "Walk the Talk"
- ⇒ **Team Objectives: Communicate if downsizing will occur behaviors of managers must match words**

### 6. Enable Others to Act on the Vision

- ◇ change organizational structure so managers can act
- ◇ expand job descriptions
- ◇ change performance appraisal

⇒ **Team Objectives: People must be given opportunity to support vision. Remove barriers for organizational groups to act**

**7. Plan for and Create SHORT-TERM WINS**

- ◇ must see improvements in first 12 months
- ◇ establish goals in the first year
- ◇ achieve objectives and reward people with promotion and even money
- ◇ pressure is important element

⇒ **Team Objectives: Identify potential short-term wins. Make sure that these are achieved to send the correct message.**

**8. Consolidate Improvements and Produce More Changes**

- ◇ celebrating a win is OK, but do not rest
- ◇ need to embed new ideas in the company
- ◇ maintain urgency
- ◇ maintain the coalition of change makers
- ◇ use short-term wins to tackle bigger problems
- ◇ renewal takes years not months - peaks came after 2-3 years

⇒ **Team Objectives: Do not stop after first improvements. Tackle larger problems with the same urgency.**

**9. Institutionalize the New Approaches**

- ◇ change needs to stick
- ◇ new behaviors need to stay - if not imbedded they will disappear.
- ◇ help people to see the connections
- ◇ next generation of managers needs to personify the new approach

⇒ **Team Objectives: Changes need to be firmly established. New management must reflect changes. Changes must become the new culture of the firm.**

## **Company Action Plan - Example**

**Company Action Plan - Example**

**DOO Oranzerli**  
**"Zik Vinolug"**

**June 1996**

### Company Overview

**DOO "Oranzeril"  
(Zik Vinojug)**

Zik Vinojug is a one hundred (100) hectare greenhouse and farming operation located near Gevgalia in southern Macedonia. They operate thirty two and one-half (32.5) hectares of plastic and glass greenhouses, plus sixty hectares of open field farming. Zik Vinojug employs two hundred seventy (270) workers.

Zik Vinojug is currently twenty-seven percent(27%) privately owned - 17% employee and 10% pensioners - with plans underway to purchase 57% of the company by June 1996. Primary products are tomatoes and cucumbers, with 1995 sales of 3,945,520 DEM, a drop of 26% from 1994 sales.

The company wishes to diversify away from traditional vegetable products where competition is severe and markets limited. They have requested MBRC assistance to improve financial management systems, study crop diversification possibilities, perform market research and develop a business plan to finance their possible new activities as well as develop new geothermal energy sources to reduce greenhouse heating costs.

### Improvement Objective Areas

- 6) **Financial Management, Reporting and Control**  
Company wants to develop and implement a cost accounting system.
  
- 2) **Operational and Managerial Improvements**
  - a. Company wants to identify new crops in order to diversify its products.
  - b. Desires operational analysis & business strategy overview.
  
- 3) **Marketing and Sales**  
Company wants to locate new markets for its products.
  
- 4) **Strategic Partnerships, Joint Ventures and Capital Attraction**  
Company wants to prepare a business plan to obtain credit for developing a new greenhouse geothermal energy source and to diversify business activities.
  
- 5) **Development of new business in the Agricultural Industry**  
Zik Vinojug desires to use wastewater for aquaculture

I have read and reviewed this proposed Company Action Plan and agree with the vision and strategic outline in principle. I agree that as these strategic objectives progress, that I will undertake due diligence to accomplish and implement these steps in a timely and professional manner.

Sig. \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Company Action Plan**

**I. Function Area: Financial Management, Reporting and Control**

**Problem Statement:**

Company does not have a cost accounting system for its different agricultural products.

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results
1) Company cannot detect production cost problems because a product cost accounting system does not exist.	1) Design an appropriate agricultural product costing system by identifying fixed and variable costs through an operational analysis.	D. Butrov / financial volunteer T/B/N & D. A. Anderson	30 June 96	System designed and started
2) Financial management training must be conducted to design and implement a cost accounting system so the company can pinpoint operational and financial weaknesses and strengths	2) Train operating and financial personnel in the implementation and use of a cost accounting system using the "Managing Your Business Tool Box - Management Controls and Policy", Articles V, IX, X & XI Tool Box and Templates as models.	V. Zajkov / A. Vesna & financial volunteer T/B/N & D. Anderson, Maznevka	15 July 96 30 July 96	Training conducted. System implemented.

**Comments**

**Company Action Plan**

**II. Function Area: Operational and Managerial**

**Problem Statement:**

Company depends on growing traditional greenhouse crops for its mainstream revenue and needs to diversify and develop higher value crops.

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results
1) Cropping program dependent on traditional crops with intense local market competition.	1) Conduct rapid assessment of viable alternative crops adaptable to the available growing conditions.	D. Butrov w/ greenhouse & horticultural crops volunteers T/B/N & D.J. Anderson, Gavrilovski & Maznevskva	30 July 96	Rapid assessment of alternative crops conducted.
2) Company not totally availing itself of current resources such as: a) more inexpensive energy sources b) available greenhouse infrastructure not used year round c) good technical management to diversify into higher value crops	2) Prepare feasibility study for growing herbs, ginseng, sweet bell peppers and other high value greenhouse crops. Detail as follows: • estimated production • market value • production costs • economic returns • management capability	D. Butrov w/ greenhouse & horticultural crops & fin. mgmt. volunteers T/B/N & D.J. Anderson, Gavrilovski & Maznevskva	15 Aug 96  30 Aug 96	Feasibility studies of high value crops completed.  Crop diversification decisions taken.

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comments

**Company Action Plan**

**III. Function Area: Marketing and Sales**

**Problem Statement:**

Company depends on local market for sales and desires to diversify and expand markets.

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results
1) Production capacity high, but local markets small and very competitive.	1) Source market information on identified markets using trade statistics, government trade agencies, industry contacts.	D. Butrov./ B. Andonov w / .greenhouse volunteer T/B/N & D. A.	15 Aug 96	Market info received and reviewed
2) New market information missing on which to make sound marketing decisions.	2) Pursue identification and opening of different, more attractive markets.	Anderson, D.J. Anderson, Gavrilovski	30 Aug 96	New markets identified
	Focus on entry to a new trial market to gain experience. trial shipments.	D. Butrov., V. Zajkov, B. Andonov w / .greenhouse volunteer T/B/N & D. A.	15 Sep 96	New market selected and preparation made for entry
	Enter new market with regular shipment	Anderson, D.J. Anderson, Gavrilovski, Maznevska	30 Oct. 96	Market entered

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**Comments**

**Company Action Plan**

**IV. Function Area: Strategic Partnerships, Joint Ventures & Capital Attraction**

**Problem Statement:**

Company needs a business plan to obtain financing for development and rehabilitation of geothermal wells and pipeline for heating purposes.

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results
1) Company needs financing for additional geothermal wells to replace expensive bunker oil heating source.	1) Develop and present feasibility study for developing new hot water wells and replacing or repairing existing pipeline.	V. Zajkov / D. Butrov / V. Cuginski / B. Andonov & D.A. Anderson, Gavrilovski	15 July 96	Feasibility study prepared
2) Existing geothermal delivery pipeline is eighteen years old, corroding and requires replacement.	2) Develop a business plan for BOD approval, using MBRC staff assistance and tool box for "Preparing a Winning Business Plan".(See also V..Development of New Business.....)	V. Zajkov / A. Vesna / D. Butrov / V. Cuginski / B. Andonov & D.A. Anderson, Gavrilovski, Maznevska	15 August 96  15 Sept 96	Business plan prepared  Financial institutions contacted
	Seek financing for approved projects by presenting business plan to financial institutions previously identified by company and MBRC..	V.Z., A.V., D.B., V. C., B.A., D.A., J.G., S.M.	30 Oct 96	Credit obtained

**Association Action Plan – Workshop Appendices**

**Comments**

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**Company Action Plan**

**V. Function Area: Development of New Businesses in the Agricultural Industry**

**Problem Statement:**

Company is planning start-up of a new agribusiness diversification into fish farming, and lacks the information necessary to perform a feasibility study.

Key Needs	Solutions	Team Members Responsible for Execution of the Solution	Completion Date	Measurable Results
1) Company has return heating water which could be used for warm water aquaculture production.	1) Conduct a pre-feasibility study to determine if sufficient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capabilities</li> <li>• resources</li> <li>• demand exist to</li> </ul>	V. Zajkov / D. Butrov / Cuginiski / & D.A. Anderson, D. J. Anderson, volunteer T/B/N, Gavrilovski	1 July 96	Determination made if conditions exist to merit a feasibility study
	(if go) proceed with a feasibility study to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enterprise budget</li> <li>• technical requirements</li> <li>• physical requirements</li> <li>• market demand</li> </ul>		15 Aug 96	Feasibility study complete
2) Needs a business plan to obtain approval and financing.	2) Prepare a separate business plan to present to the BOD for approval utilizing the Business Plan Tool Box	V. Zajkov / D. Butrov / V. Cuginiski /	1 Sept 96	Business plan completed and approved

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<b>Qualify potential lenders</b>	<b>A. Vesna &amp; D.A. Anderson, D. J. Anderson, volunteers</b>	<b>10 Sept 96</b>	<b>Shortlist prepared of lenders</b>
<b>Submit business plan</b>	<b>T/B/N, Gavrilovski, Maznevska</b>	<b>15 Sept 96</b>	<b>Business plan submitted to lenders</b>

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### Comments