

METHODOLOGY

**FOR PREPARATION OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMEMES OF CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AUTHORITIES**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Strategic planning is a major reform requiring substantial efforts on the part of all central public administration authorities (CPAAs). The Strategic Development Programme (SDP) of an authority is the key document for planning the managerial and strategic work of an authority, tool to be used for policy and budget planning, both at institutional and national levels.
2. This methodology describes how a central public administration authority should conduct strategic planning and it provides definitions, describes the role, structure and essence, as well as rules of and stages in the process of preparation of SDP of CPAAs. Details about how to organize best this process, with different examples for each SDP component, templates of forms and texts will be found in the SDP Guidebook.
3. This methodology was drafted by the Policies, Strategic Planning and External Aid Division (PSPEAD) of the State Chancellery (SC), in concert with all CPAAs.
4. The purpose of this methodological paper is to ensure interaction between the strategic planning across central public administration and the strategic planning at national, sector and cross-sector levels. It is crucial that all authorities that will prepare SDP have the same approach; that documents are standardized; and that SDPs of different authorities are aligned.
5. In the event that the integrated Government-wide strategic planning system changes, this Methodology will need to be revised in order to ensure coordination between and integration of the two interdependent planning systems.
6. The key goals of the Methodology are:
 - To determine the SDP place and role in the overall strategic planning system;
 - To create a common understanding of compulsory SDP components, as well as of their relevance and purpose;
 - To guide civil servants through the process of strategic planning in CPAAs;
 - To suggest institutional arrangements for the preparation of SDPs;

- To establish the basis for drafting the SDP Guidebook;

I. PLACE AND ROLE OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SYSTEM

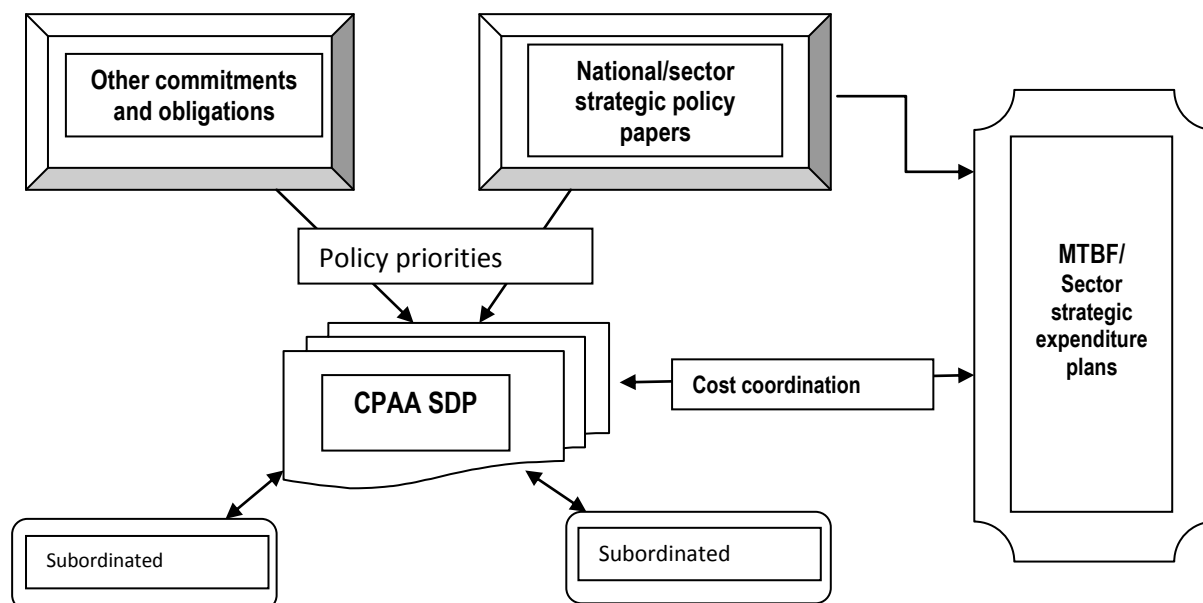
What is a Strategic Development Programme?

7. The Moldovan strategic planning system consists of a number of national, sector and cross-sector strategic documents that contain objectives/priorities that CPAAs ought to achieve.
8. However, there is no internal document that an authority could use to present its input into the achievement of policy priorities laid out in national, sector and cross-sector strategic documents and to present how it should development its capacities to improve the performance.
9. The SDP of an authority will be the main document:
 - describing the future direction of an institution and focusing on the medium term policy priorities;
 - planning the institutional work on medium term, and detailing how the authority will achieve the objectives stipulated in national, sector, and cross-sector strategic documents;
 - reflecting its capacity gaps on the basis of comprehensive capacity assessment;
 - planning capacity development actions of the authority;
 - serving as a tool for improving accountability and communication both internally, and externally.
10. In other words, the SDP indicates the added value of the authority in the process of implementing sector programmes and achieving national priorities in the way that it can be used as a management tool by the leadership of the authority. This document ought to provide a internal perspective of the authority on how it aims to contribute to achievement of priorities and goals laid out in national, sector and cross-sector policy documents.
11. Therefore, SDP is expected to become “an ID” of the authority, i.e. the fundamental document from which annual plan will derive and which will serve as a platform for all management systems within the authority (coordination, communication, planning, monitoring and evaluation, control

etc.). Its purpose is twofold: (i) it is a tool for planning/prioritization of institutional objectives and (ii) authority's management tool.

How does SDP relate to other strategic and planning documents?

12. It is crucial that the medium term policy priorities approved in other strategic documents are prioritized and included in an internal document of the authority in order for it to be able to plan how to achieve those policy priorities, what tools ought to be used and what institutions will be engaged - identifying in parallel the overall role of the authority.
13. On one hand, the SDP indicates the role and contribution of the authority in the process of implementation of national, sector and cross-sector strategic planning documents, as well as the tools to be used for achievement of those broader priorities and goals. On the other, it provides concrete input into medium-term planning of the Government.
14. At the same time, the SDP must also include commitments and obligations of the authority which are either stipulated in various international treaties (including those deriving from EU documents) or are part of the mission of the authority, but for various reasons are not found in national, sector, and cross-sector policy documents.
15. Therefore, the SDP ought to cover a wider range of objectives - not only the official Government and sector priorities, but also the ones that lead to the achievement of the overall authority's mission and that can be identified in other key national or international documents. However the number of such non-priority objectives needs to be kept as low as possible.
16. In its relationship with the Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF), the SDP crosscuts mostly the Strategic Sector Expenditure Plan, mainly under Policy Development and Management component, where capacity development activities financed by the national budget are indicated.
17. This link between the SDP and the National Development Strategy (NDS), the MTBF and other policy documents, as well as with subordinated institutions, is shown in the picture below.



18. Thus, all existing national, sector and cross-sector policy document represent a sort of framework for identifying broader medium-term policy priorities and sector programme goals, on the basis of which concrete SDP (authority) objectives will be formulated within the SDP.

What is the link with SDPs of other authorities?

19. The objectives of the subordinated institutions will also need to be reflected in the SDP. Moreover, the SDP of the authority will need to show the link with programmes goals and SDP objectives of other authorities operating in the same sector or working on similar policy issues.

20. In case if the input from other CPAAs is required for ensuring implementation of SDP objectives of the authority, as represented in the respective SDP, this link will need to be explicitly stipulated in order to make clear the responsibilities of different authorities in the implementation of broader sector programme goals.

21. Therefore, to achieve the programme goals will be possible only with a sound partnership among authorities. Hence, SDP must specify partnering authorities; how they engage in the partnerships; and the inputs they provide into the achievement of the programme goals through achievement of their own SDP objectives.

II. SDP PLANNING PERIOD

22. For sustainability purposes, the SDP plans the work of an authority for a 4-year period. It does not require to be redrafted each year, but only revised, and only if needed.
23. For the purpose of SDP implementation, regular Annual Activity Plans of CPAA will be used. They will set out clear activities required for implementation of the SDP and will also serve as a tool for SDP monitoring and evaluation.
24. Namely, the SDP will be revised only if the recommendations of Annual Evaluation Report of the authority or any substantial change in national, sector or cross-sector policy priorities require changes in the authority's own policy priorities and SDP objectives.

III. DESCRIPTION OF COMPULSORY SDP COMPONENTS

25. SDP will have the following components:

- Introduction (standardized text specifying SDP purpose and its link with other policy documents);

Current situation

- Authority Mission;
- Authority profile (organizational chart, budget, portfolio of internal units, personnel, etc.);
- SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats producing impact on the performance of the authority);

Policy framework

- Medium-term policy priorities (taken from the official national, sector and cross-sector policy documents);
- Programmes and subprogrammes (sectoral activity areas that the authority manages or contributes to) and their respective goal/s;

SDP Objectives

- SDP objectives falling under the competence of the authority, including performance indicators, responsibilities, timeframe, and implementation;

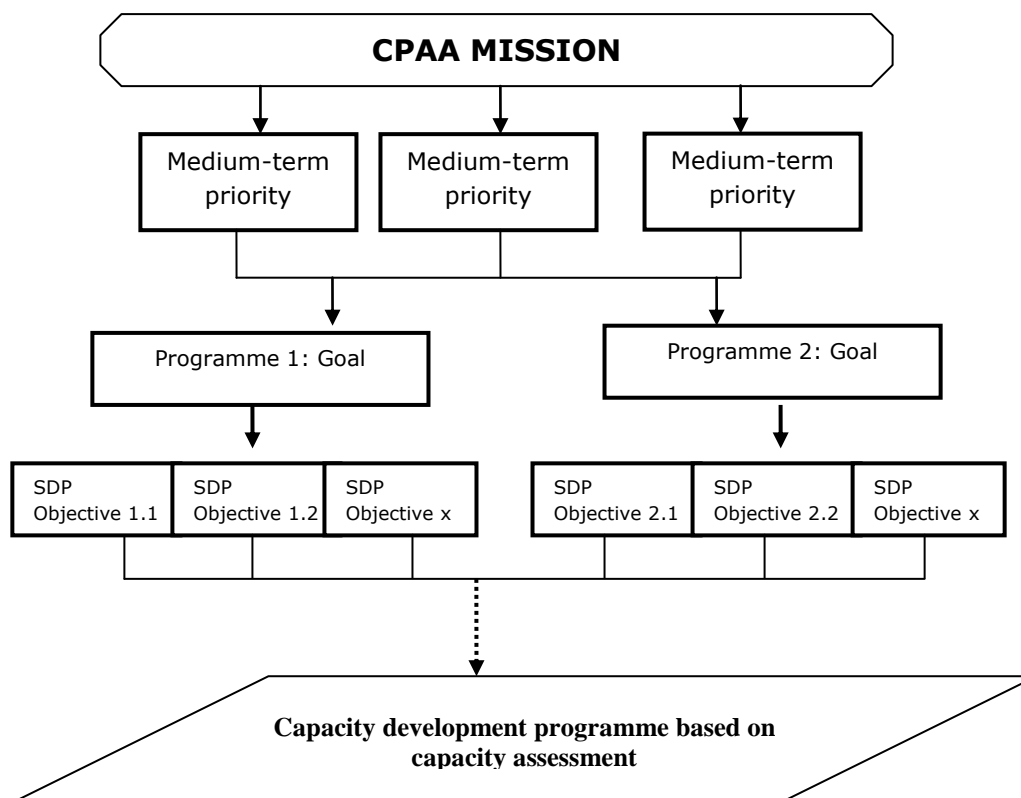
Capacity assessment and development

- Summary of capacity assessment, indicating priority capacity gaps
- Capacity Development Programme, reflecting the main measures for addressing capacity gaps required for SDP implementation

Implementation aspects

- Monitoring and evaluation system;

26. Graphically, the SDP structure should look as follows:



3.1. MISSION

27. The Mission statement is a short sentence identifying the role of the authority in the overall public administration system, as well as providing an analytical summary of its core functions and responsibilities.

28. The mission must address the “purpose of existence” of the authority, and indirectly indicate primary stakeholders (clients, partners, etc) and main outputs produced.

29. Hence, the mission should answer the following questions: “Who are we as an organization?”, “What it is that we do?”, “Who are we doing this for?” and “How are we doing it?”

30. The mission must be identical with the one stated in the normative provisions in place (regulation of the authority), if it exists currently.
31. However, the mission statement is not an objective itself and should not be reported on or include specific targets or indicators.

3.2. AUTHORITY PROFILE

32. Authority profile provides information about the key features of the institution.
33. It will describe the authority's organizational and functional structure, namely:
- Organizational chart;
 - Portfolio/mission of internal units of the authority;
 - Budget and personnel data;
 - Subordinated institutions.
34. The format of the profile will be standardized for all CPAAs and templates (including tables) will be provided in the SDP Guidebook.

3.3. SWOT ANALYSIS

35. SWOT represents a summarized analysis of current internal and external situation, emphasizing strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats which produce impact on the achievement of SDP objectives and the overall performance of the authority.
36. The first part of SWOT - SW - refers to identification of strong and weak internal organizational aspects that produce direct impact on the achievement of SDP objective and/or on the overall performance of the authority.
37. The second part of SWOT – OT - refers to identification of external factors that are not under direct and full control of the authority, but play crucial importance either for enabling or hindering the achievement of SDP objectives of for the overall performance of the authority.

38. Additional benefit of the SWOT is that it is based on collaborative approach – it will be conducted through brief, internal workshop – which also facilitates openness, discussions and sharing.

3.4. MEDIUM TERM POLICY PRIORITIES

39. Medium-term policy priorities are strategic objectives laid out in national, sector or cross-sector policy documents that indicate broader policy framework and the way resources are being allocated.
40. This part will provide a summary of policy commitments laid out in the Government Activity Programme, National Development Strategy (or respective new national strategic planning document) and in other national, sector or cross-sector strategic policy documents falling under the authority's competence.
41. If no priorities relevant for the authority are indicated in the national, sector or cross-sector policy document, the authority will identify the medium-term priorities drawing on its mission, key functions and other policy documents (e.g. international and EU agreements)

3.5. PROGRAMMES

42. Programme (or subprogramme) covers an activity area that relates to the authority at sector level and compiles a set of sector goals and activities that can be achieved and carried out only when several authorities become involved and/or in partnership with non-governmental organizations.
43. Programme goal reflects the expected final policy impact on the society that an authority is trying to achieve by implementing it in collaboration with other sector-related authorities.
44. This SDP chapter will contain brief information about the programmes/subprogrammes falling under the competence of the authority, indicating their main goals and explaining partnerships necessary for achieving them.
45. Programme goals that will be included in the SDP should correspond to those included in the MTBG.

46. Besides the authority responsible for the implementation of the programme/subprogramme (leader institution) all other authorities or organizations engaged in the process will be mentioned and their inputs into the programme/subprogramme implementation will be described in brief.
47. In the case of an authority that deals only with part of the programme/subprogramme implementation, the leader institution in charge of that programme/subprogramme will be specified and its input in the implementation of the whole programme/subprogramme will be described in brief as well.
48. The programmes ought to contain clear goals and allocate responsibilities and roles among the authorities/institutions engaged in their achievement. If problems arise with the distribution of roles among authorities, the authorities will resort to the Sector Groups responsible for the policy area to allocate the responsibilities within partnerships among different relevant authorities/organizations.

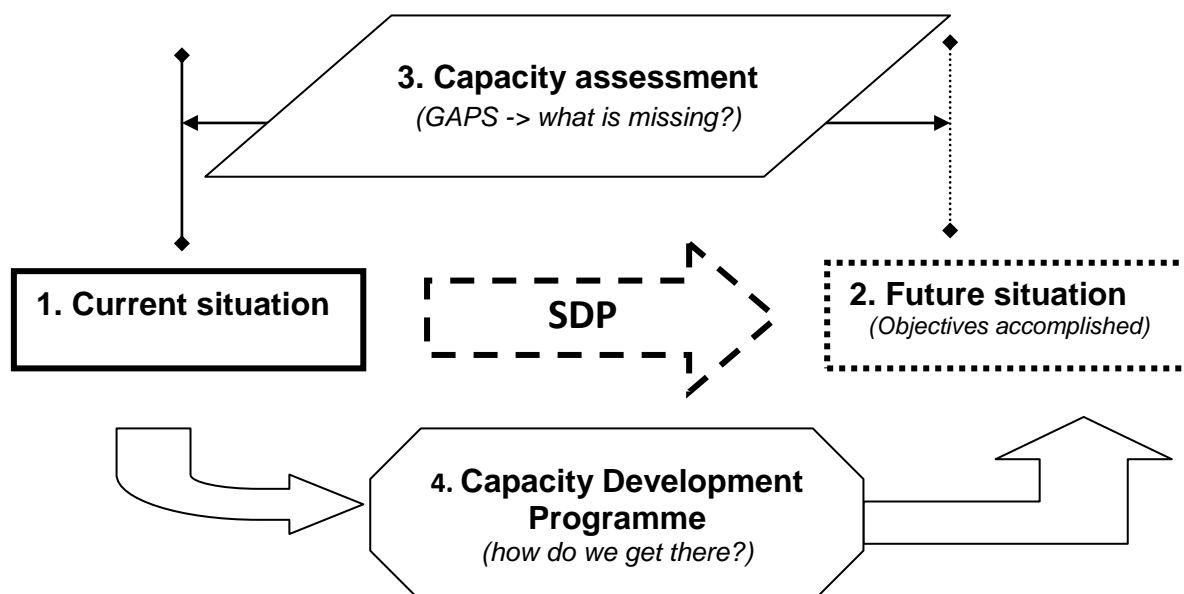
3.6. SDP OBJECTIVES

49. Each programme/subprogramme that the authority is in charge of or relates to can be further disaggregated into concrete authority objectives (SDP Objectives)
50. The SDP Objectives are a sort of “sub-goals” that describe more specifically the programme goals. They are statements of planned performances and expected results of the authority in a certain time period through which the authority contributes to the achievement of broader national, sector and cross-sector priorities and objectives.
51. Namely, programme goals become operational through objectives. A full achievement of a programme goal should be expected once all SDP objectives of all involved authorities are achieved. Moreover, SDP objectives must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) and allow for their subsequent monitoring and evaluation.
52. Each SDP objective will be detailed, indicating performance indicators, the unit in charge of achieving it, timeframe and tools/means to be used for its achievement. To describe the objectives, a standardized table provided in the SDP Guidebook will be used.

53. It should be kept in mind that only those objectives that the authority is in fully in charge of need will be identified and described (including those that relate to subordinated institutions formulated from authority's position).
54. When formulating a SDP objective falling under the competence of a subordinated institution, the authority will pay particular attention to the tools/means it will use to make sure the objective is achieved by the subordinated institution in the given timeframe and by meeting the respective performance indicator.
55. Performance indicators ought to be set only for SDP objectives, in order to avoid overlapping with monitoring and evaluation of medium-term policy priorities and programmes goals that are part of other strategic documents.
56. Detailed activities and expected Annual Results relevant for SDP implementation will not be included in the SDP – instead, it will be included in regular Annual Action Plans of CPAAs, because the implementation of the SDP is conducted through regular management of authorities.

3.7. CAPACITY ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

57. Capacity can be defined as resources, abilities or skills of individuals, organizations and the whole administrative/government system that are required for achieving objectives in efficient, effective and sustainable manner.
58. The overall conceptual approach to capacity assessment and development is presented below:



59. Capacity assessment is based on the comparison between the existing capacity and the capacity required in future for the achievement of SDP Objectives. It comes after setting the SDP Objectives and the emphasis is what is required in terms of capacity - not in general, but for specific SDP Objectives and in the respective time period. Those are called capacity gaps – the capacity we not possess currently, but we require for being able to achieve the SDP Objectives.

60. Capacity assessment should cover three key levels of capacity:

- System level (external): legal, policy, institutional, political and socio-political;
- Organizational level (internal): organizational structure, systems, and processes;
- Individual level (internal): individual and team skills, competences, experience, knowledge, etc.

61. However, an assessment can never cover all three levels of capacity to the same extent. In regard to SDP preparation the focus will be on the organizational level, with some attention paid also to the system and individual levels.

62. The results of capacity assessment will be summarized and included in the DSP. The SDP Guidebook will provide detailed explanation how the capacity assessment should be conducted for the purposes of SDP preparation.

63. After assessing the capacity needs and identifying lacking capacities for each SDP Objectives, a Capacity Development Programme will be prepared. The purpose of such a programme will be to ensure that missing capacities are acquired and nurtured, putting a special emphasis on:

- **Efficiency** - doing things with minimal use of resources for achieving the objectives;
- **Effectiveness** - focusing on the priorities, most important things to be done in order to achieve the objectives;
- **Sustainability** - the ability to ensure that, the impact of achievement of objectives will remain for longer period.

64. In other words, the Capacity Development Programme is a package of correlated measures explaining how to develop missing capacities with minimal use of resources, focusing on priorities and ensuring sustainability.

65. This document will be part of the SDP and it will include: prioritization of capacities and means by which they should be developed. In addition, this document will provide link with ongoing and planned capacity development projects.

66. Specific, detailed capacity development actions will be included in Annual Plans of the authority.

3.8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

67. This SDP section will describe the tools and procedures to be used for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the results of implementation of the SDP. Monitoring and evaluation will be based on indicators of SDP Objectives, but will focus on the actual results and activities as presented in Annual Plans of the authority. Monitoring and evaluation should indicate, achievement and failures, as well as corrective measures. The standardize text for this SDP section will be included in the SDP Guidebook..

IV. SDP DRAFTING

68. In line with this methodology the SDP preparation process must be based on the following principles:

- Enough time for drafting a quality paper (8-10 months);
- Enough time for internal and external consultations (participatory approach);
- Phased approach – each phase explained and discussed/tested individually;
- Provision of additional training and support for representatives of the authorities.

69. During the SDP preparation, the State Chancellery will provide continuous methodological support in order to:

- make sure that all CPAAs understand and apply the SDP Methodology in the same manner;
- test the SDP Methodology (and the Guidebook) at each stage of SDP preparation and modify it, if required;
- propose quick solutions to the problems that might emerge in the course of SDP preparation;
- ensure the link between the SDP and national, sector and cross-sector strategic documents, and address all discrepancies among SDPs of authorities involved in the same sector.

70. The manager of each authority will issue an internal decision on the creation of a Planning Team. The Planning Team will be in charge of the overall SDP preparation and it will consist of:

- Minister / deputy minister / deputy director general, in charge for strategic planning of the authority (Team Leader);
- Head of the Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation Division/section of the authority or an equivalent post (deputy of the Team Leader);
 - *In case an authority does not have such a unit, the Planning Team will include representative of another relevant unit or an individual civil servant appointed for this purpose by the manager of the authority.*
- representative of the Policy, Strategic Planning and Foreign Aid Department of the State Chancellery;
- directors of general divisions or heads of divisions and/or sections;
- selected representatives of technical assistance projects, if appropriate;
- managers of subordinated institutions and organizations.

71. Key functions of the Planning Team will be to:

- supervise and coordinate the whole process of preparation of the SDP;
- ensure timely and quality SDP drafts and the preparation of Annual Plans of the authority;

72. The internal decision issued by the manager of the authority will specify composition of the team, responsibilities of each team member, and the schedule of regular meeting of the Planning Team.

73. The overall process of preparation of the SDP will be divided in the following stages:

Stage 1

- Creation of the Planning Team;
- 1st Training and consultative meeting organized by the State Chancellery
- Approval of the work plan for SDP preparation by the Planning Team;
- Drafting of the following chapters: *mission, authority profile and SWOT analysis*;

- Consultations with the State Chancellery and the final approval of the draft chapters by the Planning Team;

Stage 2

- 2nd Training and consultative meeting organized by the State Chancellery
- Drafting of the following chapters: *Medium Term Policy Priorities* and *Programmes*, as well as initial setting of SDP Objectives
- Consultation with related authorities, the civil society and other external partners
- Consultations with the State Chancellery and the final approval of the draft chapters by the Planning Team;

Stage 3

- Elaboration of previously set SDP objectives and drafting of the chapter on *SDP Objectives*
- Consultations with the State Chancellery and the final approval of the draft chapters by the Planning Team;

Stage 4

- Conducting capacity assessment to identify missing capacities for each objective and drafting of the summary of findings
- Drafting of the Capacity Development Programme;
- Consultations with the State Chancellery and other stakeholders and the final approval of the draft chapter by the Planning Team;

Stage 5

- Approval of the SDP by the Managing Board of the authority followed up by public launch and media coverage (including posting the SDP on the website of the authority);
- Drafting of the annual activity plan of the authority for the first year of SDP implementation.

74. The Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation Divisions/sections (or equivalent) will play crucial part in the work of the Planning Team, since they will prepare agenda and minutes, collect information and data needed for the SDP preparation, etc.

Coordination and approval procedure

75. The responsibility for strategic planning across central public administration will lie with the State Minister, and it operationalized through PSPFAD within the State Chancellery – hence, this unit will coordinate the overall process of preparation of the SDP by:

- revising the SDP methodology, if needed;
- providing training and methodological support to authorities;
- ensuring consistency and coordination amongst SDPs of related authorities;
- endorsing drafts of SDP chapters and the of the SDP in total.

76. The State Chancellery (PSPFAD) will examine cross-sector links and will ensure correlation between NDS (or another new national strategic planning paper), MTBF, other national, sector and cross-sector documents, with SDPs.

77. Once endorsed by the PSPFAD and State Minister, the SDP will be submitted to the Managing Board of the authority for final approval and posted on the official website of the authority.

78. If changes need to be made in the SDP of an authority, they will be first consulted with the State Chancellery and State Minister, and only then approved by a decision of the Managing Board of the authority.

V. SDP MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

79. The shift to performance management implies assessment of authority's performance. This means that performance indicators will be used to enable assessing the progress achieved against the preset objectives and indicators.

80. SDP monitoring and evaluation will be based on the SDP objectives only and it will basically be the same as the regular monitoring and evaluation of the authority. The monitoring and evaluation documents of SDP/CPAA will be

approved by the manager of the authority and submitted to the State Chancellery within the given timeframe. The SDP Guidebook will provide detailed directions and standardized forms for monitoring and evaluation.

81. SDPs will be implemented through CPAA Annual Plans. The latter will use the SDP objectives from the SDP to formulate specific Annual Results and Activities that will comprise Annual Plans of the authority. Such Annual Plans will become the main tool for the regular management of the authority and a platform for annual monitoring and evaluation of SDP/CPAA.
82. SDP/CPAA monitoring will be an ongoing process of assessing the progress achieved throughout the implementation of Annual Plans. The purpose of monitoring will be to check the compliance with the Annual Plan (and implicitly SDP) and to identify the reasons leading to potential failures, and then formulate corrective actions to address those failures. Monitoring will have to confirm that certain annual activities are, de facto, taking place and that they are producing expected results – or, if not, to suggest corrective measures.
83. Because the monitoring of SDP is the same as regular CPAA monitoring, the SDP monitoring systems may differ. Amongst other, they could include quarterly, monthly or even weekly reports.
84. Evaluation can be conducted only after some implementation has been done. There will be 3 types of evaluation. Detailed directions and explanations will be provided in the SDP Guidebook.
85. The first type of SDP/CPAA evaluation is the Annual Evaluation Report, drafted by CPAA based on the annual action plans, through self-evaluation. Therefore, the first type of evaluation of the Strategic Development Programme will be, in fact, the common annual evaluation of CPAA. Taking account of the performances achieved the previous year and SDP objectives, the authorities will draft Annual Plans for the following period.
86. Annual evaluation can also identify the need of eventual changes to SDP. However, the annual changes in the programme cannot be substantial – their purpose will be to make sure that certain aspects of SDP objectives (such as the deadlines or indicators) are revised so as to reflect new policies and needs.
87. The second type of evaluation paper on SDP/CPAA will be drafted in the last (the fourth) year of SDP implementation and will result in the Final

Evaluation Report. Its purpose is to provide information required for drafting a new SDP for the following planning period.

88. The final evaluation report will be coordinated with the State Minister and approved by the Board of the authority along with the new SDP draft. The final evaluation report will be presented at Government meeting.
89. The third type of evaluation is not regular – it will be conducted only when major changes are made to Government plans and most important policy document like NDS, Government Activity Programme, sector strategies etc.
90. Once SDP monitoring and evaluation becomes part of CPAA management, they will be successful only if the internal reporting system provides relevant information. Monitoring and evaluation must be based on internal reports: if such reports exist, monitoring and evaluation will not take much time – otherwise, monitoring and evaluation that cannot rely on regular internal reporting system will be challenging.
91. Monitoring and evaluation requires sufficient capacities to be successful. Hence, the State Chancellery will deliver training for the persons in charge of monitoring and evaluation and will provide ongoing methodological and advisory support.

VI. RISKS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

92. The major risks that might hinder preparation of the SDP could be political, organizational and conceptual:

- 1). Political instability or lack of political will to introduce strategic planning in authorities.**

Political commitment is crucial since SDPs are expected to become the key managerial tool for the internal management in the authorities and a platform for planning the overall work of the authority.

In order to obtain political will, holding an initial conference and seminars with top management will help to explain the role of SDP in the Government-wide strategic planning system and its place in the overall management of the authority.

- 2). Lack of support on the part of civil servants, due to the less successful practice with IDPs in 2008 and complexity of the SDP methodology**

The SDP methodology must be widely promoted and properly explained in order to ensure that this new approach to institutional strategic planning is understood correctly and that it receives civil servants' support.

Hence, regular training and consultations need to be organized to explain each stage in detail and to find solutions for problems that might arise.

The SDP documents are also expected to balance between flexibility and consistency – in other words, to ensure sufficient opportunity for adjusting SDPs to changing environment, while ensuring respect for the strategic direction of the SDP overall.

Moreover, the SDP approach will need to be internalized into regular internal management systems and integrated into regular SDP/CPAA Annual Plans and regular CPAA monitoring and evaluation, as well as receive clear and strong support by the leadership of the authorities.

3). SDP will not integrate fully into the Government-wide strategic planning system and will just be an additional and irrelevant document.

SDP is expected to be integrated into the Government-wide policy and budget planning processes, both in terms of timeframes and methodological framework. For instance, the new national strategic planning document should determine priorities and strategic directions for medium to long term, but it should not go into excessive detail in order to provide the opportunity for the SDPs to elaborate on practical objectives and tools for implementation. Moreover, SDPs should always ensure that they align with broader strategic and policy documents – both in content and overall logic.

In case the Government-wide strategic planning system undergoes change, the SDP Methodology may also need to be revised.

4). Insufficient time for SDP drafting can affect its quality.

To ensure a quality SDP, in line with this methodology, at least 8-10 months of intensive and continuous work are required.

5). Lack of motivation on the part of PAMEDs, as coordinators of SDP drafting in authorities, to make considerable efforts to organize this process.

In order to improve motivation of PAMEDs - and therefore ensure support for preparation of SDPs - investment in setting up of an interactive network of PAMEDs are desirable.