

Strategic Plans & Work Plans

Given that constitutional processes are often implemented in high stress environments, with short timelines and political pressure for finalization, planning at the outset can be very helpful in enabling [Constitution-Making Bodies](#) (CMB) and other stakeholders to implement their mandates. This page helps the reader understand the why, how, what, and when of constitutional process planning. Strategic plans help to frame the broader mandate and goals of the constitution-making process, while work plans provide the operational detail necessary to direct the work teams to implement the strategy.

This paper discusses the following topics:

1. Purpose of a Strategic Plan
2. Purpose of a Work Plan
3. Process of developing a Strategic or Work Plan
4. Issues for consideration during planning

1 PURPOSES OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is particularly critical in constitution-making because:

- By nature, constitution-making processes are short-lived. The window of opportunity in which to finalize the constitution is usually small. Constitution-making processes often take place in an atmosphere of urgency and great expectation. Planning can help to ensure that the CMB can meet its deadlines while ensuring that there is still time for meaningful public participation, dialogue, and consensus building.
- It is common that those entrusted with the mandate to draft a constitution are provided with little time and few resources. Planning can be crucial to ensure the effective and efficient use of scarce resources, including human resources.
- A constitution-making process is by its nature politically volatile, divisive and historically critical, and requires careful management in order to ensure that the ‘constitutional moment’ is not wasted. Planning can be crucial to ensure a clear process that can be explained to the public and stakeholders, who can then work to hold the CMB to account as the process moves forward.

Although not always produced, in practice, developing an explicit Strategic Plan is a key process for building consensus around the constitutional process, in particular, by enabling the CMB itself to work through higher level strategic issues and plot a course forward.

2 PURPOSE OF A WORK PLAN

Work Plans are critical to operationalizing a Strategic Plan, but can also be developed as products on their own. Most commonly, CMBs produce a document that is a mix of Strategic and Work Plan. While the Strategic Plan provides high level objectives and context, the Work Plan

provides the operational detail necessary to direct the work teams to implement the Strategy and to manage the budget. The two documents should therefore be read together and developed as a complementary package. Depending on the type of work plan, it could be drafted in either a narrative format or as a table.

3 PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC OR WORK PLAN

While the Strategic Plan is intended to provide an overall vision for the constitutional process, the Work Plan is a tool that may be used by the CMB or the CMB [Secretariat](#) (and sometimes, other stakeholders) to support implementation of the process. In order to be useful, it is therefore essential that the Work Plan has the buy-in of the CMB, the Secretariat and any other key stakeholders involved in implementation.

The process of developing Strategy and Work Plans is as important as the Plans themselves, because the process helps build a common vision and develop a team approach with a common understanding of what is required. A Strategy or Work Plan is typically developed by the CMB, with support from the CMB [Secretariat](#), with a view to identifying priorities and activities to enable the CMB to execute its functions and deliver on its mandate in a timely fashion.

Planning is often undertaken through some form of participatory workshop, which brings together the key stakeholders to work through the issues and consensually agree on a way forward. Sometimes these sessions can utilize an outside facilitator (the UN often supports such planning exercises). These sessions commonly take 1-2 days and might involve only the CMB senior leadership (eg, Thematic Committee Chairs or the CMB Business Committee), all CMB members, senior Secretariat staff, or may also include other government and non-government stakeholders, and sometimes even development partners. In practice, following a participatory process, the Secretariat will then develop a first draft of the Strategy or Work Plan (sometimes with assistance from an external consultant), which will then be considered and endorsed by the CMB leadership.

4 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION DURING PLANNING

While each constitutional process is different and involves a range of specific complexities, nonetheless, it can be useful to ask the following questions when developing a Strategy or Work Plan for a CMB:

- ***What are the strategic objectives in the constitution-making process?*** Asking this question will help develop a common vision for the process, and will also help guide the CMB Members and Secretariat staff to ensure that their efforts are focused and deliver on their overall mandate.
- ***Who are the key stakeholders in the process and how will the CMB engage with them?*** This will help the CMB ensure an inclusive and participatory process, which proactively reaches out to the marginalized and/or those who may potentially undermine the process.
- ***What key activities need to be undertaken and outputs produced by the CMB?*** While these are big questions that will need to be unpacked through planning, it is important to keep them in mind. For example, when considering priority activities, the CMB will need to decide how much value they put on [civic education](#) and [public consultation](#), and whether and how Thematic Committees might work. When considering outputs, the CMB will need to decide what their drafting outputs - ie, [report\(s\) of the CMB](#).
- ***How will the CMB engage with the public, including in order to educate them on the process and to consult them on their views?*** This will help the CMB Secretariat to develop and implement a more comprehensive CMB [communications](#) plan, [civic education](#) plan and [public consultation](#) plan.

- **How should the [Secretariat](#) be designed to best support the CMB to achieve its strategic objectives effectively?** This will help ensure that the Secretariat has the right staff and capacities to give the CMB the support it needs to deliver on its mandate.
- **What financial and material resources are required?** This will help the CMB to make a budget and personnel request to the Government and to donors, and to then manage financial expenditures throughout the process.
- **What are the risks that the CMB will need to manage?** Constitutional processes usually face numerous risks. It is important for the CMB to identify these risks and identify planned responses. Ideally, any plan will need to be flexible to allow for delays. It may be an idea to include review points (eg, every 3 or 6 months) to allow the CMB to reconvene, review the plan, and revise it to account for the existing operating environment.
- **What are key indicators can be used to monitor and measure progress?** Identifying key benchmarks for progress can help the CMB stay on track, and identify when it deviates substantially and make corrections. Plans can include output benchmarks (eg. first draft of the Constitution produced by X date) and/or process benchmarks (eg. at least X number of consultative meetings held by Y date; at least X number of areas covered by Y date; at least X number of public hearings held by each Committee by Y date).

Disclaimer: This document was created as content for constitutionmaker.un.org. It does not necessarily reflect official UN policy or guidance.