Action planning

fact sheet

What is an action plan?

An action plan
- Organizes and identifies support for a project.
- Provides time frames, actions and outcomes.
- Is used to energize participants/staff on the actions needed to execute the plan

An action plan helps you move from the present to the preferred future situation. An action plan is flexible in structure, but can include task assignments, milestones, timelines, resource allocations, data collection methodology, and evaluation criteria to be performed.

Action plans layout the steps for moving to the desired situation

How to create an action plan

Step 1: Set the scene
 a. Briefly describe the project
 b. Define project goal(s) (a broad statement of what the program hopes to accomplish)
 c. Define project objectives (specific, measurable conditions that contribute to program goals.)
 d. Set (or estimate) an end target date
 e. Define what success will look like? (The outputs or outcomes).

Step 2. Create the action plan
 Break the project up into the achievable steps.
- Identify the steps needed to achieve your outcome or outputs
- Specify activities required for each step (what will be done?)
- Identify who will be responsible for each step
- Establish a completion date for each step
- Identify results that will show progress (How you know your activities implemented?)

Step	Activity (What will be done)	Who responsible	By when	How know achieved

An action plan should be developed in the context of the wider goals of the institute or program.

Summary: An action plan details "who will do what, when and how".

What's the difference between a Strategic plan and an Action plan?

An action plan has the details of how you will achieve your strategic plan.

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Organic example:

Step 1: Set the scene

a. **Project**: Organic crop production and marketing in Moldova

b. **Project goal**: Improve organic practices in Moldova

c. **Project objectives**: Develop a set of practices and procedures for organic certification for Apricots.

d. **Project target date**: December 2007

e. **Project outcomes**: At the end of the project we will have (there will be) a production manual detailing management and post harvest practices for organic Apricot production in Moldova. (Sample action plan below)

Step 2. Create the action plan

- Identify the steps needed to achieve your outcome
- Specify activities required for each step (what will be done?)
- Identify who needs to do each step
    - **Note:** A project driver (manager) is needed to drive the whole process
- Establish a completion date for each step
- Determine actions needed to get process started

Step	Activity (What will be done)	Who will implement	By when	How know achieved
Literature review	Locate other organic manuals or materials	Vladimir	August	List of publications
Draft the document	Write document for Moldova conditions	Ag specialist	September	Document
Review document	Send document to specialists for review	Organic and crop specialists	October	Reviewers comments received
Document revised	Incorporate reviewers comments	Vladimir	October	Revised document
Pretest document	Pretest document with lead producers	Vladimir	November	Revised document
Document revised	Incorporate farmers comments	Vladimir	November	Revised document
Distribute document	Make available on the web and in hard copy	Vladimir	December	Final document