WMO’s strategic planning process

Introduction

The overall purpose of the strategic planning process in WMO is to set high-level and long-term objectives and strategies for the Organization. It is a continuous process of planning, executing, evaluating and updating within a four-year financial period. The Strategic Plan resulting from this process motivates, guides and coordinates the collective activities of Members, primarily through their National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, the Executive Council, Regional Associations, Technical Commissions and the Secretariat.

The strategic planning process begins with the integration of Members’ input into a high-level planning document that defines objectives, strategies and expected results. It serves as the main basis for the Operating Plan. The Operating Pan describes the deliverables and associated activities of the Organization and provides the basis for results-based budgeting and justification of resource allocations. Actual achievements are measured by performance indicators.

The WMO strategic planning process results in three fundamental documents:

- **The WMO Strategic Plan (SP)**, which provides a high-level statement of strategic directions and priorities of WMO in the form of the top-level objectives, strategic thrusts and corresponding expected results;
- **WMO Operating Plan (OP)**, which converts the Strategic Plan into specific deliverables and related activities to be implemented by the WMO Programmes, and the corresponding timelines and key performance targets; and
- **WMO results-based budget (RBB)**, which connects deliverables to resources.

The expected results connect the three documents and are reflected in each one of them.

**WMO Strategic Plan (SP)**

The WMO Strategic Plan establishes the purpose and direction of the
Organization. It is the result of a Member-driven process to identify Organization-wide needs and priorities and it establishes the specific focus for the Organization’s four-year financial period. It is reviewed and approved by World Meteorological Congress in the year prior to the beginning of the WMO financial period.

The specific elements of the Strategic Plan are:

- **Top-level objectives**, which are the high-level imperatives for the Organization;
- **Strategic thrusts**, which define the Organization’s response to specific needs and define strategic initiatives targeted for action; and,
- **Expected results and key performance indicators**, which describe the end results produced during the Financial Period and the measures of progress towards achieving those results.

Collectively, these elements support the results-based management process within WMO and establish the foundation for operational planning. The Strategic Plan is evaluated periodically by monitoring programme performance during execution and the results form the basis for necessary modifications.

**The WMO Operating Plan (OP)**

The WMO Operating Plan converts the top-level objectives and expected results described in the Strategic Plan into specific deliverables and associated activities (e.g., initiatives, projects, conferences), which are required to achieve the expected results. The Operating Plan is based on WMO Programmes. The deliverables of each of the Programmes are attributed to a specific expected result, to which they contribute and which are associated with one or several realistic and unambiguous key performance targets. A timeline indicates the period of realization of each deliverable. The corresponding financial resources are given in the results-based budget. The Operating Plan will be evaluated at the mid-term and at the end of the financial period. Each Programme defines methodologies and mechanisms for collecting data and information necessary for its performance evaluation. The Operating Plan is submitted to Congress for review and endorsement.

The specific elements of the Operating Plan are:

- Deliverables of each Programme which address the top-level objectives and accomplish the expected results;
- Programme activities, initiatives, projects and services, which generate the deliverables;
- Key performance targets and timelines, which establish the goals necessary to assess the progress of the Operating Plan towards achieving the Expected Results of the performance period; and
- Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Operating Plan.

**WMO results-based budget (RBB)**

The Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan provide the foundation for effective resourcing. The WMO budget is a results-based budget in which resource justification is the end product of a process in which the Secretariat, working with Regional Associations and Technical Commissions, identifies the activities and initiatives as well as the corresponding resources, which are required to achieve the Key Performance Targets identified in the Operating Plan. The process consists of a four-year budget proposal prepared by the Secretariat following the fiscal guidance of the WMO Executive Council. The proposal is submitted to Congress for review and approval.

The results-based budget determines the affordability of the WMO programme activities. It is an iterative process that refines the priorities of the Organization through adjustment of the programmes to operate within predetermined financial guidance, while sustaining the strategic direction established by the Strategic Plan.

The specific elements of the results-based budget are:

- A logical framework for informed budgetary decision-making, which provides the objectives, expected results, outputs to be delivered, resources to be used, and performance indicators;
- Resource justification by results, which is designed to optimize the use of resources and to improve the responsiveness of the Secretariat to meet the needs of WMO Members; and
- Integration of performance measures into the budgetary decision-making process, which measure progress towards delivery of the key performance targets against resources spent.