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Systems and plans

Systems and plans are what help your everyday governance be most effective. Think about how you can set up strong policies and procedures in key areas of governance, including communication, meetings and decision-making.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are essential for effective governance. Policies are big-picture guidelines. They outline the group's long-term goals and expected outcomes. They also clarify expectations and ensure accountability. Some groups also have processes. Processes are the series of actions to achieve outcomes. They are often outlined in policies and feed into procedures.

Procedures explain how to implement policies in specific situations. They provide detailed instructions and are usually drafted by management and approved by the board.

There are two types of policies and procedures:

- Governance policies focus on the 'big picture'
- Operational policies guide daily tasks

Communication

Effective communication helps make informed decisions, achieve goals and build trust.

Internal communication takes place within a group. It includes CEO-board communication, staff interactions, and information organisation. Try engaging with members through different platforms, answering questions, and offering accessible information.

Consultation means engaging with people to gain knowledge and advice. Regularly consult with members about governance priorities, strategic direction, and issues. Include local people when designing consultation processes, use accessible language, and allow sufficient time.

External communication is how a group shares information with the public. It includes websites, social media, and reports that influence public support. Effective external communication is clear, legally compliant and culturally appropriate.

Meetings

Meetings offer opportunities for collaboration, information sharing, and decision-making

There are phases to effective meetings:

- **Pre-meeting preparation:** Arrange a venue, send invites, prepare agenda, consult leaders, confirm roles, ensure quorum.
- **During the meeting:** Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country, record attendance, provide documents, encourage participation, follow the decision process, set rules.
- **Post-meeting:** Finalise minutes, implement decisions, prepare next meeting's draft.

Key meeting documents include:

- **Agenda:** Shows meeting discussion topics and helps stay on track.
- **Minutes:** Written record of meeting discussions, decisions, and outcomes.

Decision-making

Effective decision-making enhances productivity. Decisions should align with group rules and constitutions and, for some organisations, with appropriate laws.

Informed decisions are transparent, well-considered, and consistent.

Consensus decision-making involves all members reaching an agreement. It involves collective discussion and ongoing negotiation.

If consensus cannot be reached, some groups may use **majority rule** through voting. Each member has a say, and decisions are binding when approved by the majority of attendees.

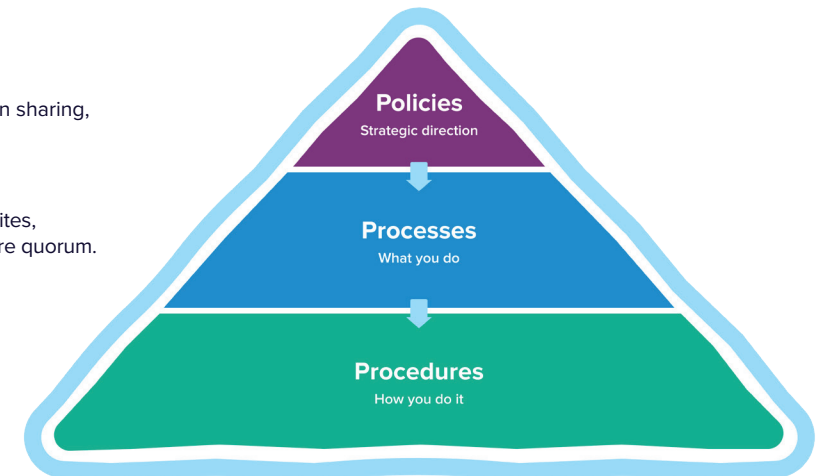
It's beneficial to share decision-making with staff, members and the community.

Let those most affected contribute to decisions. This may include First Nations women or those with specific skills.

Regularly seek input from staff and – where appropriate – community and members. Encouraging them to contribute and raise concerns allows a broad range of perspectives to be heard.

Implement your decisions

Decisions must be effectively implemented to have an impact. Make sure you develop procedures to effectively implement decisions, including recording minutes, assigning tasks, and requiring updates from the CEO and staff.



Strategic planning

Strategic plans set out your vision and values, long-term goals, targets and specific strategies for success.

Develop your strategic plan

Strategic plans should:

- be short and easy to understand
- be consistent with your values and vision
- include your operational plan
- give staff challenging, responsible assignments and realistic timeframes
- list actions and tasks
- be culturally legitimate

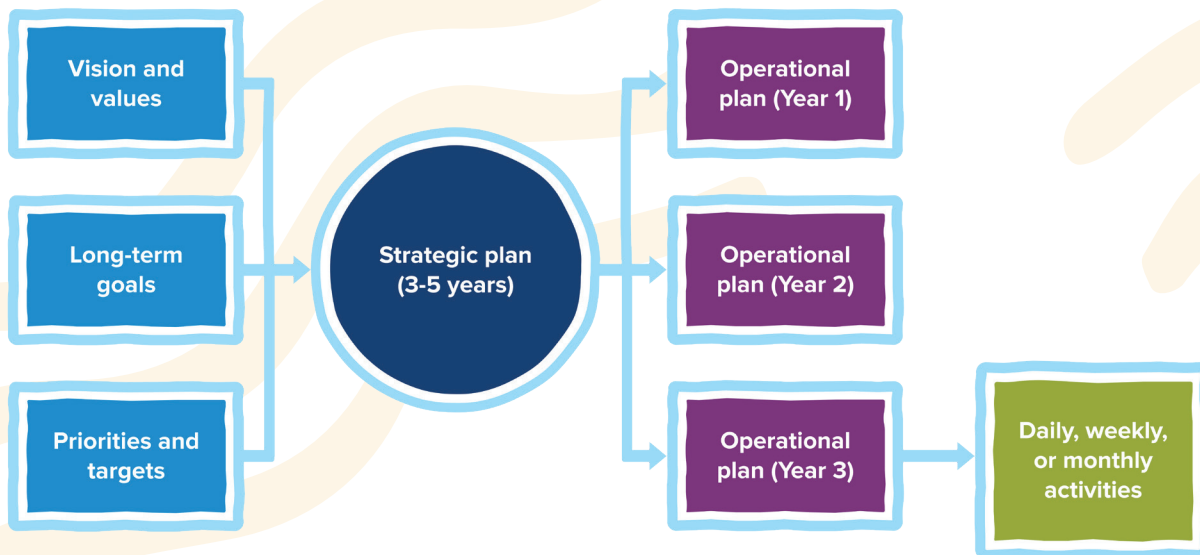
Risk management

Risk management is the process of identifying, assessing and managing risk that could affect your group.

Risk is the chance of something unwanted happening that could expose your group or a person to a threat or danger.

Risk management framework

A risk management framework can help your group make decisions in a more thoughtful and controlled way.



The key processes to cover when developing an effective risk management framework are:

- Identify the risk
- Assess the risk
- Manage the risk
- Monitor and review

Managing risk

The type of risk determines how you choose to manage it. There are several ways to manage risk:

- **Avoid the risk:** Stop the activity creating risk.
- **Prevent the risk:** Take action to reduce the likelihood of risk occurring.
- **Corrective measures:** Reduce consequences if risk does happen.
- **Transfer the risk:** Shift to a third party, e.g., insurance.
- **Accept the risk:** Have plans for consequences if risk occurs.

Change and crisis management

Managing change is an important part of successful risk management. Not handling change properly can create risk. Successful change management involves clear communication with members and community to help them embrace change. If change management fails, a crisis management plan becomes necessary.

Types of risks

The 7 most common risks are:

Operational risk: Issues in day-to-day operations.

Reputational risk: Potential damage to the group's name.

Environmental risk: Danger from hazards or pollutants.

Financial risk: Risk of financial losses or mismanagement.

Strategic risk: Risk to achieving goals from events or decisions.

Legal risk: Risks from non-compliance with regulations or contracts.

Health and safety risk: Risk of harm due to hazards.



For more information,
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