



UNIT 4

ELITE PERFORMANCE PLANNING



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INTRODUCTION

- It is the purpose of this module to facilitate a process that will develop strategies for the elite development of rugby.
- Assuming that there are three levels for play, Participation, Performance and High Performance, the emphasis will be solely on the Performance and High Performance.
- The initial focus will be on the playing of the game at the elite level, which is the core from which all other activity is generated. It is the most public focus of the game.
- At the centre of the core is the elite player, facilitating their development and success.
- The process is a step-by-step process each of which is explained and examples given.
- To achieve the best result, the process is an inclusive one in which all aspects of the game that impact on the mode of play at this level are invited to participate.
- Planning sessions may last a maximum of 3 days with intervals of up to 3 weeks in between to allow participants to reflect on what has been produced.
- The conclusions of a session will be reviewed at the commencement of the next session.
- The aim is to collectively review the current plan and to formulate a plan for the future.
- Once the overall plan has been produced plans for each of the performance strategies will be developed.
- The plan should be reviewed annually and each component will be reviewed more frequently.
- Those participating in the process should continue their involvement throughout the implementation of the plan depending on availability and the expertise needed to meet specific needs.



THE PLANNING METHOD

There are six steps in the planning method.

STEP 1 – Vision and Aims

Why are we playing rugby at this level?

- This is defined as the collective vision for elite rugby to a given date in the long - term future.
- This is then sub-divided into aims for each year during this period of time.

STEP 2 – Outcome Goals

What has to be done to achieve Step 1?

- This is rugby-specific based on the mode of play, i.e. the Game Plan.

STEP 3 – Performance Goals

How is Step 2 to be achieved?

- These may be game-specific strategies, i.e. the Patterns of Play or rugby-specific strategies or support strategies.
- The strategies necessary to achieve the Game Plan must be identified and explained.

STEP 4 – Achievement Strategies

How is Step 3 to be achieved?

- These are the structures necessary to achieve the goals that have been developed in step 3.

Note: Existing strategies and structures will be analysed with reference to how they are currently meeting the Game Plan and alterations must be made where necessary.

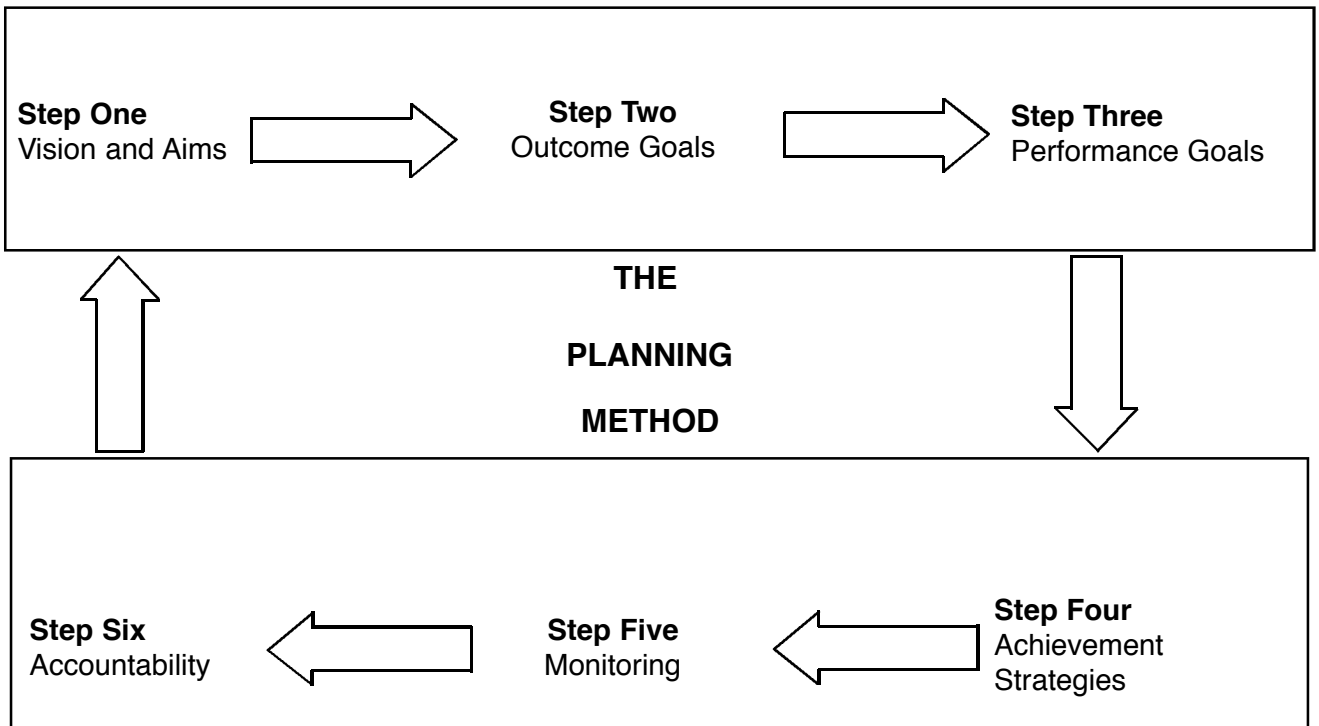
STEP 5 – Monitoring

- The ultimate test will be how the implementation of the plan meets the vision and aims.
- Throughout the plan Outcome Goals, Performance Achievement Strategies will be regularly evaluated to ensure that the focus remains constant and relevant to the vision and the aims.
- Monitoring may be annual, seasonal, quarterly or at the conclusion of an activity, depending on the nature of what is being evaluated.

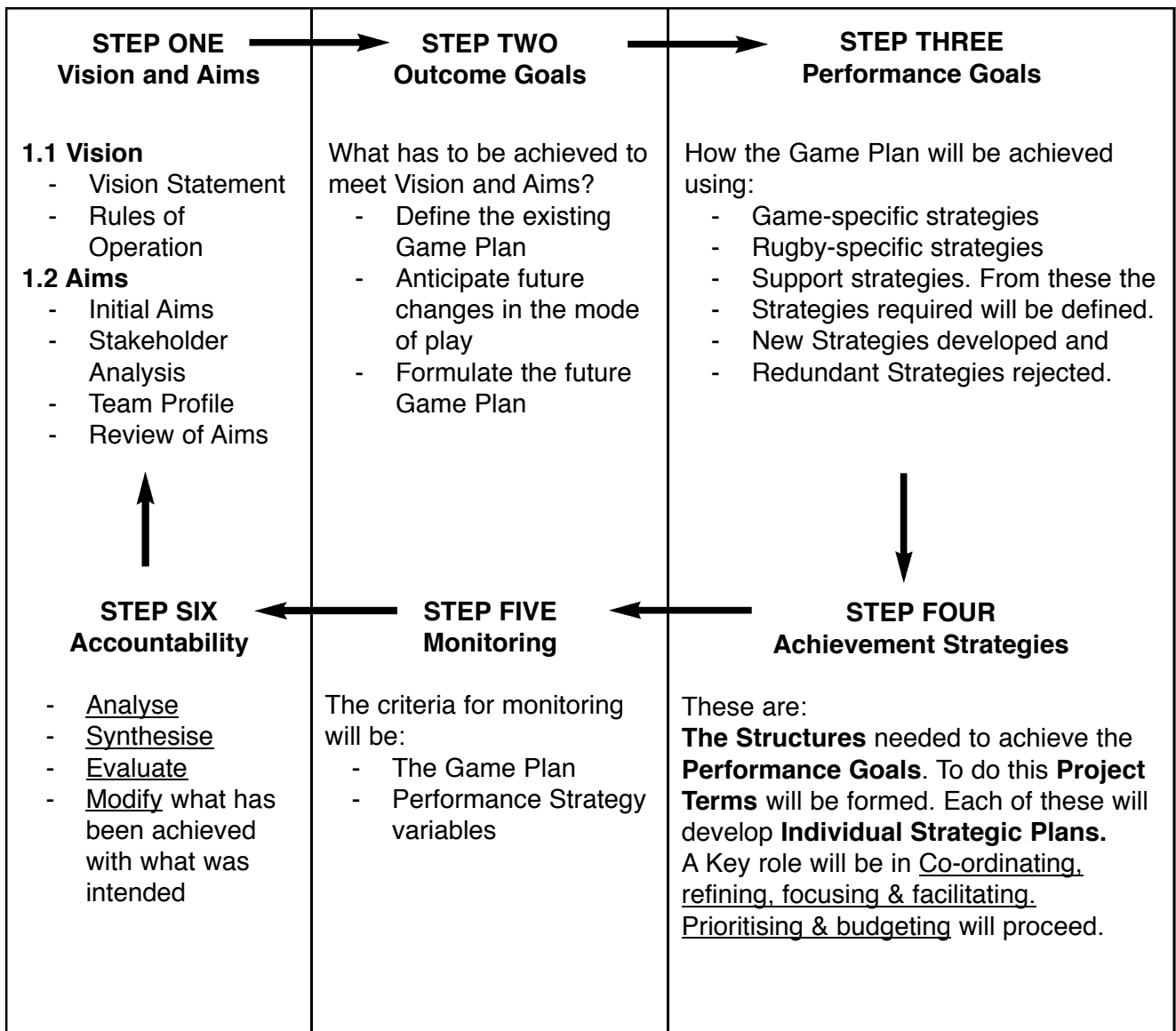
STEP 6 – Accountability

- Accountability is the comparison between what was intended to be achieved and what was achieved.
- This provides the context of the evaluation mentioned in Step 5.
- A review of the total plan and its components leads to a re-evaluation of the vision and the aims. However, in this context these should not change greatly, the reason for which will become obvious once they have been specifically defined.
- The accountability stage will focus on the Outcome Goals, which are the Game Plan; the Performance Goals, which are the Performance Strategies; the Achievement Strategies, the Vision and the Aims.
All are evaluated for their contribution to the achievement of the Vision and the Aims.

Fig. 1
THE GENERIC MODEL



Applied to this process the model will be modified as follows:





STEP ONE - Vision and Aims

Formulating the Vision

Definition - Vision - The Vision is the organisation's "raison d'être".

Explanation

- The successful achievement of the aim requires us to have a compelling vision.
- This vision must unify all in contributing to a common purpose.
- The motivation to achieve the purpose lies in empowering those involved to fully take part, in having responsive processes to meet needs without delay, in providing information through regular frequent communication and in having systems of accountability.
- This motivation is supported by financial rewards and is driven by trust, the sense of belonging to a team and by recognition associated with doing well in achieving the vision.
- All these can be measured and managed for success.

Definition – The Team

The team we are referring to is the elite component of the playing of the game in a rugby union.

Definition - Project Teams

Each strategy will have a specific task-related team to implement it. It will be composed of experts in that area, amongst whom will be persons who are involved in the whole process so that there is a co-ordination.

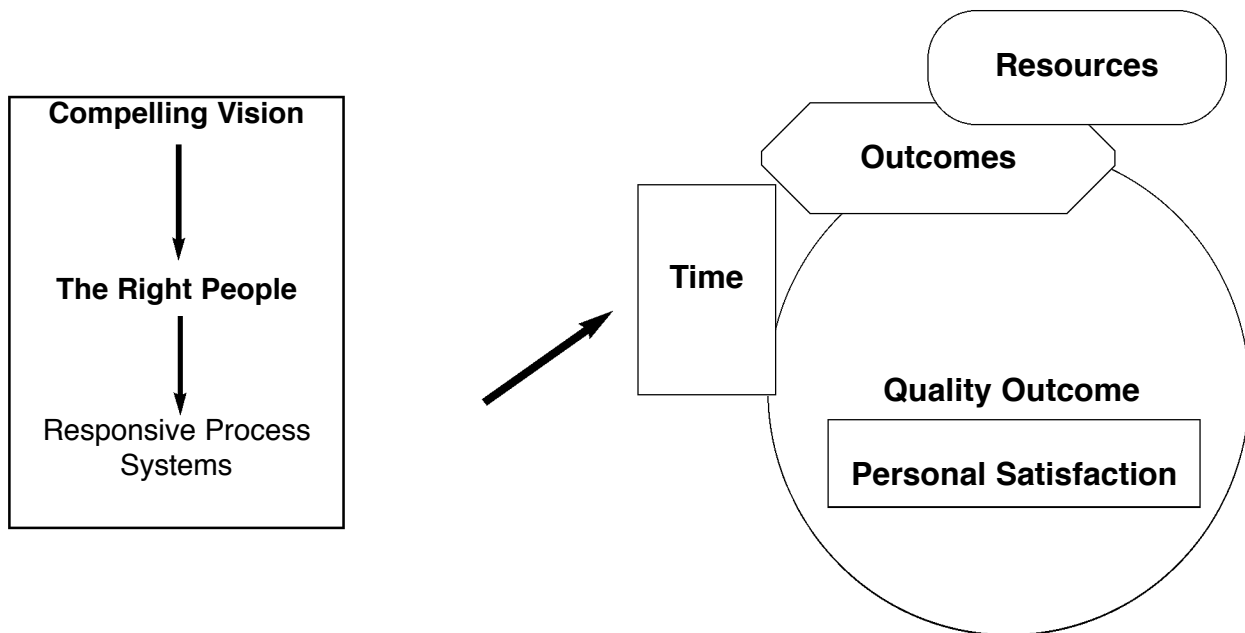
Examples: The National teams at all levels
 Notational analysis team
 Regional academies
 Major club teams
 Fitness training team
 Sports medicine team

Lessons of the Past

The following are lessons of the past based on past mistakes and past success.

1. The plan is for the development of the core, which is the playing of the game.
2. Vision and values must be held in common.
3. Support systems are needed to enable the vision to be achieved.
4. Unity and focus must be retained in pressure situations.
5. Balance between the different components get the best results.
6. Guidance, empowerment, and latitude encourage initiative.
7. Decisions must be made without undue delay.
8. Regular reflection maintains focus.

9. The thoroughness of the input will ensure that the process delivers.
10. Discrimination is essential when considering inputs from other sources. The basis of this discrimination is the extent to which the input will enhance the aims and the vision.



In Implementing the Process it is the Role of Leadership to:

Implementation - Formulate a Vision

The following are key aspects of a vision.

The vision must:

- Focus on an event or events, i.e. have a time-frame.
- Have an aim.
- State how the aim is to be achieved.
- State the effect the method used will have in achieving the results.

Example

In the campaign the ultimate objective of the project is to develop a rugby team that can build, modify, play and eventually win on a given day. This is achieved by focusing on performance, programme, the available budget and responsive processes, and a management system that allows the project teams to learn quickly from its experiences.

Formulating the Vision Statement

Definition – The vision statement identifies the environment under which the vision can be achieved.

Example

Our aim is to build a challenge that can win the 2007 RWC and that we can be proud of its success in all respects.

To achieve this we want an informed and fully motivated team that:

- Encourages every member to make a meaningful contribution.
- Has a high degree of integrity and group honesty.
- Recognises personal goals but not hidden agendas.
- Continually monitors and improves performance.
- Has clear and measurable goals.
- Is enjoyable to be part of.

Rules of the Operation

- The assumption is that all of those involved and the sections of the game which they represent will have a mutually acceptable raison d'être.
- This raison d'être is embodied in the vision statement and rules of operation.
- The following rules of operation are a guide:
 - Fairness and honesty.
 - Openness – sharing.
 - Emphasise simplicity.
 - Focus – never lose sight of the ultimate aim.
 - Encourage creativity.
 - Emphasise follow through.

Formulating The Aim

Explanation

- Define the Aim or, if it has been stated by the governing body, take it as read.
- However, between 2001 and 2007 there will be a number of progressive aims that have to be achieved as milestones resulting in the achievement of the ultimate aim.
- All aims should be SMART aims. This mnemonic is useful in ensuring the practicality and measurability of the aims.

S – Specific to the task – to do something so that there is an end result.

M – Measurable in quantitative and qualitative terms.

A – Achievable – goals are realistic, not too easy or too hard.

R – Relevant – to your overall mission – how it contributes to the end result.

T – Time-scaled to meet deadline

Examples:

- To win the 6 Nations Championship/Tri Nations Championships/Pac Rim Championship each year.
- To win a minimum of half of the test matches against major opponents each year.
- To use patterns of play and tactics that progressively achieve the future game plan from match to match.

There may be more than one aim as the example shows and each is a step towards achieving the overall aim.

Note: While these aims may be agreed at this point in the process, they should be finalised only after once a comprehensive analysis is undertaken of the mode of play and playing strength.



Stakeholder Analysis

Explanation

The analysis identifies who the plan is being produced for, the range of stakeholders and who are the most important of these.

Method

To do this complete the following tasks:

1. List the stakeholders.
2. Categorise them into those most directly involved in the mode of play and those who provide support services to them.
3. Finally, for each category, we will rank the stakeholders in order of importance.

Developing a Team Profile

Explanation

- The team that is profiled is based on the players who are likely to be selected for the national team during the period of the plan. These are those in the professional and semi-professional ranks and those playing in selected national teams at all teenage and post-teenage levels.
- To focus on the mode of play the framework that will be used for the analysis will be the principles of play. The principles of play identify what has to be done successfully to ensure the game is played to the best of the players' ability. They are the dynamics of the Game.
- The analysis will be for the players at the elite level at this point in time so that we have a baseline against which we can judge future progress.
- Within the principles of play the information will further be categorised into technical and tactical.

Technical refers to the individual and collective skills needed to play the game, so that the players have the widest range of options.

Tactical refers to the ability of the players individually and collectively as mini-units, units and teams to make decisions, i.e. how, when and where the technical skills will be performed to achieve the best results, by choosing the best options.

As a guide. Rugby will be regarded most fundamentally as a game in which possession is won in order for a team to create space and then use the space created to apply pressure and score points.

- For each of the principles we will identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Strengths are at least equally important. The reason is that while addressing weaknesses solves the problems in the current game, it doesn't project it to a higher level. This can be achieved by enhancing strengths and by using what is being done well to expand options.
- The enhancement of strengths may make solving of some weaknesses unnecessary.
- The strengths and weaknesses should then be ranked in order of importance as they can best contribute to fulfilling the principles of play and Game Plan. They will, therefore, be a prioritised list of needs.



The Principles of Play

ATTACK	DEFENCE
1. Gain Possession <i>To</i>	1. To Contest Possession <i>And</i>
2. Go Forward <i>With</i>	2. Go Forward <i>By</i>
3. The Support of Team Mates <i>To</i>	3. Applying Pressure <i>To</i>
4. Maintain Continuity <i>Exerting</i>	4. Prevent Territory being gained <i>And</i>
5. Pressure <i>To</i>	5. Supported by or in Support of Team-Mates <i>To</i>
6. Score Points	6. Regain Possession <i>And</i>
	7. Counter Attack

Review of the Aims

Having completed the team profile, the aims should be reviewed and any changes that may be necessary should be made.

STEP TWO - Outcome Goals

Explanation

- The Game Plan is the Outcome Goal.
- The Game Plan explains what has to be achieved in the mode of play to meet the vision and the aims.
- The Game Plan is based on the team Profile.
- To maintain consistency with the Team Profile the Game Plan is based on the Principles of Play.
- The Game Plan is divided into an attacking Game Plan and a defensive Game Plan.
- This consistency is further maintained by the use of the Principles of Play to define the Patterns of Play that follows.
- The Patterns of Play explain how the Game Plan is to be achieved.
- Field position and the positioning of the opposition on the field of play will result in changes to both Game Plans. It will therefore be necessary to bear this in mind and make reference to changes as a result of these two variables.
- Variables for analytical protocols are generated from the Game Plan. The same applies to performance standards and bench-marking. These will be team, player and position specific.
- Care must be taken not to become too prescriptive in these variables as if this is the case cloning may occur and individual flair and initiative may be suffocated.

Note: The Game Plan explains what the team is to achieve not how it is to achieve it. It gives a focus to the outcome the team wishes to achieve in attack and defence from a given position. How this is achieved usually results in more detail and is the essence of team training. However, all must know the outcome so that they have an objective for their actions.

Method

The method that will be used to produce the Game Plan will be as follows:

1. Define the Existing Game Plan

This will provide a baseline for the current game. It will enable a comparison to be made with any changes that will occur in the future.

2. Future Changes

- These will be changes that may occur over the next 4-5 years.
- In order to develop a future Game Plan we must first of all identify any changes that may occur in the playing environment.
- Amongst these changes will be the expansion of options that should result from the development of players.
- Other changes will be factors outside the realm of player development but which have a major influence on the way the game is played.
- Some of these are law changes, referee interpretation, the play of opponents, the impact of our play on the play of opponents and changes in the playing structure e.g. competition format.
- To analyse and include future changes into the discussion, the following tasks should be performed.
 1. Brainstorm all possible changes.
 2. Prioritise them based on the likelihood of them occurring.
 3. Categorise the most important under headings; e.g. law change, the play of opponents by union etc.
 4. For each speculate on how they will impact on the Game Plan.



3. Analysing the Play of Opponents

- The play of opponents should be analysed by bench marking, using key performance indicators.
- This will be done periodically through the duration of the project and will have a major impact on our future Game Plan.
- Our game plan and patterns of play (game-specific strategies and rugby-specific strategies) will provide the variables for benchmarking. The use of a common set of key performance indicators, based on our play will allow a direct comparison to be made between our play and that of our opponents because the dynamics of play will be the same.
- Benchmarking can also be used to compare players in the same position, domestically and against international opponents, using a common set of position-specific variables generated from our future game plan. This should be undertaken at all national team levels. Each will have their own, key performance indicators.
- Benchmarking will provide the basis for talent identification, talent selection and player assessment protocols.
- This will assist in the process of match preparation and team selection.

4. The Future Game Plan

- Draft the future Game Plan based on these changes.
- In addition add any innovations or changes you would like to see included that would assist in achieving the Vision and Aims, i.e. they would secure a competitive advantage.

STEP THREE - Performance Goals

Explanation

- The Patterns of Play explain how the Game Plan is to be achieved.
- They are based on the Principles of Play. The task is to take the future Game Plan and identify how it can be achieved on the field of play.
- The patterns are specific to the mode of play and contribute to it.
- These are performance goals.
- Initially our task is to identify the game-specific strategies; the rugby- specific strategies and support strategies that have to be put in place.

Secondly, we must compare what is needed with what is currently in place and finally, to add new strategies, modify existing strategies and reject redundant strategies.

- If it is important to be as far-reaching and imaginative as possible in identifying the strategies that will meet the needs and to then prioritise them, base on their likely contribution to achieving the Game Plan.

Examples

Game-Specific Strategies

- Patterns in Gaining Possession.
- Patterns in Attack.
- Patterns in Defence.
- Match-Specific tactics.
- Selection/Talent Identification /Priorities.
- Match notational analysis/Key Performance Indicators.
- Decision-making and option taking.

Rugby-Specific Strategies

- Talent Identification.
- Player recruitment and availability.
- Competition structure – domestic competition programme.
- Player development.
- RWC Planning and Preparation.
- Staff Coaching Programme.

Support Strategies

- Physical training and diet
- Psychological training.
- Lifestyle – planning for life after rugby.
- Counselling.
- Public relations and marketing.
- Up-skilling of development staff.

Method

1. For each aspect of the Game Plan identify how it is to be achieved on the field of play.
2. Use broad categories to prioritise this list from the most important to the least important.
3. Group these according to the following categories:
 - Game-specific strategies
 - Rugby-specific strategies
 - Support strategies
4. If there is currently a strategy in place relevant to what is wanted, write it down.
5. Compare this with what is wanted and make any changes that may be required.
6. If there are any strategies that are in place that are in addition to those listed above, discuss them to determine whether they will be used as they are, modified or rejected.

STEP FOUR Achievement Strategies

Explanation

- Now that we have defined the Performance Goals, the logistics of how these are to be implemented must be decided.
- The achievement strategies are the structures needed for implementation.
- These structures will be project teams who will assume responsibility for implementing the performance goals.
- This will involve defining aims, outcome goals, performance goals and achievement strategies, in addition to the monitoring and evaluation of the project; i.e. they will apply the same planning process to each of the individual strategies.
- This means that each project will use the methodology explained in this module to develop its own strategic plan.
- Some project team members may be members of more than one team where a close liaison is necessary.
- Project teams may be for a definitive period or ongoing for the duration of the entire project.
- In general, personnel for a project for a definitive period will remain the same, while those for the entire project may change as the need arises.
- Project teams may be formed for a single strategy or a number of related strategies.
- In addition, there will be a co-ordinating project team. Personnel will be drawn from the ad hoc teams. Their function will be to retain an overview and to ensure input is evaluated so that it meets the vision and the aim.
- Project teams will have ownership of their own authorised process. It is from the implementation of these processes that their results will be generated.

Project Teams

- Each project team is asked to either adopt the overall Rules of Operation or develop their own.
- Teams must concentrate on the project and not be distracted by routines. These can be delegated to others allowing the members of the project team to concentrate on what they do best.

Establishing Project Teams

Method

1. Cluster the strategies putting those with related characteristics together.
2. Give each cluster a title, e.g. Fitness, Medical, Player Development. These are the titles of the project teams.
3. The planning process for each strategy now becomes the planning process for the project team.
4. Identify clearly the type of expertise needed to implement the process in order to achieve the strategy, eg. Team management and coaching, selection, sports medicine, sports science, fitness, information and resources, elite coach development, academy staff.



5. Identify where liaison between teams would be necessary and the expertise needed to ensure it occurs.
6. From the current staff put names to the roles emerging the analysis in 4. above.
7. List staff that may be needed, but are currently unavailable and would have to be recruited.
8. List staff that are no longer needed, based on the above strategies.
9. Budgeting
 - Budgeting will be done on a prioritised basis with priorities based on playing needs.
 - Within the total budget an amount will be allocated to the strategy.
 - Each strategy will be listed in prioritised order and a detailed budget will be made for each.
 - Strategies of high priority will be funded more completely than those of lower priority,
 - It is to this budget that each project team must work.

Examples of Project teams (these will be linked to one or more performance strategies)

- Regional development squad.
- National junior development squad.
- National age grade squad.
- Regional academies.
- National player development.
- Talent selection.
- Fitness, diet.
- PR, media relation.
- Match and tour logistics.

STEP FIVE Monitoring

Explanation

- The Game Plan and the Performance Goals will be the criteria against which the overall programme will be monitored. These will emerge from the planning process.
- This will apply to the overall plan as well as to the individual performance goals.
- Monitoring should be both measurable and subjective i.e. it should be based on both qualitative and quantitative criteria.
- The use of notational analysis will be fundamental in monitoring the Game Plan and the Game-Specific Strategies.
- Monitoring will be undertaken by the co-ordinating team for the overall plan, based on feedback from the individual project teams.

Method

1. Identify what was intended to be achieved.
2. Identify what was achieved.
3. Identify
 - what exceeded expectations
 - what met expectations.
 - And what did not meet expectations.
4. Note the reasons for each, with supporting evidence.
5. Recommend remedial action if need be.



STEP SIX Accountability

Explanation

- The key tasks of the Accountability Stage are analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- It is at this stage that a comparison is made between, what was intended to be achieved, with what was achieved.
- This would apply to the overall plan and to the performance goals.
- Projects will be evaluated at their conclusion, while the overall plan will be evaluated annually by the group that formulated it.
- Based on the evaluation, alterations will be made to stages 1.2.3 and 4 of the plan with flow-on changes being made to individual performance goals.
- Throughout evaluation the focus will be on the contribution of the strategy in attaining the Vision, the Aim and the Game Plan.
- The basis of the review will be the Monitoring results.
- In addition to overall accountability, a variety of methods will be used to provide on-going accountability. These are internal systems of accountability.

Examples of Internal Systems of Accountability

The two basic systems will be those involving meetings and those involving documents.

Meetings:

- Weekly Stand-up Status Meetings.
- Co-ordination Meetings.
- Monthly Half-Day Strategy Update.
- Team Performance review (4 monthly).
- Annual review Meeting.

Note: All these meetings would not be necessary. From this range the project teams should work out what is best for their purpose.



Documents for Accountability

- Timelines
- Budget
- Performance Chart
- Work Breakdown Structure
- Strategy Document
- Document Meetings and Commitments
- Notice Boards

Further Key Points

- It is vital to develop mechanisms to encourage interaction and responsiveness.
- Examples are:
 - Briefing meetings to start each day.
 - Contingency planning – "What if" scenarios.
 - Visualising success.
 - Flexible infrastructure, especially to avoid delay.

Conclusion

There needs to be an established process for monitoring each of the following:

- The project team personnel.
- Overall plan implementation.
- The play of opponents.
- Player performance.
- Performance specialists.
- Support strategies.
- Resource requirements.