Module 2: Strategic Planning

Unit 1: Overview of the strategic planning process
Steps in the process

1. Preparing for planning
2. Involving stakeholders
3. Conducting situation analysis
4. Setting priorities
5. Defining M&E framework
6. Defining implementation arrangements
7. Costing the plan
8. Finalizing the plan
1. Preparing for planning

Key elements in preparing for planning:

- Defining how the planning process will be managed
- Defining the methods and approaches to be used
- Identifying and compiling the required information
- Developing a work plan and budget for planning

Covered in detail in next unit
2. Involving stakeholders

• Strategic plan provides an overall framework within which all players can find their appropriate roles and make their appropriate contribution.

• Essential that stakeholders are involved in developing the plan to ensure legitimacy, ownership and commitment to the plan.

• Need processes that ensure regular and transparent consultations and participation.
Key issues:

• **Ensure early buy-in to the planning process:** ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the steering committee and planning team to provide their perspectives and assent at each step of the process.

• **Build consensus around programme priorities:** regular consultations for stakeholders to be involved in validating the situation analysis and identifying priorities.

• **Obtain consensus on the draft plan:** consultations on the draft plan to ensure consensus on the contents and presentation of the plan.
3. Conducting situation analysis

Essential to ensure that strategic plan is evidence-informed.

Five areas must be included:

- **Socioeconomic context**
- **Epidemiological analysis**
- **Response analysis**
- **Stakeholder analysis**
- **Programmatic gap analysis**

Covered in detail in later unit
4. Setting priorities

• Setting appropriate priorities and turning them into results is the most critical step in planning - it defines the direction of the response in the given period.

• Framing a robust results matrix to reflect the priorities is the fundamental success factor in planning.

• Priorities must:
  – Be based on situation analysis
  – Be informed by other national priorities
  – Define the results to be achieved
  – Identify how best to achieve the results

Covered in detail in later unit
5. Defining M&E framework

- M&E systems track what is being done and whether the programme is making a difference.

- M&E systems allow managers and implementers to make corrections, changes, re-allocations during programme implementation to respond to progress towards results.

Covered in detail in later unit
6. Defining implementation arrangements

• Effective management and coordination essential for the health sector response - must be described in the Strategic Plan.

• Roles and responsibilities of all partners for implementing the strategic plan must be described.

• Addressing specific needs in the 6 health system 'building blocks' is a key element of the strategic plan.

• Decentralization levels in a country - a critical consideration in defining implementation arrangements.

Covered in detail in later unit.
7. Costing the plan

- All estimated costs for implementing the strategic plan should be depicted in a budget.

- A strategic budget provides a comprehensive financial framework in which to design and implement the strategic plan.

- A good strategic budget will itemize expenditures in line with the goals, objectives and interventions of the plan, and will allocate funds against the expected cost of achieving those results.

Covered in detail in later unit
8. Finalizing the plan

- **Consensus on the draft plan**: once the full plan has been developed, interested parties must come to consensus on the contents and presentation of the overall plan.

- **Assessment of the plan**: peer review; internal or external;

- **Official endorsement**: Internal legitimacy within the health sector; external legitimacy beyond the health sector

- **Dissemination**: partners; stakeholders; also to provinces or districts, local authorities, municipalities, etc.

- **Supporting plans**: Specific intervention plans (e.g. testing & counselling, IDU, PMTCT, ART, etc); M&E plan; Financing plan; Technical assistance plan; Procurement and supply management plan; Human resource plan