

2. Strategy Survival Guide

(London, Cabinet Office, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2004)

What is it?

The Strategy Survival Guide aims to support strategy development and promote strategic thinking in government. It encourages a project-based approach to developing strategy and describes four typical project phases. It also discusses a range of skills and useful tools and approaches that can help to foster strategic thinking. It is offered as a resource and reference guide, and is not intended as a prescription or off-the-shelf solution for successful strategy work.

How does it work?

The guide is structured around two sections:

(i) The Strategy Development section (<http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/survivalguide/dev/index.htm>) discusses the process of conducting a strategy project. This highlights the different stages to the strategy development process; justification and set up; research and analysis; strategy formulation; and policy and delivery design. Each summary page provides links to the following detail:

- Typical tasks
- Example outputs
- Management issues that should be considered
- Typical questions that should be asked
- Relevant skills

(ii) The Strategy Skills section (<http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/survivalguide/skills/index.htm>) addresses the skills that are required for successful strategy work. These are:

- Managing people and the project
- Managing stakeholders and communications
- Structuring the thinking
- Building an evidence base
- Appraising options
- Planning delivery

The summary page for each strategy skill contains links to a number of helpful tools and approaches. Together, these make up a 'toolkit' for the strategy practitioner – using the right tool for the job will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of strategy work. 'In practice' examples are provided to illustrate how each tool or approach has been applied in recent strategy work, and references are provided for those wishing to find further information. Where appropriate, blank templates are also provided.

Example

One of the tools suggested to help with planning the delivery of a successful strategy is designing an implementation plan. The SU Childcare Project is an example of one in practice. The Strategy Unit Childcare project team specified the need for an implementation plan at an early stage: stakeholders were clear that an implementation plan would be one of the final deliverables from the project, and felt that they could own the process.

The team involved key players in thinking through implementation: they set up working groups on specific project strands and specified the key deliverables. They delegated as much of the detailed work as possible to the lead players to establish ownership and buy-in to the specific tasks as well as the overall conclusions.

The team presented the plan in a tabular form: it specified key conclusions, outputs, activities, lead responsibility, key stakeholders and timetable. For the ministerial version, the team inserted an additional column for further comments.

The plan was published as an annex to the report, so that key stakeholders could be held to account for delivering against it. See the Implementation Plan in Annex 2 of the Delivering for Children and Families Strategy Unit Report 2002 (<http://www.strategy.gov.uk/output/Page3685.asp>).

For more information

The Strategic Capability Team at the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit exists to support government departments in understanding and applying the content of the guide (see <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/survivalguide/site/intro/about.htm#sc>).

Source

<http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/survivalguide/index.htm>