



**CHALLENGES IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
GOVERNMENT STRATEGY BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS: A CASE
STUDY OF THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM (LEDET)**

SUBMITTED

BY

ELIZABETH SARONA MAHLATJI

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this (mini-dissertation/thesis) hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Public Administration has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Mahlatji ES (Miss)

2 May 2013

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DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to the following people: God for making this entire process possible. To my parents who have been my role-models for hard-work, persistence and personal sacrifices and who inspired me to set high goals for myself. I also want to thank them for instilling confidence in me to achieve such goals. To my younger brothers, Tebogo and Thato for being good, being part of me and for their support throughout my studies. Lastly, to my grandmother for her encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy by government departments: A case study of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. The need for this study was considered relevant and necessary as government departments face challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy. Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, as a case study, face challenges in fulfilling some of its mandate. In terms of its strategic plan, the department seeks to address issues relating to economic growth, the promotion and development of tourism, and using environmental management to guide and monitor sustainable development in the province. These challenges have negative implications in the delivery of services to the communities. The ability of the Department to effectively implement the excellent environmental and economic legislation, at the same time the management of growth of tourism in the country remains a challenge. Although the strategic plans are elaborated, they have not been translated into concrete and concerted actions to meet the needs of the citizenry.

In this study, the researcher investigated the following: demographic profile of respondents, challenges in the planning process, challenges in the implementation process, the impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery and lastly the disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy. Data was analysed into themes and revealed communication, training, interpretation of relevant prescripts, limited resources/proper allocation of resources and effective participation of relevant stakeholders as, amongst others challenges to the process.

The study concluded by providing recommendations to management of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on how to enhance planning and implementation of government of strategy. Some of the recommendations proposed are improved communications with stakeholders, proper allocation of resources, empowerment of employees, effective time management, discipline and responsibility and encouragement of a culture of change.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For purposes of the Green Paper on National Planning (2009: 10), strategic planning means strengthening the relationship between the state and the society. The State needs to foster an environment of mutual trust with the public. It needs to ensure, through an active citizenry, a culture in which the public enriches both policy development and implementation by the State. Through the planning processes and outcomes, the State can lead the development effort and win public acceptance as the leader of societal efforts. Strategic planning, or developing a strategic framework, is about the bigger picture which is done at a higher level. Organizations often get so caught up in everyday problems and often forget to think about the big picture. They are too busy planning “to do things” and something they fall under operational planning. It is through strategic planning that an organization develops a strategic framework. This framework helps the organization determine its priorities and strategies that are likely to help in the realisation of the organization’s vision for the future.

According to Louw and Venter (2006), strategic management is concerned with effective strategies that balance the organization’s resources and capabilities, values and goals with its external environment. In doing so, strategic managers are responsible for establishing a clear direction for the organization and a means of getting there, which requires the creation of strong competitive positions. In other words, the implementation of a strategy should be in such a manner that all the organizational architecture and activities are integrated in order to achieve effective performance.

The main emphasis of technically rational approaches to strategic management has always been on the formulation, evaluation and selection of appropriate strategies. It is always recognized, however, that none of this analysis is of much use unless the strategies so developed are implemented by an organisation. It is also often pointed out that in practice managers spend most of their time on implementation rather than formulation and that the failure of a strategy is most frequently due, not to poor formulation, but to the difficulties of implementation hence the disconnection between planning and implementation processes. Despite the recognition of its importance, however, the question of implementation continues

to receive relatively little research attention and some hold that the consequent lack of practical and theoretically sound models to guide managers' actions during implementation is a major cause of implementation failure (Alexander, 1985).

The main objective of the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism (LEDET) is to enhance the economy of the Province through engagement in activities that influence economic growth such as tourism, SMME's development and facilitation of investment. The purpose of the Department is to develop the provincial economy, promote and manage environmental and tourism activities. For the department to function efficiently and effectively, a sound functional and organizational structure that is aligned to the Department's strategic objective has been developed. This structure consists of the following branches: Economic Development, Environment, Tourism and Administration.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Lack of coherent and long term plan has weakened the ability of government to provide clear and consistent policies. It has limited its capacity to mobilize the society to pursue the departmental objectives. Lack of coherence has hampered efforts to prioritize resource allocations and to drive the implementation of government objectives and priorities. In addition, weaknesses in coordination of government activities have led to policy inconsistencies and, in several cases, poor service delivery and audit queries (Green Paper on National Planning: 2009:10).

The Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism is facing challenges to fulfill some of its mandate in terms of its strategic plan, the department seeks to address issues relating to economic growth, the promotion and development of tourism, and using environmental management to guide and monitor sustainable development in the province. These challenges have negative implications in the delivery of services to the communities. The ability to effectively implement excellent environmental and economic legislation at the same time with the management of growth of tourism in the country remains a challenge. Although the strategic plans are elaborated, they have not been translated into concrete and concerted actions to meet the needs of the citizenry.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by LEDET in the planning and implementation of government strategy to achieve service delivery.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify challenges in planning and implementation process and the impact of planning on the delivery of services
- To determine causes and effects of the disconnection between the planning and implementation processes
- To recommend measures that can be put in place to improve the planning and implementation of programmes

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was designed to resolve the following research questions:

- What are the challenges faced by LEDET in the planning process?
- What are the challenges in the implementation process?
- What are the causes and effects of the disconnection between the planning and implementation process?
- Which measures can be put in place to improve the planning and implementation of programmes?

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Strategic Management can be defined as the process whereby all the organizational functions and resources are integrated and coordinated to implement formulated strategies which are aligned with the environment, in order to achieve the long term objectives of the organization (Ehlers & Lazenby, 2008: 2).

1.6.2 Strategic Planning is the systematic process of establishing a need and then working out the best way to meet the need, within a strategic framework that enables you to identify priorities and determines your operational principles(Ehlers & Lazenby 2008: 2)

1.6.3 Annual Performance Plan is a document, covering each program activity identified in an agency's budget, that describes the actions and goals that the organization will undertake during the year to work towards the long-term goals established in the organization's strategic

plan. Specifically, the annual performance plan establishes the agency's performance goals for the year, describes strategies the agency will use to meet these goals, and identifies performance measures to measure or assess the relevant service levels, outcomes, or outputs that are to be achieved and to compare actual program results with the established performance goals (Department of National Treasury 2010: 12).

1.6.4 Performance Monitoring is a continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to compare how well a project, programme or policy is being implemented against expected results (Department of National Treasury 2010: 12).

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Strategic planning has been hailed as important in order to enable government to deliver proper services to the citizens of the country. Strategic planning is about clearly defining the objectives a country sets for itself. It assess, at a macro-level, where a country is in relation to those objectives and describes the policies, programmes, options and trade-offs requires to achieve those objectives. This has encouraged the researcher to undertake the study to add more knowledge on the strategic planning and implementation process of the government, looking at the challenges and possible solutions (Green Paper on National Planning: 2009).

The success of this study will be significant in the following manner:

Firstly, it will be useful to the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in the sense that the results will be known to them and such results will also help them to tackle the challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy

Secondly, it will be useful to academic scholarship be in the sense that the study will contribute to knowledge

Finally, it will add to the body of knowledge be in the sense that future researchers pursuing similar research area will use the study as their source of reference.

1.8 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The researcher discusses the planning and implementation of government strategy by the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET). The disconnect between the planning and implementation of programmes, the aim and objectives of the study will be clearly spelled out and questions which will be answered by the findings. Hypothesis to be tested and technical terms will be defined.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the researcher reviews studies which were done on the topic particularly focusing on public sector institutions and the challenges they face in strategizing and implementing those strategies and plans.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODOLOGY

The chapter covers the research design, study area, population, sampling method, data collection, ethical consideration particularly the identified population and sample including justification of choices in terms of sampling, the type of interviews and the methods to be used for data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 : DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter the researcher captures, analyze and interpret collected data. This involves giving meaning to the views and opinions expressed by the respondents and providing the implications therefore with regard to formulation and implementation of strategies in the Department.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Outcomes from the research will be revealed and possible solutions will be suggested. The recommendations will be used to inform practice and enrich theory.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter One has introduced the research study and outlined a brief background of the study. This chapter has covered the problem statement, aims, objectives, and the significance of the study. The research questions which guide the research process are also discussed. Definitions of some key concepts that are relevant to the study are given.

The next chapter is titled literature review. Its main purpose is to review literature on the subject matter. The chapter outlines amongst others, namely legislative framework informing the strategic planning and implementation process of government, significance of strategic planning, the debate on the strategy, the strategy change cycle, ten-step strategic planning process, strategic planning within international context, the constraints to effective project planning and implementation, finally the critical problems in strategy implementation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the premise for this research argued that the lack of coherent strategic planning and implementation of the Government strategy is directly linked to the effectiveness of service delivery. This chapter will focus on reviewing similar literature that deals with challenges in the planning and implementation of the Governments' strategies in the international and local contexts. It is also important to review Government legislative framework and policies that guide the strategic planning and implementation process. In South Africa, for instance, lack of public buy-in, capacity backlogs and inconsistency of policies always lead to service delivery protests which hamper the country's image as a capital city of the economic opportunities.

Wiseman (2006: 96) is of the view that planning and implementation of the strategies will determine effectiveness of the way in which Government rolls out its programmes. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, that has paved the way for democracy in South Africa, has a direct impact on the public sector. It brings major structural changes to undo the wrongs of the past. Emphasis was put on meeting the basic demands of all the citizens by reducing fruitless Government expenditure. This objective is achieved by allocating resources for productive investment and its redirection to areas of greatest need. This means that government institutions should re-orientate and optimise access to services by all citizens. This must be within the context of fiscal constraints and the fulfillment of competing needs.

The Public Finance Management Act no. 1 of 1999 has mandated Government institutions to be accountable and transparent with expenditure management system. It also allows new initiatives to be funded through re-allocation of the existing resources. It seeks to ensure that fiscal environment is provided for long-term departmental strategic planning and business planning to supplement Department of Finance with overview of strategic planning across Government institutions. The set targets and objectives are binding and subject to tough scrutiny (Arnaboldi and Lapsley 2003:349)

2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The following are various legislative frameworks which inform the Government strategic planning:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996;
- Public Finance Management Act No.1 of 1999;
- Treasury Regulations, Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2009-2014;
- Green Paper: National Strategic Planning 2009 and
- The Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP).

2.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996

The constitution does not clearly provide a distinctive strategic planning process but it encourages the public sectors such as Limpopo Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism to promote public participation, accountability, transparency, financial management and efficient use of scarce resources. However, Departments are mandated by law to plan and implement strategies that aid with rendering basic services and performing the functions assigned to them.

In terms of Section 195 (1) the constitution focuses on the principle of, *inter alia*, the promotion of the efficiency, economic and effective use of resources. Section 41 calls for each sphere of the Government to comply with national legislations, investigate, monitor and evaluate organisation to improve the performance within public services. The constitution is the supreme law of the country and guides all the Departments when developing strategies.

2.2.2 Public Finance Management Act No.1 of 1999

The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) (as amended by Act No. 29 of 1999) is one of the most important pieces of legislation passed by the first democratic government in South Africa. The Act promotes the objective of good financial management in order to maximize service delivery through effective and efficient use of the limited resources. The PFMA adopts an approach to financial management, which focuses on outputs and responsibilities rather than the rule driven approach of the previous Exchequer Acts. The Act is part of a broader strategy to improve financial management in the public sector.

In terms of section 18, the PFMA promotes accountability and transparency in terms of using state funds to prepare budget, control, estimates, implement and ensure that the funds are provided to enhance Government mandate such as strategic planning. The Act protects fruitless expenditure and realigns resources to the top order priorities such as that of strategic planning. There are no specifics on strategic planning and implementation process but call for Department to take control of public funds when planning to fast track service delivery.

2.2.3 Treasury Regulations

Each year, the Accounting officer of an institution must prepare a strategic plan for the forthcoming Medium Term Expenditure Framework period for approval by the relevant authority such as Parliament or Legislature. The strategic plan must include the following aspects: cover a period of three years and be consistent with the institution's published medium term expenditure estimates; include specific Constitutional and other legislative, functional and policy mandates that indicate output deliverables for which the institution is responsible, include policy developments and legislative changes that influence programme spending plans over the three-year period, include the measurable objectives, expected outcomes, programme outputs, indicators (measures) and targets of the institutions programmes and include details of the Service Delivery Improvement Programme.

2.2.4 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2009-2014)

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF, 2009-2014) builds on the success of the 15th years of democracy. It is a statement of intent, identifying the development challenges facing South Africa and outlining the medium-term strategy for improvements in the conditions of life of South Africans. The MTSF is meant to guide planning and resource allocation of all spheres of government.

MTSF assists in terms of setting up strategic objectives that are broken down into targets for the first five years under the themes: a growing economy; sustainable livelihoods; access to services; comprehensive social security; crime and corruption; constitutional rights and governance; Africa and the world. It explained that governance should place critical measures to ensure capacity to meet these objectives. These are cooperation among economic partners; stronger partnership across all sectors; improving the system of monitoring and evaluation; focusing on economic development in areas with economic potential; recruiting and skilling law-enforcement agencies.

2.2.5 Green Paper: National Strategic Planning (2009)

The Green Paper: National Strategic Planning (2009) provides ideas on planning and coordination to achieve the identified priorities and provides details on the institutions involved and the broader environment in which planning occurs. The Paper sets out an institutional framework for planning and describes outputs of planning.

Section 19 of the Green Paper provides additional information on the role of sub-national spheres of government in national planning. The document states that the key principle of effective government planning relates to the notion that different spheres of government are able to affect one another. Planning should not be rigid or top-down. Various spheres of government should work together to establish effective and efficient plans that will promote the functionality and institutional integrity of government.

2.2.6 Limpopo Employment Growth and Development Plan (LEGDP)

The LEGDP (2009) provides a framework for the Provincial Government to set out strategic priorities and outcomes as indicated in the Medium Term Strategic Framework into key strategic priorities which will guide service delivery over the next five years. The strategic priorities related to the LEGDP are to provide guidance on the key issues that the Province, with its respective departments and municipalities, should focus on to ensure economic growth and development. It was reported that the province faces significant challenges in transforming the system of governance such as capacity gaps in local government, poor quality of public services, declining trust and confidence in public institutions and weak planning capacity across the three spheres of government. The province sets out the long term goal to build an effective and accountable state as well as fostering active citizenship.

The province also sets out priority targets for the next five years in the form of the clusters which are social cluster, economic cluster; security cluster; infrastructure cluster; and governance and administration cluster to spear-head the strategic planning and implementation of the Departments. The long term plan and 2030 strategic vision which sets out targets and highlights key challenges and intervention is the base-line to monitor and review progress made in attempting to improve the livelihoods of the community and strategic mandates, which are Economic growth, sustainable livelihoods, rural development, food security and land reform.

2.3 THE CONCEPT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Shapiro (2008) mentioned that when strategic planning is done, the department should move into the next phase of planning which is doing the business/action/operational planning. This turns a strategy into implementation. Without the strategic planning phase, it is very likely that the organization will end up doing a range of activities that may not always add up to a co-ordinated effort. The strategic plan keeps the organization on track. All organizations conduct planning in various forms. It is possible to plan at the strategic level, at the activity or operation level, to plan for an organisation, or for a programme or for a project. The two main kinds of planning are strategic planning and business / action /operational planning.

Any new organization, project or programme needs to do strategic planning in order to develop a strategic framework within which it has to operate. However, established or existing organizations, projects or programmes also need to revisit the strategic planning process from time to time. As situations change, sometimes existing strategies don't work and new strategies are required. It is not recommended that the organization do strategic planning every year. However, an organization should review its strategic planning every two years, and a full-scale strategic planning process every three to five years.

Alexander (1985) states that the responsibility for the implementation of the approved consolidated government programme in the State's development plan devolves on its officials. The successful implementation of the plan is a function of the institutional arrangements put in place, the sincerity and commitment of executing officials, available logistic supports and the funding arrangements. The officials are attending planning and reviewing meetings and working collaboratively on developing plans. The process of rolling down the mission statements and the objectives may in itself be implementation in so far as the participation motivates people to accept changes in behaviour.

The strategic planning of an institution is done by the top management where they decide on the vision, mission, goals and objectives of that particular institution. For example, the governments work on five year plans which are converted into annual performance plans. From the plans developed by management, middle management will develop action plans which will clearly stipulate projects, budget, timeframes to implement in order to realize the plans developed by top management (Alexander 1985).

The Action Planning involves business or operational planning which is done at middle and lower level of the organization. This means identifying the tasks that need to be done in order to achieve the objectives. The action plan records what must be done, the date by which it will be done, who will be responsible for getting it done, and what resources will be needed to do it (money and people). Without an action plan, implementation is very difficult and work tends to be confused and uncoordinated. Besides, it becomes difficult to know who should have done what by when. Sometimes things do not get done and no-one notices until it is too late. A strategic framework is the skeleton of planning that result in impact. An action plan is the hand that leads to efficient and effective implementation. In order to use an action plan effectively, an organization or project needs good time management. Without this, the plan will not work (Alexander 1985).

According to Oladipo (2008: 86) the planning process is set in motion in the third quarter of the year with issuance of call guidelines by the National Planning Commission to the State counterparts for submission of projects and programmes. The State Planning Commission in collaboration with the State agency responsible for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs issues comprehensive guidelines requesting the local governments to submit projects or programmes proposals for inclusion in the plan. These guidelines reflect policies and objectives of the state government for the period to ensure consistency and integration of strategies.

The responsibility for the implementation of the approved consolidated local government programme in the State's development plan devolves on its officials. It is appropriate to note that the successful implementation of the plan is a function of the institutional arrangements put in place, the sincerity and commitment of executing officials, available logistic supports and the funding arrangements.

Project planning begins with the setting of goals and objectives which represent the broad rationalization of goals and objectives for the existence of an organisation. The benchmark of progress achieved is usually measured by the degree of attainment of stated goals and objectives. Usually, the goals and objectives are concretized and translated into programmes and projects which represent tangible and measurable parameters of success or failure. This is often a very difficult process but represents a very important stage in the planning process.

Resources are the essential ingredients required for the implementation of projects. Whether tangible, intangible, human, material or financial, the main characteristic of resources is their scarcity or inadequacy in implementing the strategy. The element of scarcity of resources constitutes a serious limitation to the attainment of goals and objectives. The first lesson to be learned from this reality is therefore, that projects have to be properly planned through careful selection and implementation of programmes and projects in such an efficient and effective manner to facilitate the realization or achievement of goals and objectives (Oladipo 2008: 85).

The success of an organization is mainly determined by the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. It is further emphasized that efficiency is concerned with doing things right, while effectiveness is concerned with doing the right things. Likewise, management of an organization can be divided into operational and strategic.

2.4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is one of the ways to help organizations and communities deal with their changed circumstances. It is intended to enhance an organization's ability to think, act and learn strategically. It can help an organization clarify and resolve the most important issues they face. Besides, it builds on strengths and takes advantage of major opportunities while they also overcome or minimize weaknesses and serious challenges. It can help them to be much more effective in what seems to be a more holistic approach. If the strategic planning does not do that, it probably was not worth the effort, even though it may have satisfied certain legal mandates or symbolic needs (Bryson, 2004: 28).

Strategic planning is a leadership and management innovation that is likely to persist because, unlike many other recent innovations, it accepts and builds on the nature of political decision-making. Raising and resolving important issues is the heart of political decision-making, and the heart of strategic planning. Strategic planning seeks to improve (on) raw political decision making. However, by ensuring that issues are raised and resolved in ways that benefit the organization, its key stakeholders and society (Bryson, 2004: 28)

In the South African context, the purpose of strategic planning is to assist departments in establishing priorities that will better serve the needs of the community. A strategic plan must be flexible and practical. Strategic planning is informed by the priorities of the elected government. The outcomes of the strategic plan of the departments, must therefore, comply

with the strategic objectives identified in the Medium Term Strategic Framework and Green Paper on National Strategic Planning. The Green Paper of 2009 states that the key to effective government planning relates to the ability of different spheres of government to affect one another and establish effective and efficient plans to promote functionality. As a matter of principle, the national strategic plan defines the framework for planning across all spheres of government.

2.5. THE STRATEGY DEBATE

Strategic planning has traditionally been seen as a domain of large organisations that spend a lot of time and resources formulating a vision and mission statement and developing a strategic plan for the organisation. More energy then goes into communicating these into greater organisation and aligning different businesses to the corporate strategy through business planning. This process is seen as necessary in managing a large organisation where the chief executive needs to communicate with each and every employee of the organisation and ensure that all the units of the organisation are working towards the same purpose and goal. While there has been no conclusive evidence that there is a relationship between strategic planning and performance, a formal strategic planning process may improve the effectiveness of management and therefore, lead to indirect improvements in performance (Dincer, Tatoglu and Glaister, 2006).

Successful organisations appear to regard planning as an aid to innovation in business processes (Georgellis, Joyce and Woods, 2000). Beaver and Prince (2003) argue that strategic planning may well be a proxy for a number of organisational activities and characteristics, such as management competence and involvement, style of leadership and employee participation. Strategic planning should then contribute positively to performance as literature shows that it gives direction to an organisation and provides measures and controls to track performance.

2.6 THE STRATEGY CHANGE CYCLE

The Strategy Change Cycle becomes a strategic management process and not just a strategic planning process to the extent that it is used to link planning and implementation and to manage an organisation in a strategic way on an ongoing basis. As Poister and Streib (1999: 331-312) argue, the overall purpose of strategic management is to develop a continuing commitment to the mission and vision of the organization (both internally and in the

authorizing environment), nurture a culture that identifies and supports the mission and vision, and maintain a clear focus on the organization's strategic agenda throughout all its decision-making processes and activities.

The strategy change cycle may be thought of as a process strategy (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998 and 1999), processual model of decision making (Barzelay, 2001:56), or activity-based view of strategizing (Johnson, Melin and Whittington, 2003), in which a leadership group manages the main activities in the process but leaves much of the content of individual strategies to others.

2.7 TEN-STEP STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process spans from formulation of the plan to implementation (Subramoniam and Krishnankutty, 2002) and can be analysed from a process or content point of view. The content refers to different elements of the actual plan and the process is the way in which the plan is developed and deployed (O'Reagan and Ghobadian, 2002). The inter-dependability of the two is however critical in developing an organisation's uniqueness and creating an opportunity for discovery of a competitive advantage. It is, therefore, important that organisations have a living strategic plan that is informed by the processes used in developing and deploying the plan.

There are nine steps to follow when developing a strategic plan of an organisation: (Subramoniam and Krishnankutty, 2002)

2.7.1 Initiate and agree on a strategic planning process

The purpose of the first step is to negotiate agreement among key internal and external decision makers or opinion leaders about the overall strategic planning effort and the key planning steps. The support and the commitment of key decision makers are vital if strategic planning in an organization is to succeed. Furthermore, the involvement of key decision makers outside the organization is usually crucial to the success of public and nonprofit programs when implementation will involve multiple parties and organizations (Nutt and Backoff, 1996; Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999; Huxham, 2003). Strategic planning for a public or nonprofit organization, network or community is likely to work well when an effective policy making body is in place to oversee the effort.

2.7.2 Identify organizational mandates

According to Piotrowski and Rosenbloom, (2002), formal and informal mandates placed on the organization consist of the various “musts” it confronts, that is, the various requirements, restrictions, expectations, pressures and constraints it faces. It is surprising how few organizations know what they are (and are not) formally mandated to do. Typically, few mandates of any organization have ever read, for example, the relevant legislation, policies, ordinances, charters, articles and contracts that outline the organizations formal mandates. Even when they have read these materials, it is likely that their organizations strategic plans will fail to address at least some of the formal mandates and that these mandates may be overlooked (Piotrowski and Rosenbloom, 2002).

According to Bryson, (2004) many organizational members also do not understand the informal mandates which are typically political in the broadest sense that their organization faces. It may not be surprising, then, that most organizations make one or more of three fundamental mistakes. The first mistake committed is, the inability to articulate or knows what they must do. Secondly, by believing that they are more tightly constrained in their actions than they actually are. Thirdly, is to assume that if they are not explicitly told to do something, they are not allowed to do it. These mistakes will lead to failure of the strategy; it is therefore upon managers to detect all this early in the process.

2.7.3 Clarify organizational mission and values

According to Frederickson, (1997) an organization’s mission, in tandem with its mandates, provides the organisations with the most important justification for its existence. An organisation’s mission and mandates also point the way towards the ultimate organizational end of creating public value. For a government, governmental agency, or non-profit-making organization, this means that there must be identifiable social and political demands or needs that the organization seeks to fill. Viewed in this light, these organizations must always be seen as a means to an end, not as an end in and of themselves (Frederickson, 1997). Identifying the mission or purpose of the organization does more than justifying the organisation’s existence. Clarifying purpose can eliminate a great deal of unnecessary conflict in an organization and can channel discussion and activity productively (Terry, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Nutt, 2002).

2.7.4 Assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The planning team should explore the environment outside the organization to identify the opportunities and challenges the organisation faces. It should explore the environment inside the organisation to identify strengths and weaknesses. Basically, outside factors are those which are not under the organisations' control, such as economic, political, and technological factors and inside factors such as team orientation, stability, people orientation and innovation and risk taking are those that are under the organizations control (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Opportunities and challenges are usually (though not necessarily) more about the future, whereas strengths and weaknesses are usually about the present and not the future (Nutt and Backoff, 1992).

Monitoring a variety of forces and trends, including the political, economic, social, educational and physical ones, can help planners and decision makers to discern opportunities and challenges. Unfortunately, organizations often focus only on the threats they see in serious challenges and ignore the genuine opportunities these challenges may also present, so care must be taken to ensure a balanced view (Dutton and Jackson, 1987; Borins, 1998; Nutt, 2001). In other words, attending to challenges and weaknesses should be seen as an opportunity to build strengths and improve performance (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001).

2.7.5 Identify the strategic issues facing the organisation

Strategic issues are fundamental policy questions or critical challenges affecting the organisations' mandates, mission and values, product or service level and mix, clients, users or payers, cost, financing, structure, processes and management. Finding the best way to frame these issues requires considerable wisdom and dialogue, informed by a deep understanding of organisational operations, stakeholder interests and external demands and possibilities. The first four steps of the process are, initiation and agreement on a strategic planning process, identifying organizational mandate, clarifying organizational mission and values, assessing the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are designed to slow things down so that planning team members have enough information and interaction for the needed wisdom to emerge. The process is designed, in other words, to unfreeze people's thinking (Lewin, 1951; Dalton, 1970; Fiol, 2002) so that knowledge exploration and development may occur (March, 1991; Crossan, Lane and White, 1999). This knowledge is then exploited in this and later phases.

2.6.5 Formulate strategies to manage the issues

According to Bryson (2004:46), a strategy can be defined as a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions or resource allocation that define what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. Strategies vary by level, function and time frame. Organisations develop strategies to deal with the issues they have identified. This definition is purposely broad in order to focus attention on achieving consistency across rhetoric (what people say), choices (What people decide on and are willing to pay for), actions (what people do), and the consequences of those actions.

Effective strategy formulation and implementation processes link rhetoric, choices, actions and consequences into reasonably coherent and consistent patterns across levels, functions and time (Eden and Ackermann, 1998). They are also tailored to fit the organisations' culture, even when the purpose of a strategy is to reconfigure that culture in some way (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Draft strategies and perhaps drafts of formal strategic plans are formulated in this step to articulate desired patterns. Strategies may be reviewed and adopted at the end of this step if the strategic planning process is relatively simple, small scale and involves a single organisation

2.2.7 Review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan

Once strategies have been formulated, the planning team may need to obtain an official decision to adopt them and proceed with implementation. The same is true when a formal strategic plan has been prepared. This decision will affirm the desired changes and move the organisation towards refreezing in the new pattern (Fiol; 2002), where knowledge exploration of previous steps can be exploited (March, 1991).

2.2.8 Establish an effective organisational vision

In this step, the organisation develops a description of what it should look like once it has successfully implemented its strategies and achieved its full potential. This description is the organizations vision of success. A few organisations have such a description or vision, yet its importance has long been recognized by well-managed companies, organizational psychologists and management theories (Locke, Shaw, Saari and Latham, 1981; Collins and Porras, 1997; Kouzes and Posner, 2002). Such a description may include the organization's mission, its values and philosophy, its basic strategies, its performance criteria, its important decision rules and the ethical standards it expects of all employees.

2.2.9 Develop an effective implementation process

Just creating a strategic plan is not enough. The changes called for by the adopted strategies must be incorporated throughout the system for these strategies to be brought to life and for real value to be created for the organisation and its stakeholders. Thinking strategically about implementation and developing an effective implementation plan are important tasks on the road to realizing the strategies developed in step 6. For example, in some circumstances direct implementation at all sites will be the wisest strategic choice, but in other situations some form of staged implementation may be best (Joyce, 1999).

The organisation must build into action plan enough sponsors, champions and other personnel along with enough time, money, attention, administrative and support services and other resources to ensure successful implementation. It must “budget the plan” wisely to ensure that implementation goes well (Huxham, 2003). Successfully implemented and institutionalized, strategies result in the establishment of a new regime, a “set of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area” (Krasner, 1983: 2).

2.2.10 Reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process

Once the implementation process has been underway for some time, the organization should review the strategies and the strategic planning process as a prelude to a new round of strategic planning. Much of the work of this phase may occur as part of the ongoing implementation process. However, if the organisation has not engaged in strategic planning for a while, this will be a separate phase. The organisation should focus on successful strategies, asking whether they should be maintained, replaced by other strategies or terminated. Unsuccessful strategies should be replaced or terminated. The strategic planning process should also be examined, its strengths and weaknesses noted and modifications suggested to improve the next round of strategic planning. Effectiveness in this step depends on effective organisational learning, which means taking a hard look at what is really happening and being open to new information (Bryson, 2004: 51).

2.8 STRATEGIC PLANNING IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

In this section, two case studies are analysed: New Zealand, Canada and Nigeria

2.8.1 A case of New Zealand

A critical determinant of successful government is the ability to make good decisions, and manage their implementation. Modern government is complex. It requires thousands of decisions to be taken and acted upon each day. The compound effect of these decisions is enormous due to the size and pervasiveness of the government. The dramatic decline of New Zealand's fortunes during the 1970s and early 1980s exposed the inherent flaws in their version of the traditional model of centralised government decision-making and management. They discovered the cumulative costs of poor decisions the hard way. They learnt that, under stress, centralised authority fails to cope with entrenched features of public administration such as value conflicts, ambiguity and uncertainty over cause and effect, asymmetries of information about performance and the likely consequences of decisions, skewed incentives, and the difficulty of distinguishing at any given moment the accidental from the systemic, and the trivial from the significant (Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner 1996).

According to Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner (1996), public sector reforms begun in 1986 reflected the realisation that their arrangements for government decision-making and management needed a radical overhaul. New Zealand set about developing a management system that would provide greater assurance of the quality of decision making and the overall level of performance. For high quality decisions, it is important that people are appropriately empowered. It is vital that they have a good understanding about Government's overall priorities and the types of behaviour being sought, and about the impact of their decisions and actions on the government system. It is important that good information be available to them or that they have incentives to get that information. It is also crucial that those people be held properly accountable for their decisions.

Leaders and managers of governments, public agencies, non-profit-making organisations and communities face numerous and difficult challenges. For example, the dizzying number of trends and events affecting the United States in the past two decades: an aging and diversifying population, changes in the nature of families and an apparent shift to political conservatism. Besides, tax cuts, levy limits and indexing, dramatic shifts in federal and state responsibilities and funding priorities are also to be considered. Furthermore, a huge bull market in equities followed by one of the longest bear markets in history, a closing of the gap

between the rich and poor and then a reopening of that gap are on the list of trends and events affecting USA. There is also the emergence of children as the largest group of poor Americans, dramatic growth in the use of information technology, e-commerce and e-government, the changing nature of work and a redefinition of careers. Finally, fears about international terrorism and emergency of obesity as an important public health concern should be indicated on the list as well. Perhaps, most ominously, New Zealand have experienced is a dramatic decline in social capital in recent decades (Putnam, 2000), and citizens in the United States and other developed countries appear to be less happy now than they were thirty years ago (Lane, 2000: Institute of Education, 2003).

New Zealand government put emphasize on following points to ensure successful strategic planning and implementation:

2.8.1.1 Making managers manage improved quality of decisions.

The shift from centralised regulation to decentralised management was the defining event in New Zealand's public sector reform. Deregulation of the public service compelled managers to move from a passive compliance mentality to an active management mentality. The contractual emphasis in the New Zealand model pushed the need for intelligent decisions on resource allocation down through the administrative chain to the point at which services are delivered. This forced managers at every level to focus on the Government's objectives, to manage the risks to those and to become more responsive to the requirements of the recipients of their services. Freedom of information legislation, introduced prior to the reforms, was instrumental in changing attitudes to the value of information, and in improving the volume and quality of information about government. Decisions at all levels are now based on better information, better budgeting processes and a longer time frame (Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner 1996).

2.8.1.2 The importance of leadership

The strong need for developing a strategic approach to government in New Zealand was matched by the readiness of Ministers and senior public servants to take the reform model into a new phase. Political leadership was vital. The National Government made a public commitment to a range of policy objectives over the period up to the year 2010. It also decided to publish annual updates of progress towards those objectives. Some Ministers adopted the same approach within their portfolios, and published '2010' documents for areas

such as the environment, science and technology and education. It is difficult to overstate the importance of such clear and public objectives, and of sustained commitment to their achievement (Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner 1996).

2.8.1.3 The Impact on Performance

New Zealand government introduced a strategic management process to improve attention to longer-term priorities, government co-ordination and consideration of overall effectiveness, which were initially overlooked in the shift away from central regulation (Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner 1996).

2.8.1.4 Departments' strategies.

According to Matheson, Scanlan and Tanner (1996) there has been a considerable spin-off from the Government's strategic approach within departments. In particular, departments can now make their Budget bids and do their business planning within a common strategic framework. Almost all departments are developing strategic business plans, allowing them to make clear connections between what they have to do to contribute to the wider strategic picture and the organisational implications in terms of structure, skills, capital investment and external relationships. They are also more able to involve managers and staff in their own strategic management initiatives, such as flattening structures, devolving managerial responsibility, empowering front-line staff, investing in information technology, and paying more attention to evaluating the impacts of policy and services.

2.8.2 A case study of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) in Ontario, Canada

Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) in Ontario, Canada is an example of a government service organization that has been relatively successful in utilizing this managerial approach to assist with the achievement of stated organizational vision, mission and goals.

The LCBO is a crown corporation established to control the sale of liquor and to promote responsible drinking within the province of Ontario. The LCBO is an excellent case study for several reasons. Firstly, it has incorporated many of the policy objectives in the new public sector model and new market dynamics into its strategic management processes leading to improved performance levels and customer service. Secondly, the LCBO is recognized as the largest buyer of alcoholic beverages in the world, with 1999 sales totaling approximately \$2.5 Billion. Thirdly, the LCBO's operations have drawn attention in both the public and private

sector. The LCBO exemplifies the possibilities for change in the public sector. The private sector Retail Council of Canada named the LCBO Innovative Retailer of the Year in 1997 and 1998. The case study examines best practice benchmarks, and four related areas - industry analysis, stakeholders, service performance, and change management – to determine overall value creation in the LCBO's performance (McInerney & Barrows, 2000).

As more government organizations are forced to justify their existence and their ability to service citizens, pressure for government responsiveness can be seen across many service sectors. In Ontario alone, huge changes to fundamental services have occurred with unprecedented speed. Massive budget cuts to hospitals, amalgamations of city districts and school boards with huge cuts to administrative overhead, and the downsizing of many federal government organizations such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) illustrate this urgency for change. In a recent Report to Taxpayers, the Ontario government spent \$780,000 in its marketing literature to justify its welfare reforms to taxpayers (Canadian Press, July 15/2000). The new message communicated by governments is about how it can maximize services, exercise greater fiscal responsibility and improve customer value.

Amidst these changes, it is important to remember that nothing happens in a predictable, sustained way unless one builds mechanisms that cause it to happen in a predictable, sustained way. (Joiner, 1994). The LCBO is a unique example of how government organizations can utilize strategic management tools to create more customer-focused services, despite inherent complexities within the public sector. The Ontario government established the LCBO as a monopoly provider of alcoholic beverages and enacted regulatory entry barriers to prevent competition, however, the threat of privatization has injected elements of competition that imperfectly competitive markets can exhibit competitive characteristics if these markets are deemed to be “contestable” (Baumol, Panger and Willig 1992). The threat of privatization has made this market contestable, even in the presence of regulatory barriers.

The challenge for government is to build customer-focused strategies that are well designed, satisfy customer needs and provide superior levels in product and service performance. While opportunities for improvement exist, the LCBO's strategic management design and processes are an excellent example of the potential for all of government organizations to become more responsive and more accountable. A modern context for change must therefore emphasize value creation through strategic management. It is both necessary and possible for public

sector organizations to become dynamic learning organizations like the LCBO – competent to identify changes in customer needs and capable of meeting these changes through the delivery of innovative service mechanisms (McInerney & Barrows, 2000).

2.8.3 Nigeria, the state of Kwara

Project identification, selection and articulation at local government level in Kwara State of Nigeria has not enjoyed the sophistication and elaborate procedure usually associated with modern project planning rituals (Oladipo 2008). Instead, ideas on development plan articulation and project selection usually flow from the central government to the local government. This system, which has existed over time, is expected to maintain national focus but recent developments increasingly advocate a bottom-up planning approach which allows the local people to have inputs into projects/programmes earmarked for their benefits in order to ensure sustainability. It is, however proper to critically examine the contents and operations of the present top-down procedure in order to assess its adequacy and requirements for reform. The planning process is set in motion in the third quarter of the year with issuance of call circulars/guidelines by the National Planning Commission to the State counterparts for submission of projects and programmes (Oladipo 2008).

The State Planning Commission in collaboration with the State agency responsible for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs issues comprehensive guidelines requesting the Local Governments to submit project and programme proposals for inclusion of the plan. These guidelines reflect the policies and objectives of the state government for the period to ensure consistency and integration with Federal thinking. The guidelines also supply data/information on macroeconomic framework, resources projection and programme ceilings for each local government and require submissions to reflect the scale of priorities, emphasis, peculiarities and needs for their areas (Oladipo 2008).

2.9. PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS TO EFFECTIVE PROJECT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The successful planning and implementation of government programmes and projects have been hampered by a number of factors, notable among which are according to Oladipo (2008) are:

2.9.1 Lack of Qualified Manpower

Manpower shortages have remained the bane of effective project planning and implementation in government areas. Professional and trained planners are virtually non-existent while administrative officers performing planning functions lack any form of training and experience. The double jeopardy here is that not only is plan formulation poor but also that continuity is not ensured (Oladipo 2008).

2.9.2 Paucity of Data

Although inadequacies in the quality and scope of data for planning purposes are a general phenomenon in the country, it is more pronounced at the government level. Yet adequate and reliable data is indispensable to effective planning and implementation. Data is required for analyzing situation on ground and in determining areas to be served to engender equity and even development (Oladipo 2008).

2.9.3 Inadequate Finance

Government has continued to experience inadequate finance to execute their projects/programmes in spite of their enhanced share from the Federation Account. This is attributable to increasing recurrent expenditure outlays, additional responsibilities, high inflation rates, erratic economy all acting in concert to increase the cost of governance. Added to this is the inability of planners to forecast accurately the estimated cost of projects (Oladipo 2008).

2.9.4 Lack of Effective Project Monitoring

As in planning a project, government officials who are charged with the responsibility of supervising and monitoring projects lack the exposure, focus and the prerequisites of a tough task. This is compounded by lack of collaboration and cooperation due to differences in orientation and training. In addition, field officers are known to compromise roles and standards due to lack of motivation and logistic supports. The results are that projects have collapsed shortly after handover, boreholes have been drilled without water (Oladipo, 2004), contracts get paid for not doing or doing shoddy jobs and incidence of abandoned/uncompleted/white elephant projects adorns the landscape. (Oladipo 2008).

According to Ehlers & Lazenby (2004: 9), the following are some of the reasons why strategic plans fail: Time : managers argue that too much time is spent on planning and not enough on implementation of strategies, unrealistic expectations from managers and employees even though the process of strategic management should include as many participants as possible, this is not always practically achievable, uncertain chain of implementation: strategic plans are formulated at higher managerial levels of the organization, this means that it is usually someone else who has to implement them and they are often not sure of what is expected from them and no specific objectives and measurable outcomes: probably the single most important criticism of strategic management is the fact that management does not know whether strategies have been implemented successfully or not. In other words, there are frequently no measurement tools to see whether the organization is better off or not after implementing the strategies.

2.10. CRITICAL PROBLEMS IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

When organisations attempt to implement new strategies, they often find that there are common problems to deal with. For example, much more time is necessary for strategic change to take place than most organisations realize. Major problems often arise and some crises distract attention away from implementation. Poor leadership and direction from lower level managers may hamper implementation. Lack of coordination can cause significant problems. Poor definition of key tasks and lack of training and instruction of employees can cause significant implementation failure. Many firms which experience poor implementation find that an unclear statement of overall goals along with inadequate communication of these goals establishes a foundation for failure. Lack of true top management commitment will often lead to a lack of effective strategic implementation.

Once the implementation process has been under way for some time, the organization should review the strategies and the strategic planning process, as a prelude to a new round of strategic planning. Much of the work of this phase may occur as part of the ongoing implementation process. However, if the organization has not engaged in strategic planning for a while, this will be a separate phase. The organization should focus on successful strategies, asking whether they should be maintained, replaced by other strategies or terminated. Unsuccessful strategies should be replaced or terminated. The strategic planning process should also be examined, its strengths and weaknesses noted and modifications suggested to improve the next round of strategic planning. Effectiveness in this step depends

on effective organizational learning, which means taking a hard look at what is really happening and being open to new information (Bryson, 2004: 51)

According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001: 18) “The whole point of a learning organization is that it needs to get a better handle on the fact that it doesn’t know what it doesn’t know”. Viewing strategic planning as a kind of action research can embed learning throughout the entire process and make sure that the acquisition of information, the feedback and the dialogue necessary for learning occur (Eden and Huxham, 1996)

2.11. CONCLUSION

The above literature review has shown that effective planning of the strategies plays a crucial role in guiding the Implementation of the Departments’ programmes and delivery of services is likely to be fast tracked. In South Africa, strategic planning by public institutions is the top priority however, the question raised by the literature is that, how effective or inclusive or holistic are the processes involved in strategic planning looking at the selected case study? The practical part of this research report is aimed at evaluating the way in which the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism plan and implement the government strategy. It also looks into the alignment and disparity between Governments’ Departments and stakeholder participation in planning and implementation process of the strategies. However, before that, the following chapter explores the appropriate methodology that will be used to collect data necessary to answer the research questions raised in the problem statement.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the research design and data gathering techniques used in the study. It further outlines the procedures followed and describes how data relevant to the research questions were collected and analysed. The purpose of the chapter is to justify the selection of adopted research designs, methodology, population, sampling and data analysis.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is defined as a set of procedures that guides the researcher in the process of verifying a particular hypothesis and excluding all other hypotheses, or explanation. It allows the researcher to draw conclusions about the relationship between variables (Claire & Craig 2000:156). In this section, titled research design, the researcher presents the research design and the rationale for the choice of the design. The study was mainly based on a case study, which is part of the qualitative research approach.

3.2.1 Choice and rationale of design

The researcher has utilised the qualitative research which is defined as a research conducted using a range of methods which use qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of social reality (Claire & Craig 2000:156). The study was designed to investigate the challenges with respect to planning and implementation of government strategy by government departments. This has required in-depth investigations to answer the research questions and achieve the study objectives. In-depth investigations are by nature part of qualitative research methodologies. A case study was utilised in that only one department Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) was used as a single case (unit) of the problem. The results can be used to inform practices for similar situations elsewhere in the province.

3.2.2 Research Methodology

According to Kumar (2008) research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it people study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in

studying his research problem as the deals with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methodical technique but also the methodology.

This section presents the research methodology or the way in which the researcher has attempted to answer main and sub-questions. This section comprises of the study area, population of interest, sampling procedure, research questions (or hypothesis), data collection methods, data analysis, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations.

3.3. STUDY AREA

The research was conducted in the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), which its head office is situated in Polokwane City. The Department was established as a result of the reconfiguration of the Department of Finance & Economic Development on 01st December 2004. The Department was established in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, of 1996 and is governed by the Department's endeavour to achieve the strategic goals, which is regulated and guided by the applicable broad policies and legislation mandates as outlined in the strategic plan of the Department.

In terms of its strategic plan, the department seeks to address issues relating to economic growth, the promotion and development of tourism, and using environmental management to guide and monitor sustainable development in the province. The strategic goals of the Department include enhancing the ability of the Department to deliver public services, accelerate employment, growth and development, manage and use natural recourses sustainably. LEDET has offices in the five districts in the province which are Capricorn, Sekhukhune, Mopani, Waterberg and Vhembe. The study has however, focused at the head office, where executive management decisions are taken, such as the strategic planning and monitoring unit which is housed at head office of Polokwane.

The department is also responsible for the following parastatals which are implementing arm of the department:

- Trade and Investment Limpopo (TIL) which was established to promote the Province as the preferred investment and trade location in Southern Africa through marketing the competitive advantages of establishing and maintaining a business in Limpopo
- Limpopo Gambling Board (LGB) responsible for the promotion of the gambling industry for the benefit of the people of the Province

- Limpopo Economic Development Enterprise (LimDev) responsible for development of the Limpopo Province and to empower it's people, entrepreneurs and business pioneers through a clear, strategic path for sustainable development
- Limpopo Business support Agency (LIBSA) responsible for the provision of non-financial business support to ensure job creation thus reducing poverty in line with the Limpopo Province Growth and Development Strategy
- Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA) responsible to make Limpopo Province the preferred econ-tourism destination in Southern Africa

3.4 POPULATION OF INTEREST

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) population refers as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. Population of interest was the provincial government departments with respect to their strategic planning and implementation functions. The study focused only on one department in the province, LEDET as a single case. The LEDET has staff compliment of 1455 officials which comprised of male and female.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE AND SELECTION METHOD

A sample is referred to as a group of elements drawn from the population, which is considered to be representative of the population and which is studied in order to acquire some knowledge about the entire population. (Claire B & Craig HS: 2001). We sample in effort to understand the population from which a sample is drawn. As such, we are interested in describing the sample not primarily as an end in itself, but rather as a means of helping to explain some facet of the population. In this study, the targeted respondents were senior management services (SMS) of the department which has a total compliment of 1 HOD, 2 Senior General Managers (SGM), 6 General Managers (GM) and 35 Senior Managers (SM). The study rationale required that only subjects who fall within the SMS category should be used since they are the ones responsible for strategic planning process in the department. Since the sampling frame is not large enough, non-probability sampling techniques was used. In other words, a purposive sample of the SMS (n=40 respondents) was used in the study. In addition, a further sample of managers of specific key programmes was purposively selected. Therefore, the whole sample size was 30 Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) officials.

3.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Creswell (1994: 2) views the qualitative research method as “an enquiry process of understanding a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting views of information, and conducted in a natural setting”. Qualitative research as a research methodology is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research. It further studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focuses on their meanings and interpretations (Maree, 2010: 51).

As qualitative research approach was used in the study, the study did not formulate research hypothesis. Instead, qualitative methods were designed to resolve the research questions. The following research questions were addressed:

- What are the challenges in the planning process?
- What are the challenges in the implementation process?
- What impact does planning have in the delivery of services?
- What are the causes and effects of the disconnect between the planning and implementation process?
- Which measures can be put in place to improve the planning and implementation of programmes?

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

According to Voce (2005) Data collection method refers to the systematic approach to data collection. Data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews with senior management services and managers. An interview schedule was conducted with each respondents consisting of closed and open-ended questions. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain desired information from the sampled population. The interviews were, therefore, conducted with 26 respondents in which out of the targeted Senior Management Services, only nine (9) responded and from the managers only 17 responded. A target of 30 respondents could not be reached and as such four (4) respondents failed to participate in the study.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The qualitative data was summarized based on the researcher's subjective interpretation, data was summarized into themes and sub-themes and finally, all data was analyzed using a thematic approach.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics is a set of principles which is suggested by an individual, is subsequently widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents. (Strydom, De Vos, Fouche and Delpont: 2002). According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2006: 201) indicate that there are four important ethical considerations that a researcher should pay attention to, namely: informed consent, right of privacy, protection from harm, and involvement of the researcher. These ethical elements will be duly complied with in this proposed study.

The subjects were briefed on the purpose of the study and the participation was voluntary. Non-disclosure clause (privacy to confidentiality to information) was included in the first page of the structured interview questionnaire. The results were reported in an honest and unbiased manner. The report will be made available to all relevant stakeholders upon completion of the study.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research design and research methodology. The study area, target population, sampling method, data collection method and ethical considerations were also covered by the chapter. The next chapter deals with data analysis, that is data collected from the sampled population.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings, data and analysis of the results of the study. Data was collected from Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET). The study investigated the challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy by government departments: a case study of LEDET. The study utilised structured interview questionnaire which was done on a one to one interview with the senior management and programme managers of the department. The department management structure is composed of top management which is Senior Management Services and middle management which are managers responsible for specific programmes. The department has about 43 Senior Management Services and 200 Programme Managers. The research purposefully selected 30 respondents in the categories of Senior Management Services and Programme Managers. The researcher targeted 10 respondents in the category of Senior Management Services and 20 Programme Managers. Instead, only 9 Senior Management Services respondents participated in the interview while only 17 Programme Managers participated in the interview. Therefore, only 26 instead of 30 targeted participated in the study.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Structured interview was conducted with Senior Management Services and programme managers in the department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. The department has 43 Senior Management and 200 managers. The research purposefully selected 30 participants because of the believe that the sample is representative of the senior management services and programmes managers in the department. Only 26 officials participated in the study. The structured interview questionnaire was divided into five themes, with theme one probing demographic profile of respondents. Theme two probed challenges in the planning process, while three probed challenges in the implementation process. The fourth theme four probed the impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery and the last theme looked into the disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy. Data collected presented the following results:

4.2.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic data of respondents is important to this study because it helps the researcher to understand the background information on the respondents. In probing the demographic profile of respondents, the researcher focused on the following aspects: gender of the respondents, age group, marital status, highest qualification, occupation and which programme they belong to. These aspects are significant in any research in order to have a clear picture of the respondents as subject of inquiry.

4.2.1.1 Gender of the respondents

The researcher probed this variable in order to avoid gender biasness in the findings of this study. Gender inequality is still a critical issue of discussion in both development and public administration literature today. Gender of respondents is as follows:

Table 1: Gender of respondents

Female	8
Male	18

Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents are males. These results reveal gender disparity in the department concerned. These findings tell that there could be lack of compliance by the department in respect of the Employment Equity Act and gender mainstreaming or that there are no competent females to take leadership positions in the department.

This therefore indicates that the department still needs to look into the possibilities of increasing females within the ranks of leadership position in the department. This is a requirement that the public departments in South Africa are still grappling to fulfill. This therefore implies that the Affirmative action policy is not completely applied or achievable in most South African public departments.

4.2.1.2 Age group of respondents

The researcher probed this variable to understand which age group is involved in the planning and implementation process of the government strategy.

Table 2: Age group of respondents

20-35	4
36-45	9
46-55	11
56-65	2

Table 2 shows that the majority of the participants are between the ages 46-55 that have been working for government for a reasonable period and have enough experience with regard to strategic planning and implementation process of government. A smaller group is for employees facing retirement age. In general, the picture drawn is of economically productive employees in the department with age group ranging from 20-55. With the current political arguments of the generational mix, the department sounds to be doing better in this regard.

4.2.1.3 Marital status of respondents

The researcher probed this variable to determine the marital status of those involved in the process. It is often argued from cultural perspectives that the higher the percentage of the married peoples in organization the higher the likelihood of responsible decision making and job execution.

Table 3: Marital status of respondents

Married	17
Single	8
Divorced	0
Widowed	1

Table 3 shows that the majority of participants in this study are married. It is only a small group of participants which falls within the category of single and widowed respondents. The picture drawn from this table about the department is that it is headed or lead by responsible

citizens. A small figure of this single people could often be belonging to young stars in management position in the age ranges of 20-35 as depicted by table 2.

4.2.1.4 Highest qualification of respondents

The researcher probed this variable to determine the educational level of respondents. It is often argued that lack of professional qualification is likely to impact negatively on the performance of the organization.

Table 4: Highest qualification of respondents

Matric	0
Diploma/Degree	6
B-tech/Honours	8
Masters	11
PHD	1

The majority of respondents' studied up to Masters level. Table 4 reveals that senior management in the department has the necessary qualifications for their job. They understand the importance of education as it is beneficial for personal growth and understanding of the dynamic environment they operate in. With better education, they get to be more creative and innovative as enables them to formulate credible plans for the realisation of the mandate of the department. The table also depicts a few respondents who have honours and junior degrees; some are still furthering their studies to be relevant to the dynamic current environment. In general the department is composed of highly skilled personnel.

4.2.1.5 Occupation of respondents

The researcher probed this variable to determine the occupation of the respondents and their involvement in government planning and implementation process. The occupation of respondents is significant in the sense that it is mostly the post level of the people that determines their participation in strategic planning within their units. It is the seniority of participants in this kind of study that determines the reliability of information obtained by the researcher. The occupation of respondents in this study indicated as follows:

Table 5: Occupation of respondents

Senior General Manager	0
General Manager	3
Senior Manager	6
Manager	17

The department has more programme managers (200) than senior management services (43) hence the figures in the table. The senior general managers, general managers and senior managers all fall within the senior management services category. No senior general manager participated in the study due to their tight schedule. Only 3 out of 8 general managers and 6 out of 33 senior managers responded. Not all of them have participated because the researcher sampled.

The department is comprised of three departments, namely, Economic Development, Environment & Tourism. All of these sections have its own mandates which needs to be fulfilled hence a larger number of managers (17) who have responded. Programme managers are also fully involved in both planning and implementation process as opposed to senior management services who are only fully involved in the planning and partly in the implementation process.

4.2.1.6 Programme under which respondents belong

The researcher probed this variable to determine the programme respondents to which they belong. The department is comprised of three programmes: administration, economic development, environment and tourism. The information in this regard will be helpful in determining the perceptions from a variety of programme membership in the department.

Table 6: Programme under which respondents belong

Administration	13
Economic Development	10
Environment & Tourism	03

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents (13) work under the administration programme. They are responsible for providing support functions to the department such as human resource management, human resource development, strategic planning, employee relations, transformation, legal services, logistical support , record management, communications services and financial management which include, supply chain management, budget management, risk management, financial accounting and Information Technology. Economic development programme (10) which is second has a number of projects and programmes which are headed by managers whose mandate to ensure economic growth through job creation in the province. Environment and Tourism (3) has lesser number as most of its staff is at operational level dealing with daily activities.

4.2.2 Challenges in the planning process

The researcher wanted to establish the challenges faced by LEDET in the planning process. In probing that, the researcher required the respondents to respond as to whether there are challenges in the planning process, what challenges are there in the planning process, how directorates try to solve the challenges, whether there is integrated planning within directorates, how directorates ensures integration of plans, what plans are normally developed by senior management services and programme managers, what constraints are there to planning in directorates and which measures can be put in place to improve planning of the strategy. The results are as follows:

4.2.2.1 Challenges in the planning process

The researcher's first probe was to determine if LEDET indeed faces challenges in the planning process. The results of the respondents were as follows:

Table 7: Challenges faced by respondents in the planning process

Yes	22
No	04

The table shows that the majority of respondents, which are 22 are of the view that there are challenges in the planning process. Some of the challenges are non-involvement of relevant stakeholders to give inputs into the process and experts to give advice on crucial issues for better understanding and interpretation by implementers. Only 04 respondents are of the view that such challenges does not exist. The reason might be that these respondents are within the administration programme wherein their work is standard and to give support to core functions. They, therefore, they do not face lot of challenges in the planning process.

4.2.2.2 What are the challenges in the planning process?

Respondents were required to provide what they consider as challenges in the planning process. The respondents mentioned the following as the challenges facing LEDET in the planning process:

Table 7: Challenges in the planning process

Challenges	Respondents
Lack of participation	01
Lack of understanding	07
Poor communication	02
Poor planning	07
Poor coordination	06
Didn't respond	03

The table illustrates lack of understanding, poor planning and poor coordination as major challenges to planning process in LEDET. Lack of understanding relevant policy mandates of the department from national departments which are often interpreted differently due to their complexity leads to poor planning. Poor planning is also as a result of limited resources or the way they are distributed. Poor coordination is another major challenge; there is often no clear direction of who does what. For example, the Department has two Research and Planning units; one for environment and the other one for economic development and the department has five parastatals which are the implementing agencies and at times there are duplication of functions. Lack of participation and communication are some of the challenges, key role players not being involved and information not being communicated about the process.

4.2.2.3 How directorates address or try to solve the challenges identified

The researcher wanted to establish what is done by directorates to resolve the challenges faced during the planning process.

Table 8: How directorates solve the challenges identified during the planning process

Solution to challenges in the planning process	Respondents
More participation and involvement of relevant stakeholders	19
Reprioritisation of programmes/ projects	03
Review previous plans	01
Training	01
Did not respond	02

The table demonstrates that majority of respondents indicated that more participation and involvement of relevant stakeholders can help to overcome challenges faced during the planning process. Literature indicates that planning process of any institution is done by top

management and implementation by middle management and operational staff. Respondents believe that it is crucial for middle management and operational staff to be fed with information since they do not participate in the planning process to ensure their buy-in and ownership of the plans. Minority of respondents indicated reprioritisation of programmes and projects as important because it is not everything that will be achieved in a similar way. As such crucial projects which will make difference to the life of the people of the province should be prioritised.

4.2.2.4 Is there integrated planning within directorates?

The researcher probed this variable to understand as to whether there is integrated planning within directorates

Table 9: Integrated planning within directorates

Yes	13
No	13

The table illustrates an equal number of respondents who said there is integrated planning and those who contend that there is no integrated planning within their directorates. 13 of respondents who indicated yes could be from the Administration Programme because it is regarded as the support function and their work is standard and routine while the other 13 who indicated no could be from the core functions who are there to fulfill the mandates of the department. That is where integrated planning is not fully taking place because for this process to achieve its intended goals, it must be participatory and engage key role players.

4.2.2.5 Ensuring integration of plans within directorates

The researcher wanted to establish how directorates ensure that there is integration of plans. Integration of plan is significant to ensure alignment of departmental mandate. Programmes within the government are supposed to be connected for achievement of one goal which is service delivery. Data regarding that integration indicated as follows:

Table 10: How does directorates ensures that there is integration of plans

Integration of plans	Respondents
Through strategic planning sessions and branch meetings	18
Planning and research	01
There is no integration of plans	02
Did not respond	05

The table illustrates that the majority of respondents mentioned that integration of plans is done during the departmental strategic planning session by top management of the department and branch meetings to accommodate those who do not participate in the departmental planning session. One respondent indicated that integration is done through research exercise to determine what is feasible while the other two said there is no integration of plans. They are of the view that people plan in silos without involving relevant stakeholders.

4.2.2.6 Types of plans normally developed

The researcher probed this variable to determine the plans which are developed by respondents

Table 11: Types of plans normally developed

Strategic Plan	17
Annual Performance Plan	18
Operational Plan	18

Most of the respondents develop the three plans as indicated in the table as senior management of LEDET. Both strategic plan and annual performance plans are developed by senior management at the strategic planning session as required by Treasury Regulations. Strategic Plan is a five year plan which is reviewed annually while the annual performance plan indicates specific projects to be implemented annually with clear timeframes. The operational plan is developed by middle management and operational staff which is informed by the annual performance plan. It encapsulates day to day activities with the budget, timeframe and responsible person.

4.2.2.7 Constraints to planning

Respondents were required to provide constraints to planning in their directorates.

Table 12: Constraints to planning

Non-alignment to policies	03
Limited resources	12
Lack of capacity	03
Poor communication	07
Did not respond	01

The table depicts that majority of respondents indicated that limited resources such as physical and financial are a constraint to planning. As a rule of thumb, resources are scarce should therefore, be used effectively and efficiently to achieve the set goals and objectives. Others listed poor communication, working in silos without communicating and engaging others during the planning process. Lack of capacity at senior management services has been highlighted by others as a challenge which could be in terms of leadership and management skills. Policies are not aligned as some are being over-looked while others are not correctly interpreted.

4.2.2.8 Measures to be put in place to improve planning of the strategy

The researcher probed this variable to determine which measures can be put in place to improve planning of the strategy, as constraints to planning has been identified in table 12. The researcher wanted to establish which measures can be put in place to address such challenges.

Table 13: Measures to be put in place to improve planning of the strategy

Training	11
Integrated planning	15
Adequate resources e.g human, physical and financial	19
Communication	17
Regulations/policies/procedures	09
Management/leadership style	17

Most of the respondents purport that adequate resources are needed in order to improve planning of the strategy. They also argue that communication and leadership style are equally important. Crucial information should be communicated to role players to ensure their support and buy-in. Managers must possess appropriate leadership style. Training of officials in order for them to have the necessary skills and knowledge of the planning process and to correctly interpret various legislations for proper alignment is deemed important. Integrated planning with relevant stakeholders such as directorates, parastatals, other departments, municipalities and private sector is also mentioned as a good measure.

4.2.3 Challenges in the implementation process

The researcher wanted to establish challenges faced by Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism in the implementation process. In probing that, the researcher required the respondents to respond to whether there are challenges in the implementation process or not, what challenges are there in the implementation process, how directorates try to solve the challenges, how often is progress reviewed on the implementation of the strategy

and which measures can be put in place to improve the implementation of the strategy. The results indicate as follows:

4.2.3.1 Challenges in the implementation process

The researcher probed this variable to determine if there are challenges in the implementation process of government strategy. The aim being to identify such and come-up with corrective measures to ensure successful implementation of the strategy

Table 14: Are there challenges in the implementation process?

Yes	20
No	06

The implementation of government programme is one critical area which is not easily achievable. From time to time it is argued that government programmes are well planned but their implementation remains difficult to be achievable. It is practically impossible to achieve a positive response regarding how project implementation is successfully achieved. In this study the majority (20) of respondents indicated that there are challenges in the implementation process.

According to literature on strategic planning, plans are formulated by top management of the organisation and somebody else who must implement the plans; often they don't know what is expected from them because they do not participate in the planning process and the information is not well communicated to them.

Minority of respondents indicated that there are no challenges in the implementation process. They could be from the administration programme because they are not fully involved in the implementation of the actual mandate of the department rather than just providing support function to core business.

4.2.3.2 Challenges in the implementation process as experienced by directorates

The researcher wanted to establish challenges faced by directorate in the implementation process. The challenges with regard to implementation of programmes by officials differ from one department to the other. Data in this instance revealed the following challenges.

Table 15: Challenges in the implementation process as experienced by directorates

Challenges	Respondents
Instability of municipal plans	01
Lack of understanding of plans	10
Limited resources	09
Not meeting deadlines & targets	02
Did not respond	04

The table illustrates lack of understanding of plans as the major challenge to implementation process and limited resources as second. Plans are often misinterpreted by implementers because some do not take part in the planning process where these plans are deliberated upon. Limited resources are also considered as a challenge in this process. These include human, financial and physical resource.

Without these necessary resources, implementation will always be a challenge. With regard to human resources, some officials get promotions elsewhere during the process, especially skilled officials who leave gaps behind. With financial resource, budgets are reduced during budget cuts exercises to cater for emergencies. Instability of municipal plans is also a challenge as it affects the department plans to ensure alignment.

4.2.3.3 How directorates attempt to solve the challenges in the implementation of a strategy

The researcher probed this variable to determine how directorates attempt to solve challenges in the implementation of a strategy. It is the responsibility of any public department to ensure that they deal effectively with challenges facing them in the implementation process regarding their projects. Often some challenges can be overcome while others cannot be overcome. In this instance, directorates in this study revealed the following regarding their attempt to solve challenges facing their programme implementation strategies.

Table 16: Directorate’s attempt to solve challenges in the implementation of the strategy

Solutions	Respondents
Capacity building workshops & branch meetings	10
Integrated planning	06
Proper allocation of resources	02
Holding officials accountable	02
Constant monitoring	03
Did not respond	04

Majority of respondents mentioned capacity building workshops and branch meetings as mechanisms through which challenges in the implementation of a strategy can be resolved. It is through these platforms that implementers get clarity on what is expected from them, in-depth discussion takes place. Integrated planning is of utmost important whereby relevant stakeholders are broad on board during the planning process to ensure proper implementation of the strategy.

Implementation of the strategy should be constantly monitored to track as whether or not the intended goals and objectives are realised and be able to apply corrective measures on time if there are challenges. It is during the planning process that resources are distributed equitably and where they are needed the most. Officials should also be held accountable for what they have done and what they have failed to do.

4.2.3.4 Review of progress on the implementation of the strategy

The researcher wanted to understand how often directorates review progress on the implementation of the strategy. Strategies are to be reviewed from time to time to monitor as to whether the strategy is in line with articulated objectives. Such will make strategy to be effective and achieve articulated objectives. Some organisations may review the strategy quarterly and annually only while others may do it weekly and monthly. In either way the effectiveness of the strategy can reasonably be reviewed annually. No matter how convincing

the strategy might be strategies always sure cracks as time continues and therefore strategies needs to be reviewed from time to time. Data in this regard revealed as follows:

Table 17: Review of progress on the implementation of the strategy

Weekly	04
Bi-weekly	01
Monthly	10
Bi-monthly	01
Quarterly	17

Since the research targeted senior management services and programme managers of the department, they mostly review progress of the implementation of the strategy on a quarterly basis, as depicted by table 16. Although some managers also review progress on a monthly and weekly basis for build –up to the quarterly, this assists in identifying challenges early and applying corrective measures before the challenge can be severe. Monthly progress is interrogated at branch and executive management meetings and quarterly reports are submitted to relevant authorities as required by the Acts/ regulations, to assess progress and how state funds is utilised.

4.2.3.5 Measures to be put in place to improve implementation of programmes

The researcher needed to establish which measures can be put in place to improve implementation of programmes. There are a variety of aspects that determines the successful implementation of a strategy. It is only a proper attention to those measures that will ensure that the strategy is used effectively to achieve the desired goals and results. As such the researcher wanted to establish from respondents in the department with regard to measures which they think can improve strategy implementation. Data collected from respondents in this regard revealed the following aspects as important to improve strategy implementation

Table 18: Measures to be put in place to improve implementation of programmes

Training	12
Integrated planning	12
Adequate resources e.g. human, physical and financial	16
Communication	18
Regulations/policies/procedures	10
Management/leadership style	15

The table illustrates the identified measures as equally important in improving implementation of programmes. Communication is one measure which has been highlighted as the most important one by most respondents (18). Respondents are also of the view that if there is effective communication by management and applying the appropriate leadership style, resources will be adequately distributed, there will be integrated planning, training will be provided to make sure officials understand the guiding prescripts, that is regulations/policies and procedures during the implementation process. Management should provide direction by clearly articulating the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the department and communicating such to ensure buy-in from other employees, as suggested by 15 respondents.

4.2.4 Impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery

The researcher wanted to determine the impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery. In probing that, the researcher required the respondents to respond as to whether or not they are of the opinion that planning and implementation of the strategy have an effect on service delivery, is the effect positive or negative, the positives of the strategy in improving service delivery, whether or not the budget allocated is used effectively and efficiently and is the strategic planning and implementation take into effect the effective utilisation of the budgets within directorates. The results indicate as follows:

4.2.4.1 The opinion that planning and implementation of the strategy have an effect on service delivery

The research probed this variable in order to understand if planning and implementation of the strategy have an effect on service delivery.

Table 19: Are you of the opinion that planning and implementation of the strategy have an effect on service delivery?

Yes	26
No	0

All respondents believe that planning and implementation of the strategy have an effect on service delivery as illustrated in the above table. Planning provides direction and guides an institution on what it wants to achieve in the short and long term. Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism planning is guided by government planning cycle and informed by its mandates, which are those of economic development, environment & tourism, also the plans are aligned to the priorities of government for example job creation which is more relevant to the department. Plans clearly spell-out the goals and objectives to be implemented with specific projects, timeframes, budget and responsible person. Proper implementation of the strategy will lead to delivery of quality services.

4.2.4.2 Is the effect positive or negative?

Respondents were required to indicate whether the effect of planning and implementation of the strategy is positive or negative.

Table 20: Is the effect positive or negative?

Positive	16
Negative	11

The table shows that majority (16) of respondents mentioned that the effect of planning and implementation of the strategy is positive because plans outline what needs to be achieved to

ensure service delivery and that should be covered in the implementation plan. Others alluded that it depends on how plans are implemented. For example if funds are allocated for a specific purpose and this is adhered then it will have a positive impact. Any deviations from the plans will result into a negative impact.

4.2.4.3 The positive effects of the strategy in improving service delivery

The researcher probed this variable to establish the positives of the strategy in improving service delivery

Table 21: The positives of the strategy in improving service delivery

Provides direction	07
Ensures effective communication	08
Prioritizing important projects	10

The table depicts that the positive effect of the strategy in improving service delivery are that they assist in prioritising important projects and that resources are allocated adequately for the realisation of those projects. The strategy also provides direction to the organisation in terms of the vision and mission and effective communication among relevant stakeholders in order to ensure integrated planning and proper implementation of the strategy.

4.2.4.4 Effective and efficient use of the allocated budget

The researcher required the respondents to indicate if the allocated budget is used effectively and efficiently.

Table 22: Effective and efficient use of the allocated budget

Yes	15
No	11

The table shows that the majority (15) of respondents indicated that the allocated budget is used effectively and efficiently mainly because the allocation is informed by the plans. Poor planning results in misallocation of budget, austerity measures and budget cuts lead to ineffective and inefficient use of the budget. It also results in either under-spending or overspending of the budget which is a financial misconduct.

4.2.4.5 Does strategic planning and implementation take into effect the effective utilisation of the budgets within directorates?

The researcher probed this variable to establish if directorates planning and implementation process takes into effect the utilisation of the budgets

Table 23: Does strategic planning and implementation take into effect the effective utilisation of the budgets within directorates?

Yes	20
No	06

Majority (20) of respondents are of the view that strategic planning and implementation process takes into effect the utilisation of the budgets within directorates. During the planning process costing of projects is done and then translated into the implementation/action plan which outlines specific projects to be implemented, timeframe and resources. Minority (06) of respondents alluded that directorates are not held accountable for any under or over-spending of their allocated budgets, that is, they do not provide reasons for such spending.

4.2.5 The disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy

The researcher wanted to determine if there is disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy. The study probed the following: as whether or not there are notable disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy, the causes of such disconnections, the effects, the means by which directorates attempt to align planning to feasible implementation of the strategy and what directorates do to solve the problem of such disconnections. The results are as follows:

4.2.5.1 Notable disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy

The researcher required respondents to mention if there are notable disconnections between their planning and implementation of the strategy.

Table 24: Notable disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy

Yes	20
No	06

The results stipulate that majority of respondents claim that there are disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy. They attest to the fact that much time is spent on the planning process to ensure that they develop well through plans for easy implementation but often some targets are not achieved due to various reasons which will be covered by Table 24

4.2.5.2 Causes of disconnections

The researcher probed this variable to determine causes of disconnections between planning and implementation of the strategy.

Table 25: Causes of disconnections

Alignment of resources with plans	11
Lack of communication	11
Did not respond	04

The table depicts that non-alignment of resources with plans and lack of communication are major challenges which result in the disconnections. Respondents explained that in most cases, the budget is not aligned to the plans which are as a result of poor planning because plans inform the budget and as such the department does not totally achieve its mandate. Skilled officials also leave the department for greener pastures. Lack of other necessary

resources such as physical resources is also a challenge. Lack of communication between relevant key role players during the process is cited as a challenge as well, especially amongst the planners and implementers who are from time to time supposed to feed each other with information on progress. Communication with external stakeholders such as communities, municipalities and other departments is very important.

4.2.5.3 The effects of such disconnections within directorates

The researcher wanted to establish the effects of the disconnections between planning and implementation of the strategy

Table 26: The effects of such disconnections within directorates

Poor planning	06
Lack of capacity	01
Targets not realized	15
Did not respond	04

Majority of respondents (15) cited non-realisation of targets as the effect of the disconnections. Targets are not met because or plans are not adequately budgeted for, change of leadership which ultimately affect the plans, austerity measures, loss of skilled personnel amongst other reasons. This also affects service delivery as some services will not be rendered as expected. According to other respondents, poor planning causes the disconnections. This is as a result of poor coordination during planning and adequate monitoring conducted during the implementation process to assess if the planned targets are achieved. Lack of capacity by planners and implementers has been cited as another reason.

4.2.5.4 Means by which directorates attempt to align planning to feasible implementation of the strategy

The researcher probed the variable to determine the means by which directorates attempt to align planning to feasible implementation of the strategy. The data revealed the following as important.

Table 27: Means by which directorates attempt to align planning to feasible implementation of the strategy

Yes	24
No	02

The table illustrates that majority of respondents have the means by which they attempt to align planning to feasible implementation which are through implementation/operational plan which outline specific projects, budget and timelines for implementation. Operational plan is informed by the departmental annual performance plan and the strategic plan. Progress is reviewed on a monthly and quarterly basis to track progress of such projects. If there are challenges, corrective measures are applied. This is done through directorates, branches and executive management meetings and submission of reports.

4.2.5.5 What are directorates doing to solve problems of such disconnections?

The researcher required respondents to elaborate on the solutions to address the disconnections between planning and implementation of the strategy.

Table 28: What are directorates doing to solve problems of such disconnections?

Proper allocation of resources	05
Effective communication	15
Constant monitoring of plans	04
Did not respond	02

The table shows that majority of respondents indicated effective communication as the most appropriate solution to address disconnections between planning and implementation. They alluded that if all role players are involved from the planning phase and participate effectively and own-up the process and plans developed, these disconnections will be eliminated. It is during the planning phase that resources are distributed equitably and where they are needed

the most. In order to ensure proper implementation, continuous monitoring is crucial from the planning stage through to implementation stage in order to verify whether or not what was planned for is achieved and what the challenges are.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The above chapter presented the findings as informed by the research questions in Chapter One, data and analysis of the results of the study. The findings were divided into five themes, namely, theme one: demographic profile of respondents, theme two: challenges in the planning process, theme three: challenges in the implementation process, theme four: the impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery and last theme on the disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy.

In the chapter that follows, the study focuses on conclusions and recommendations drawn from the research conducted.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research provided an overview of the challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy by government departments with a case study of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET). The study briefly elaborated on the strategic planning and implementation process of government. It is referred to legislative frameworks guiding the process. According to Ehlers & Lazenby (2007:2), strategic management is defined as the process whereby all the organisational functions and resources are integrated and coordinated to implement formulated strategies which are aligned to the environment in order to achieve the long-term objectives of the organisation and therefore gain a competitive advantage through adding value for the stakeholders. The definition spells out the importance of the strategic planning and implementation process Strategic Management also covers strategy control which is not covered by this study which recommends that further studies look into strategy control/monitoring and evaluation. This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations drawn from the overall study objectives of the study.

In achieving the objectives of this study, the researcher developed the following chapters:

- Chapter one: the chapter provided the introduction and background. It outlined the research problem, aim of the study, objectives, research questions, definition of concepts pertinent to the study and the significance of the study.
- Chapter two: the chapter reviewed literature on the challenges in the planning and implementation of government strategy by looking into the African and International context. The review revealed communication, training, interpretation of relevant prescripts, limited resources/proper allocation of resources and effective participation of relevant stakeholders as challenges to, amongst others, the planning and implementation process.
- Chapter three: on research methodology. It explained the rationale behind the selection of adopted research designs, methodology, population, sampling and data gathering techniques used in the study.

- Chapter four: on data analysis. It presented the findings as informed by the research questions in chapter one, data and analysis of the results of the study. The findings were divided into five themes, namely, theme one; demographic profile of respondents theme two; challenges in the planning process, theme three; challenges in the implementation process, theme four; the impact of planning and implementation of the strategy on service delivery and last theme on the disconnection between planning and implementation of the strategy.
- Chapter five: provided conclusion and recommendation of the study as informed by data collected.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by the objectives and the results of this study. The study recommends improved communication, allocation of resources, empowerment of employees, effective time management, discipline and responsibility and culture of change. These recommendations are discussed as follows:

5.2.1 Improved Communication

Improved communication across different functions in the department and with relevant stakeholders should be encouraged. Effective communication has been highlighted as the most important mechanism through which an organisation can improve its operations and work better. Through effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders, all the parties involved tend to understand the goals and objectives of the department much better. This directly leads to better delivery of services to the communities.

The strategy that is communicated effectively will lead to better understanding by employees and other stakeholders. An understanding of why the department exists and what it needs to achieve will make all stakeholders more committed. Communication with communities should not be taken for granted as they are the main beneficiaries of government services. As government is there to service them, they should be involved at all times and feedback should be provided at all times. Yes, government is doing enough through its outreach programmes but this need to be strengthened by reaching out all communities.

5.2.2 Allocation of resources

As a rule of thumb all resources, for example human, physical and financial are scarce and therefore they should properly allocated. These resources need to be distributed where they are needed the most in line with the priorities of government. They must also be used effectively and efficiently. Better planning and utilisation of resources will result in better output, that is, delivery of quality services and improved performance of the department.

5.2.3 Empowerment of employees

The biggest mistake strategic managers make is to develop/formulate strategies themselves and then channel them down to functional/operational managers to execute. Employees have to take control and ownership of certain strategies, and if they are involved throughout the whole process of strategic planning, they will be more committed to and empowered to successfully these strategies.

5.2.4 Effective time management

Strategic plans have timelines within which they should be implemented. The whole strategic process is broken down into more specific time frames, giving all employees involved a better idea of their own time management.

5.2.5 Discipline and responsibility

Discipline and a sense of responsibility to the management of the department should be promoted. This is because the management involved in the strategic management takes full responsibility of its strategic plans and implementation, which ensures that the process is managed and controlled in a disciplined way. Managers must always be accountable for their work particularly on what they have achieved, the challenges and possible solutions.

5.2.6 Instill a culture of change

Managers should promote an environment wherein employees are encouraged to be innovative and creative rather than to be confined to Acts/regulations/policies and others. Flexibility and creativity are important fundamentals in change management as well as in strategic management.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study covered the strategic planning and implementation process of government strategy with special reference to the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), the study reviewed literature on the same topic which revealed communication, training, interpretation of relevant prescripts, limited resources/proper allocation of resources and effective participation of relevant stakeholders as challenges to the process. Data was collected from the sampled population of 30 participants and only 26 responded through a structured questionnaire. Since the study is qualitative in nature, it sourced opinions and views of respondents on the process.

The strategic planning and implementation process has the potential to make a modest contribution to stakeholders if it can be managed properly. It should also make people understand the mandate of government and of specific departments as well as ensuring ownership of plans and giving feedback to stakeholders.

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