

The documents most commonly prepared by the Bureau for the consideration of PAHO's Governing Bodies are classified as follows¹:

- **Concept paper**
- **Policy**
- **Strategy**
- **Plan of Action**

Basic definitions for PAHO Governing Body documents

Concept Paper

A concept paper presents a position on a given issue that is considered relevant and needs to be addressed. It is generally used to convey a shared understanding of a concept or a situation and related needs.

Policy

A policy document determines a definite course of action adopted by the Organization on a certain topic. It encompasses a series of coherent decisions designed to achieve a positive change in the long-term, or to solve a particular problem. A policy is usually based on the identification of a problem (defined in terms of the priorities that the Organization wishes to achieve), followed by a statement of the direction in which the Organization wishes to go. A policy document may or may not be preceded by a concept paper.

Strategy

A strategy document describes the approaches and patterns of action through which the Organization will achieve goals, and the anticipated results, with respect to a specific topic. It takes into account the Organization's internal strengths (capabilities and resources), the opportunities, and the external environment. A strategy is driven by its purpose, which is often to achieve a policy. If a strategy document is not preceded by a policy document, it must contain a defined policy.

A strategy should include:

- ✓ a very brief description of the problem, as stated in its preceding policy;
- ✓ a description of the strategy;
- ✓ evidence and analysis justifying the strategy (why this strategy was chosen over any other);
- ✓ relationship to and connection with other strategies—within and outside the health sector—that share similar values, principles, and policies.

When writing a strategy, *omit expected results, indicators, activities, and resources.*

¹ This Guideline has been adapted by GBO for the purpose of the project on the Assessment of Resolutions.

Plan of Action

A plan of action covers a specific time period and includes details on how to implement the strategy and thus achieve the expected change defined in the respective policy. The plan of action should make reference to the problem that it is addressing and respond to the goal and approaches defined in the strategy approved in this regard. The strategy and/or policy that precede the plan of action could be one of the global level, adopted by the World Health Organization or by another United Nations organization.

Although not recommended, a plan of action might not be preceded by an approved strategy. If this is the case, the proposed plan should incorporate a strategy within its proposal. This kind of document would be considered a *Strategy and Plan of Action*.

A plan of action should include:

- ✓ a platform for action that contains objectives, outcomes, and indicators (the indicators should include baselines and targets)—these should be linked with the Strategic Plan of the Organization;
- ✓ monitoring and evaluation of the plan;
- ✓ resources: budget and timeframe, showing the anticipated needs in terms of staffing, investment, operation, and training costs, among other expenses.

Taking into consideration that the PAHO Strategic Plan is the Organization's highest-level planning instrument, as approved by Governing Bodies – it sets out the strategic direction and priorities for collective action with Member States and partners – a plan of action should be fully aligned with it. A plan of action should complement the actions required to address the priorities of the PAHO Strategic Plan, and contribute to the achievement of its impact, goals and outcomes. In this regard, a plan of action should be developed in cases where there is a need to operationalize key components of the PAHO Strategic Plan that are not sufficiently addressed in the respective Program and Budgets.

The indicators of the plan of action need to be consistent with the measurements and targets set in the PAHO Strategic Plan and Program and Budgets. To ensure this, the plan of action monitoring and evaluation timeframe must be consistent with the interim progress reporting requirement of the PAHO Strategic Plan. Following the request of Member States, a plan of action should not represent any unnecessary additional financial and reporting burden to Member States.

A strategy should always be linked to a predefined and previously adopted policy. Furthermore, a plan of action should always be linked to a strategy it is trying to implement.