

## SECTION 230 – AGENCY STRATEGIC PLANNING

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**Summary of Changes**

Clarifies the relationship between longer-term planning of the Agency Strategic Plan to the shorter term performance goals and targets reviewed and updated annually in the Agency Performance Plan. Provides planning milestones for developing the next iteration of Agency Strategic Plans covering FYs 2026-2030.

### 230.1 What is an Agency Strategic Plan?

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 aligns strategic planning with the beginning of each new term of an Administration, requiring every Federal agency to produce a new Strategic Plan by the first Monday in February following the year in which the term of the President commences. The Strategic Plan, therefore, presents the long-term objectives an agency hopes to accomplish at the beginning of each new term of an Administration by describing general and long-term goals the agency aims to achieve, what actions the agency will take to realize those goals, and how the agency will deal with challenges and risks that may hinder achieving results. In general, strategic planning as a process reflects the series of coordinated activities, steps, and phases the agency conducts in order to develop and produce the Agency Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan will define the agency mission, long-term goals and objectives to achieve those goals, strategies planned, and the approaches it will use to monitor its progress in addressing specific national problems, needs, challenges, and opportunities related to its mission. A strategic planning best practice, some Strategic Plans may also include a vision statement designed to articulate a desired future state in terms of strategic direction that expresses what the organization wants to achieve while generating momentum for action on the part of the agency to accomplish the vision. The Strategic Plan explains the importance of the goals, appraises the agency's capabilities, assesses the operating environment and provides for evaluations and other studies to inform agency actions. The Strategic Plan should explain why goals and strategies were chosen, discussing the relevant evidence supporting the selected goals and strategies. Because many agency missions, programs and strategies are statutory in nature, some of the strategic plan is expected to be more descriptive of those past decisions, whereas other parts of the strategic plan should reflect important strategic decisions in response to a recent agency analysis of the operating environment, Administration priorities such as those articulated by Executive Order or memorandum, or other emerging factors, for example.

An agency's Strategic Plan should provide the context for decisions about performance goals, priorities, strategic human capital planning and budget planning. It should provide the framework for the detail published in agency Annual Performance Plans, Annual Performance Reports and on Performance.gov. Agencies need to translate the long-term goals in their Strategic Plans to strategic objectives and then to performance goals, including Agency Priority Goals, in the Annual Performance Plan. Moreover, with enactment of the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018](#) ("Evidence Act"), agency strategic plans are supported by the inclusion of the agency's Learning Agenda (i.e., Evidence-Building Plan), which establishes and maps the activities agencies will undertake to answer important short-and long-term strategic and operational questions most pressing to achieving the agency's mission. The Evidence Act also requires agencies to conduct and include a Capacity Assessment for Statistics, Evaluation, Research, and Analysis in their Strategic Plans. The Capacity Assessment will assess how an agency's evaluation, research, and analysis efforts support various agency functions, including strategic management.

Because the Strategic Plan focuses on long-term objectives, it is important that agencies consider risks and how risks change over time during formulation of the plan. Considering enterprise risk management in the early stages of the strategic planning process will ensure that the agency's management of risk is appropriately aligned with the organization's overall mission, objectives and priorities. See more on enterprise risk management in section [260](#) and performance planning in section [240](#). Moreover, incorporating strategic foresight into the strategic planning and review process is one method for identifying and managing long-term risk while also facilitating the achievement of long-term goals. Strategic foresight is a method for systematically considering a longer time horizon and broader scope of issues than other forms of planning. Integrating strategic foresight in the planning process also facilitates a systems approach to problem solving and may help an agency better prepare for future threats or take early advantage of emerging opportunities as strategic foresight tools and methods allow the consideration of multiple possible futures, with the goal of preparedness for these possibilities based on analysis. The systems approach of

strategic foresight also encourages organizational communication to avoid the "silo effect," in which problems are viewed in isolation. When exercised in conjunction with effective strategy development, agencies can understand and shape the future environment as opposed to merely reacting to it. Foresight methodologies may vary by agency depending on its mission and operating environment, but examples of strategic foresight methodologies include scanning, trend analysis, and scenario planning. Opportunities for cross-agency foresight coordination are also encouraged to be explored where appropriate.

## 230.2 What is the purpose of strategic planning?

In addition to fulfilling the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requirements, strategic planning serves a number of important management functions related to achieving an agency's mission, and vision statement where one is provided by the agency. Empirical research published in peer-reviewed journals exploring its relationship to organizational performance has shown that strategic planning has a positive impact on organizational performance in both public and private sectors across international settings, and is most powerful as a predictor of organizational effectiveness.<sup>1</sup> Strategic planning is a valuable tool for communicating to agency managers, employees, delivery partners, suppliers, Congress, and the public a vision for the future. An agency's strategic goals and objectives should be used to align resources and guide decision-making to accomplish priorities to improve outcomes. It should inform agency decision-making about the need for major new acquisitions, information technology, strategic human capital planning, evaluations, and other evidence-building and evidence-capacity building investments. Strategic Plans can also help agencies invite ideas and stimulate innovation to advance agency goals. The Strategic Plan should support planning across organizational operating units and describe how agency components are working toward common results. An agency formulates its Strategic Plan with input from Congress, OMB, the public and the agency's personnel, partners, and stakeholders and makes the plan easily accessible to all. The agency's process for establishing and managing strategic goals and objectives should fulfill these important roles:

- **Leadership.** The strategic goals and objectives communicate the Administration's priorities and direction through a unified vision, long-term goals, and supporting strategies. The Strategic Plan features strategic goals and objectives that state what the agency wants to accomplish in terms of outcomes or results.
- **Planning.** The Strategic Plan is the foundation of an agency's planning system because it provides direction for all programmatic and management functions used to execute the strategies needed to reach goals. Executives should use the Strategic Plan to provide guidance to agency components for planning their program implementation, including the alignment of information technologies and human capital resources to support improved outcomes and cost-effectiveness. Additionally, the Strategic Plan, through the multi-year learning agenda, also helps the agency to plan its evidence-building activities, which should support its overall mission. The Strategic Plan should not, however, be a binding document that prevents agencies from learning from experiences and adapting their plans to changing circumstances. Instead, the strategic goals and objectives should be updated over time, incorporating agency learning, and emergent or external factors that may impact agency implementation.
- **Management.** After the planning process, the agency uses the strategic goals and objectives to guide implementation and management. Each strategic goal should be supported by a suite of strategic objectives and performance goals. These, in turn, should be supported by other indicators used to monitor and interpret progress. The annual performance planning, human capital planning

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<sup>1</sup> George, Bert, Walker, Richard, and Monster, Joost. (2019). "Does Strategic Planning Improve Organizational Performance? A Meta-Analysis." *Public Administration Review*, 79(6): 810-819.

and budget processes jointly support the agency's implementation of the strategic goals and objectives by establishing resource allocations, refined strategies, activities, indicators, targets, and milestones in more detail. Agency Strategic Plans provide the framework for other plans and reports where agency performance goals and related analyses are communicated and monitored and revised when needed. For more information on management toward the strategic goals and objectives, see section [260](#) regarding the strategic review which includes information on the link between strategic planning and enterprise risk management.

- **Engagement.** The strategic goals and objectives in an agency Strategic Plan are a tool to engage external entities to enlist their ideas, expertise, and assistance, including Congress, the public and the agency's stakeholders. For example, because delivery partners external to the Federal Government can be critical in accomplishing agency objectives, agencies may want to engage them in identifying potential goals and strategies to accelerate progress.

### **230.3 What content is included in the agency Strategic Plan?**

Agencies should plan to address the standards for required content and information elements that are established in section [210](#) when writing a new or updated Agency Strategic Plan, and should use findings from strategic reviews as well as the development of enterprise risk management profiles and their analysis of risks to help the agency identify the most effective long-term strategies. Additionally, the Evidence Act requires the agency Strategic Plan include a separate section on evidence-building, referred to as the Learning Agenda, as well as a Capacity Assessment. See sections [210](#) and [290](#) for additional guidance describing the relationship of agency Learning Agendas and the Capacity Assessment to the Agency Strategic Plan, and how to effectively incorporate a discussion of the agency's evaluation and evidence-building efforts into the plans and strategies narrative throughout the agency strategic plan.

### **230.4 What timeframes must be established for achieving strategic goals and objectives?**

The strategic goals and objectives should be established for a period of not less than four years following the fiscal year in which it is published, starting the first Monday in February of any year following the year in which the term of the President commences. Agencies may set strategic goals for longer periods of time. See section [230.19](#) regarding interim updates.

Strategic Plan:

- Publication in February, 2026 covers FYs 2026-2030
- Publication in February, 2030 covers FYs 2030-2034

### **230.5 How does development of the annual Agency Performance Plan (APP) relate to the agency Strategic Plan?**

The Agency Performance Plan complements the Agency Strategic Plan whereby agencies translate the longer-term strategic goals and objectives in their Strategic Plans to programmatic performance goals, including Agency Priority Goals, in the Agency's annual Performance Plan. Reviewed and updated annually, agencies establish in the annual Agency Performance Plan performance goals, measures, and targets aligned to agency's objectives in the strategic plan, identifying the level of performance to be achieved during the current year in which the performance plan is submitted as well as the budget year for which it is submitted.

Agencies will publish their annual FY 2024 Agency Performance Plans in February 2023. The FY 2024 APP should be aligned to the Strategic Plan covering FYs 2022-2026, and affords agencies the opportunity to establish performance goals, measures, and targets planned for FY 2024 while revising FY 2023 performance goals, measure, and targets midyear, if needed, in order to reflect new leadership and management priorities and resource levels.

### **230.6 When must agencies next update their Strategic Plan according to the GPRA Modernization Act?**

To meet the requirements of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, agencies published an updated Strategic Plan concurrent with the publication of the FY 2023 President's Budget in March 2022. Agencies must next issue a new Strategic Plan in February 2026 covering FYs 2026-2030. Agencies should update as applicable their Strategic Plans by applying information learned from strategic reviews and other data-driven performance reviews as they are conducted, as well as reflect organizational plans and learning related to the agency's evidence and evaluation building efforts.

Agencies will prepare the initial draft components of the FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plans by June 2025 in order to inform the development of the FY 2027 budget submission and FY 2027 Annual Performance Plan, which will also include FY 2026-2027 Agency Priority Goals. The FY 2027 APP, to complement the FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plan that will be published in February 2026, will be developed throughout the course of 2025 and aligned to the new Strategic Plan covering FYs 2026-2030. Continued refinements to the initial draft components and draft Strategic Plan will be expected prior to publication in February 2026. Agencies may work with OMB to make adjustments to their Strategic Plan draft submissions if needed.

Additionally, the FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plans will also include a separate section on evidence-building and capacity, implementing requirements aimed at advancing agency evaluation and evidence-building activities identified in the Evidence Act.

### **230.7 What is an effective strategic goal?**

Strategic goals should reflect the broad, long-term, outcomes the agency aspires to achieve by implementing its mission. Strategic goals communicate the agency efforts to address national problems, needs, challenges, and opportunities on behalf of the American people. Effective strategic goals also take into account emerging trends, technologies, or significant changes in the operational environment in anticipating the impact to agency missions during a longer-term planning horizon. Both the way strategic goals are framed and the substance they communicate are important to consider. Strategic goals should reflect the statutory mission of the agency, and most agency activity will align to the strategic goals. Strategic goals need not be as specific as strategic objectives, and need not reflect every activity that the agency must undertake to accomplish its mission.

Stylistically, strategic goals should be simple statements which are neither long nor overly complex. Some guidelines for developing these include:

- Use language that the public will understand and avoid highly technical terms that are very specific to technical or professional fields.
- Use language that expresses future direction or vision, and include active or directional verbs such as strengthen, support, maintain, improve, reduce, etc.
- Be specific enough for the public to clearly understand how the goal supports the agency's mission and communicates the agency's unique responsibilities.

For example, strategic goals such as "Improve Safety" do not communicate the agency's specific efforts in this outcome area. Better specificity might be "Maintain and Improve the Safety of America's Transportation" for the Department of Transportation. If desired, short headers may be used preceding the strategic goal statement (e.g. Safety: Maintain Safe and Healthy Workplaces), and a separate field will be provided in Performance.gov for the 'header' in addition to the full strategic goal statement.

Examples of strategic goals include:

- Reduce Transportation-Related Fatalities and Serious Injuries Across the Transportation System.
- Protect the Health of Americans Where They Live, Learn, Work, and Play.
- Restore Small Businesses and Communities after Disasters.
- Extend human presence deeper into space and to the moon for sustainable long-term exploration and utilization.

### 230.8 What is an effective strategic objective?

Strategic objectives reflect the outcome or management impact the agency is trying to achieve and generally include the agency's role. They express more specifically the results or direction the agency will work to achieve outcomes in order to make progress on its mission and provide services to customers. Although objectives are usually outcome-oriented some objectives may be established to communicate the breadth of agency efforts – such as cross-cutting customer service or stewardship objectives that support multiple strategic goals. For the purposes of developing strategic objectives in the Agency Strategic Plan, strategic objectives may be described in the areas reflected below:

- **Mission / Service Focused.** A type of strategic objective that expresses more specifically the path an agency plans to follow to achieve or make progress on a strategic goal. For programs which deliver direct services to customers, this may also include the objective of providing a good experience for customers, and is therefore **Service Focused**. Service Focused objectives should be considered as those activities that reflect the interaction(s) between individual citizens or businesses and Federal agencies in providing a direct service on behalf of the Federal Government, and which is core to the mission of the agency.
- **Mission / Service Focused (Crosscutting/Other).** A type of strategic objective that is not directly tied to a single strategic goal, but may be tied to several or none. In some circumstances agencies perform statutory or crosscutting activities which are not closely tied to a single strategic goal.
- **Stewardship Focused.** A type of strategic objective that reflect the agencies activities and responsibilities to provide appropriate safeguards in executing mission and service related activities effectively and efficiently, including minimizing instances of waste, fraud, and abuse. These objectives often communicate improvement priorities for management functions such as strategic human capital management, information technology, or financial stewardship.

Agencies should treat strategic objectives, (including mission, service, stewardship, or crosscutting/other) as a primary unit for strategic analysis and decision-making. It is important to develop strategic objectives that enable a review of progress both on effectiveness of implementation and the impact made on ultimate outcomes, using a variety of sources of evidence. When developing each objective, the agency should consider how to measure progress toward achieving it, such as considering which performance indicators and other sources of evidence are most useful to understand progress and assess if current strategies are effective.

The following guidelines should be considered in crafting mission-focused strategic objectives:

- **Purpose: Will the strategic objective align agency efforts to achieve a desired outcome, and facilitate improved decision-making?** The purpose of each strategic objective is to align agency efforts toward achieving the intended outcome. Objectives should be meaningful and inspiring to agency leadership, program managers, and front-line employees, and their ongoing implementation should stimulate analysis and decisions which lead to improved outcomes. Strategic objectives should be defined to facilitate decision-making at the agency, as well as decision-making by the agency's stakeholders. It should be possible to identify the lead office and other responsible offices for each strategic objective, and to identify the programs, activities and strategies utilized to achieve the objective. In some cases, objectives may be chosen which cut across organizational or programmatic silos in order to facilitate cross-organization management, improve customer experience, or realize a better return on investment.
- **Assessment: Can progress on the strategic objective be reasonably assessed?** Agencies are required to annually assess progress toward achieving the intended outcomes of each strategic objective, as part of the strategic review (see section [260](#)). Considerations when determining if a strategic objective will support a meaningful assessment include:
  - Strategic objectives should be articulated so they express future direction or vision, and include active or directional verbs such as strengthen, support, maintain, improve, reduce, etc. The objective should be framed so it can serve as a standard against which an assessment can reasonably be performed (i.e., it is reasonable to say if progress had been made toward the objective and whether or not the objective was met).
  - Each strategic objective should have some means of assessing progress both on effectiveness of implementation and progress toward ultimate outcomes (e.g., performance indicators that can be analyzed to assess likely impacts of agency actions, evaluations).
  - An objective which includes a diverse set of outcomes will be more difficult to assess than objectives expressing a single outcome or multiple closely related outcomes.
  - The more ambiguity there is in the strategic objective statement as to the intended outcomes, the more challenging it will be to conduct a meaningful assessment.
- **Scope: Is the scope of the objective appropriate?** Strategic objectives should break down the broader, mission-oriented strategic goals to a level that reflects the impact or outcome the agency is trying to achieve through its programs. In general, strategic objectives will not be quantitative, but will add more specificity to the strategic goals and act as a bridge between the agency's strategic goals and more specific quantitative or alternative form performance goals.

The full set of an agency's strategic objectives will not necessarily capture the full depth and detail of agency activities. Many agency activities will be described through narrative supporting a strategic objective, or through the establishment of performance goals at a more granular level of agency planning, rather than through inclusion in the strategic objective statement. In general, agencies should have approximately 2-10 strategic objectives for each strategic goal; however the number may vary by agency and mission areas.

- **Clarity: Is it understandable?** Strategic objectives should be relatively simple statements that clearly communicate the outcome or impact that is desired. Statements should not be too long or

complex since there will be strategies and other narrative supporting each. Agencies should use language that the public will understand and should avoid jargon.

- **Uniqueness: Is the objective defined in a way that clarifies the agency's role and mission?** In some cases, it may be difficult to understand the objective unless the agency's role is communicated. In these cases, the strategic objective should differentiate the agency's efforts from other agencies in a particular outcome area. For example, many agencies may be working to impact economic development; however, each organization may be responsible for a different facet, using different programs, interventions and strategies (e.g., housing rehabilitation vs. small business assistance). To the extent these distinctions can be made within the strategic objective statement, agencies should do so by clarifying the agency role or communicating the desired program results in summary. Alternatively, the strategies and other narratives that describe what the agency will do to execute on the strategic objective should be used to help to clarify the agency role.

Examples of mission-focused strategic objectives:

- Increase agricultural opportunities and support economic growth by creating new markets and supporting a competitive agricultural system.
- Enforce the nation's trade laws and security laws.
- Improve quality of service for customers across the entire student aid life cycle.
- Reduce the average length of homelessness.
- Provide workers' compensation benefits for workers who are injured or become ill on the job.
- Project American values and leadership by preventing the spread of disease and providing humanitarian relief.
- Support tribal self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty.
- Deliver trusted currency and services that enable citizens and businesses to participate in the economy.
- Prevent, treat, and control communicable diseases and chronic conditions.
- Conduct Human Exploration in Deep Space, Including to the Surface of the Moon.
- Improve healthcare quality and affordability in the FEHB Program with 75 percent of enrollees in quality, affordable plans.

### **230.9 How should strategies be developed to support the achievement of strategic goals and objectives?**

Developing effective implementation strategies is as important as setting strategic goals and objectives, seeking to influence the operating environment of agencies by offering direction in the application of resources and other means in order to achieve stated objectives. A wealth of literature, both academic and applied, has been written on the topics of strategy and strategic planning in settings from the private sector, to business, national security, and the public sector more generally. Agency officials who lead agency

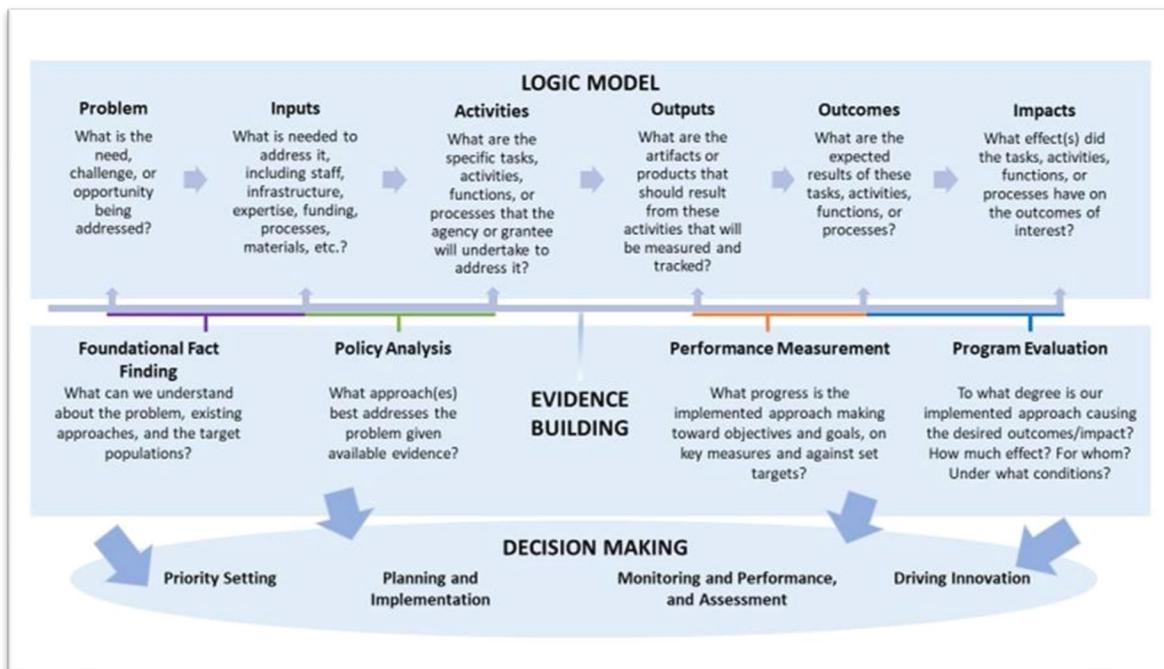
strategic planning and strategy development are encouraged to explore this literature offering a richness of lessons-learned and observations in these fields. The discussion below of strategy development in support of achieving strategic goals and objectives is intended to provide a common understanding and framework of the key components and factors to consider in constructing effective implementation strategies, and strengthen this critical component of strategic planning government-wide. Effective strategies to achieve strategic goals and objectives should:

- Meet criteria of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability, resting on a data-driven diagnosis of the problems being addressed and the complexities of goal achievement, reflecting the input of key experts, stakeholders, and previous organization learning through such processes as the agency's strategic review;
- Consider several alternative implementation approaches to address the problem, and identify a primary strategy which promises to be most effective by providing the most likelihood for success while accounting for: legal and policy considerations; likely future scenarios; lessons learned through the strategic reviews; the extent to which the agency has control over desired outcomes; the degree of certainty on cause and effect of the agency's interventions; and the agency risk tolerance (as identified in the agency ERM process). Effective strategies are often about choices, with selection of the primary strategy reflecting a determination of how best to achieve the desired future state or outcome while accounting for factors within the strategic environment;
- Reflect direction of agency leadership that accounts for critical legal, organizational, management, legislative, and budget considerations, and cascade down the organization;
- Incorporate both internal and external stakeholder inputs, including feedback from key customer groups who may lack a formal role in policy development;
- Create a coherence of effort, including alignment of budgetary resources; coordination with related programs, other agencies, and external delivery partners; and integration of contributing management capabilities and assets, such as IT investments, human capital, and evidence and evaluation-building. Effective strategies seek to apply such coherence of effort across the resources available in order to influence and shape the environment to enable achievement of desired outcomes, versus merely reacting to it;
- Be designed with an applied, action-oriented focus that effectively directs activities, resources, and efforts to address the identified problems and achieved desired goals.

### **230.10 What is a logic model, and how can this framework tool help agencies coordinate strategic planning, strategies, and evidence?**

A Logic Model generally reflects an agency's underlying theory for how the planned coordination and orchestration of resources and activities will achieve the desired outcome or change in terms of performance and impact at the organizational, operational, or programmatic levels. Often thought of as a series of "If...then" statements to demonstrate connections and linkages across the chain of planning and action, Logic Models are informed by evidence and help to operationalize the agency's implementation strategy(ies). The efficacy of the subsequent implementation strategies to achieve an agency's expressed desired change or impact has a direct relationship to the soundness of the Logic Model on which those strategies are based. To ensure strong connections and linkages that span the range of a Logic Model's various components, agencies then should strive to incorporate a Logic Model approach throughout the development of their strategic plan, mapping inputs, activities, resources, programs, etc., to outcomes and impacts that are reflected within the achievement of strategic goals and objectives. The Figure below

illustrates the Logic Model concept, expressing how inputs and activities relate to and connect desired outputs, outcomes, and impacts based on a diagnosis of the problem or opportunity to be addressed. Ultimately, the goal of the Logic Model is to clarify the agency's theory of how inputs are translated into outcomes, and the exact contents should be adapted to meet the needs of the individual agency. Importantly, it highlights how agencies can use evidence, and the different types of evidence, to inform each. And while existing evidence informs our selection of the resources and activities we choose to meet our goals, we also continually generate new evidence about whether and how these resources and activities contribute to our goals, with adjustments made accordingly.



### 230.11 What is the relationship of program(s) or program activity(ies) to strategies that are developed to support achievement of strategic goals and objectives?

While program activities offer a structure for organizing funding requests, the organizational performance and management principles advanced by the GPRA Modernization Act's strategic and performance planning are strategic and priority-goal oriented, aligned to the policy priorities of Administration and agency leadership. Agency strategic and performance plans then represent the organizational management documents that are the outcomes of effective management routines to articulate the agency's mission, goals, and priorities, and bring a unity of action and coordination of resources, activities, and efforts to achieve strategic objectives and priority goals through effective implementation strategies. When viewed more holistically through an integrated, systems view of organizational management, which connects agency budget planning with strategic and performance planning, agency strategic and performance plans can also provide a useful organizing structure by demonstrating the programs and program activities which contribute to strategic goals and objectives. In this systems view, the program activity can be a key organizing component that connects budget and funding requests as part of a coordinated strategy for achieving goals and objectives in the agency Strategic Plan. It is in this context, then, that agencies should incorporate into their existing strategic and performance planning processes considerations of how the organization of spending (i.e., program activities) is linked to and connected with performance; that is, a planning approach that views programs and program activities as critical components of the

implementation strategies embedded in agency strategic and performance plans, and which serve to focus resources, activities, and organizational efforts in order to achieve progress against the strategic plan, strategic objectives, and agencies' priority goals and initiatives (see section [230.9](#)). Such a planning approach also reinforces the Federal Performance Framework's focus as a management system that coordinates and aligns a broader complement of financial and programmatic data to enable improved decision making, accountability, and transparency of the Federal Government.

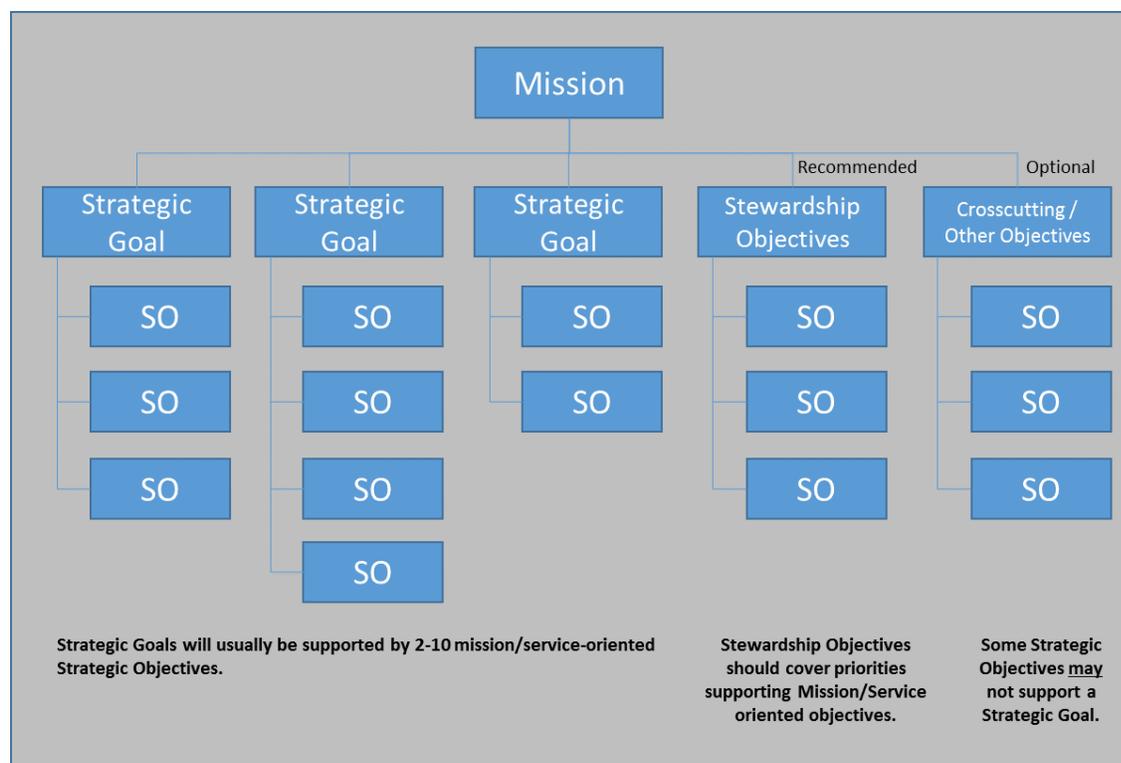
### **230.12 What is the role of enterprise risk management in strategic and performance planning?**

The alignment of enterprise risk management with strategic and performance planning helps an agency understand risks to achieving its objectives. ERM and strategic planning and performance should thus be viewed as complementary efforts to be orchestrated with each other, not as independent activities. In addition, the identification and management of enterprise risks when developing and executing strategies for achieving an agency's mission and programmatic objectives improves an agency's decision-making efforts. Activities being undertaken to accomplish goals and objectives are at an increased risk of failure when implementing strategies are formulated without identifying potential risks and without embedded mitigation mechanisms to effectively assess and manage such risks. Successful integration of ERM into an agency's day-to-day decision-making and management practices will enable an agency to leverage opportunities for managing, mitigating, or avoiding risks that affect strategic goals and objectives, which will ultimately result in more resilient and effective programmatic operations.

### **230.13 Must the agency's strategic objectives be comprehensive, reflecting the major mission activities that the agency undertakes?**

Yes. The strategic objectives should generally encompass the agency's mission and scope of responsibilities, including statutory responsibilities. However, encompassing the scope of mission activities does not mean that the strategic objectives will cover the depth and detail of agency activities. There will be many cases where agency activities are too detailed to be included in the strategic objective statement or associated description, but are relevant to support an objective or multiple objectives. In some cases, these activities will be included in supporting narrative in the Annual Performance Plan or implementation strategies for strategic objectives. The graphic below shows the relationship between Strategic Goals and Strategic Objectives, including stewardship-focused and crosscutting objectives.

Example illustration of goal and objective relationships.



**230.14 Are agencies required to set stewardship-focused objectives addressing management functions such as financial management, acquisition, human capital, information technology, etc.?**

OMB encourages agencies to establish stewardship-focused management objectives that reflect key priorities of the agency, such as a significant effort to improve performance across the organization. Agency leadership may opt to include a stewardship objective or objectives that reflect these significant agency-specific management priorities. In agency strategic and performance plans, stewardship objectives will be listed under a separate category, similar to the categorization of strategic objectives under strategic goals (see section [210](#)). Each kind of strategic objective has the same management and public reporting requirements.

**230.15 What is an effective stewardship objective?**

Stewardship objectives communicate improvement priorities for management functions such as strategic human capital management, information technology, sustainability or financial stewardship. In general, these efforts will cut across the organization and should reflect priorities that leadership would like to emphasize over the period of performance established in the strategic plan. These key management efforts need not reflect all the important operations or management functions of the agency (e.g.; budget or legal functions) rather they should reflect broad, strategic-level decisions of emphasis or describe a relatively significant performance improvement change that affects most of the organization.

Management and operation functions not reflected in the strategic plan as stewardship objectives should be addressed among performance goals in the Annual Performance Plan or in agency operational plans. Strategies supporting mission-oriented strategic objectives or strategies in the Annual Performance Plan should identify key operational processes, human capital, training, skills, technology, information and other management resources where they are relevant to the implementation of mission-focused strategic

objectives. For example, revised Federal regulations (5 C.F.R. 250) require agencies to develop and update a Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP) in alignment with GPRAMA strategic and performance planning timelines. Specifically, the HCOP operates on the same annual cycle as the agency Annual Performance Plan in order to identify and focus on the human capital goals and measures that need to be implemented each year to achieve the strategic goals set forth over the duration of the Agency Strategic Plan.

Examples of stewardship objective:

- *Financial Management:* Fight fraud and work to eliminate improper payments through increased emphasis on agency program integrity initiatives.
- *Strategic Human Capital Management:* Invest in the agency's employee recruitment, hiring, training, work-life programs and performance management so staff is engaged to more effectively serve small businesses.

### **230.16 Are agencies required to address the agency specific contributions to Cross-Agency Priority Goals (CAP) within the strategic plan?**

Yes. Because development and planning of CAP Goals is often done concurrently with strategic planning, agencies may use the development and publication of their Annual Performance Plan to update as needed the discussion or description addressing agency-specific contributions to CAP Goals in the agency's strategic plan. See sections [210](#) and [220](#) for details.

### **230.17 Who should prepare the agency strategic goals and objectives?**

The development of strategic goals and objectives is an inherently governmental function, and the plan is to be drafted only by Federal employees. Agencies should designate a lead office with adequate staffing, capacity, and expertise to coordinate and lead the various planning activities and organizational processes involved in writing the Agency Strategic Plan and the strategic goals and objectives that constitute the core framing of the plan. In this process, agencies should also engage their organizational components (employees), Congress, OMB, delivery partners and other stakeholders in the development of the strategic goals and objectives.

When preparing the plan for publication, agencies may be assisted by non-Federal parties, such as consultants or contractors who are hired specifically to provide technical input on the design and assembly of the plan, and who are not solicited for their input on policy or budget issues. The Strategic Plan should include an acknowledgment and brief description of the contribution by a non-Federal entity in preparing the plan, if applicable.

### **230.18 What is the timeline for agencies to develop and obtain input from OMB on the FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plan?**

Agencies are currently operating under their FYs 2022-2026 Strategic Plans which were published in March 2022. Agencies will next publish revised Strategic Plans in February 2026, concurrent with the release of the President's FY 2027 Budget. The table below provides an overview of the major planning milestones that will occur throughout 2025 in the strategic planning process that will help enable agencies to publish their updated Strategic Plans in February 2026, as required by the GPRA Modernization Act.

Date	Action
June, 2025	<p>Agencies submit initial draft components of the Strategic Plan covering FYs 2026-2030 for OMB review. Specific components of the high-level draft Strategic Plan submissions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Draft Strategic Goals;</li> <li>-Draft Strategic Objective areas; and</li> <li>-Draft Mission Statement (if available)</li> <li>-Annotated Outline of Multi-Year Learning Agenda and Initial Draft Capacity Assessment (see section <a href="#">290</a>)</li> <li>-Draft FY 2026-2027 Agency Priority Goal statements (impact statement only; see section <a href="#">250</a>)</li> </ul>
September, 2025 (concurrent w/ Budget submission)	<p>Agencies submit for OMB review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Full draft of FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plan that incorporates the detailed content requirements provided in section <a href="#">210</a></li> <li>-Full Draft Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment (see section <a href="#">290</a>)</li> <li>-Draft goal statements for FYs 2026-2027 Agency Priority Goals (impact and achievement statement; see section <a href="#">250</a>)</li> <li>-Draft FY 2027 Annual Agency Performance Plan</li> <li>-Draft FY 2027 Annual Evaluation Plan</li> </ul>
November, 2025	<p>Agencies receive feedback from OMB on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-full draft submission of FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, including multi-year Learning Agenda, and Capacity Assessment</li> <li>-FYs 2026-2027 APG goal statements, and</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Agency Performance Plan</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Evaluation Plan</li> </ul>
Late December, 2025	<p>Final draft FYs 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, to include Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment, submitted to OMB for clearance</p>
Mid-January, 2026	<p>For final OMB clearance, agencies submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-FYs 2026-2027 APG goal statements</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Agency Performance Plan / FY 2025 Annual Agency Performance Report</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Evaluation Plan (see section <a href="#">290</a>)</li> </ul>
February 2026	<p>Concurrent with the President's FY 2027 Budget, publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-FYs 2026-2030 Agency Strategic Plan (includes separate sections/appendices for the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment or includes them as separate, referenced documents)</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Agency Performance Plan / FY 2025 Annual Agency Performance Report</li> <li>-FY 2027 Annual Evaluation Plan</li> <li>-FYs 2026-2027 APG goal statements</li> </ul>

**230.19 What input should agencies solicit from stakeholders internal and external to the Executive Branch in the development of Strategic Plans and when?**

Outreach by a Federal agency to connect with those directly affected by policies, regulations, processes, and actions is a powerful statement. It is a direct acknowledgement that what an agency decides to do in advancement of its mission and strategic goals and strategic objectives affects the daily lives of real people across the country and around the world. In that acknowledgement is an invitation to leverage the expertise of those with relevant experience to help make agency goals, strategies, and implementation actions more directly responsive and effective. An important by-product of such outreach is the potential also to increase the public's trust in Government.

When preparing a Strategic Plan, agencies must consult with an array of stakeholders, including both majority and minority views of any Congressional stakeholders, as well as the views of other interested and potentially-affected parties, including non-Federal stakeholders and key delivery partners (see 5 U.S.C. 306(d)). These consultations should occur throughout the process used by the agency for developing updates to its Strategic Plan and take into account key milestones and timelines established in this Circular. Engagements external to the agency should occur in consultation with OMB, and generally after an initial draft is reviewed by OMB during the summer prior to publication.

Agencies are encouraged to conduct stakeholder mapping and develop specific outreach strategies and approaches to guide their stakeholder consultation activities specific to internal and external stakeholder groups. Leveraging ongoing agency communications and contact processes to solicit views and recommendations for revising goals, objectives, and strategies that are in the current plan is one approach, while other examples include hosting public meetings and town halls on the draft plan, draft strategic goals and objectives framework, or posting the draft plan or variations of the plan on the internet and inviting public comment. Agencies that invite comment from the public or external stakeholders on their draft strategic plan should do so after OMB has been provided and reviewed a draft of the plan and is comfortable with Administration policy reflected in the draft of the plan being circulated for comment. Agencies may also consider using their existing published Strategic Plan to begin earlier consultations with Congress and other stakeholders before a more fully-developed revision is completed, or when presented with compressed planning timeframes. This approach would allow stakeholders to engage in the development process.

Agencies should work with their legislative affairs offices to determine the best ways to consult with Congress on the strategic plan, in advance of finalizing the plan with OMB. Additionally, agencies must consult with Congress at least once every two years on their Strategic Plans, briefly noting how any feedback received was incorporated.

Agencies are also expected to conduct stakeholder engagement regarding the contents of the Learning Agenda and Annual Evaluation Plan. Per the Evidence Act, agencies are required to consult with the public, State and local governments, and representatives of non-governmental researchers as they develop their learning agendas. [OMB Memorandum M-19-23](#) lists additional stakeholders that agencies should consult when developing their learning agendas, including internal agency stakeholders who play a role in, have a stake in, or will use the results of the learning that results, in addition to others. The Annual Evaluation Plan also requires that agencies consult with internal and external stakeholders as they develop and implement the plan, though the engagement will likely differ by agency depending on its needs, stakeholders, evaluation, activities, etc. (see [OMB Memorandum M-19-23](#)). Section 290 includes additional information about OMB's expectations for stakeholder engagement for these Evidence Act plans.

**230.20 Can an agency consult with other agencies within the Executive Branch in the development of Strategic Plans?**

Yes. Agencies are strongly encouraged to consult with other agencies within the Executive Branch in the development of Strategic Plans, as the outcomes reflected in many strategic goals and objectives that an agency's strategic plan seeks to achieve often require interagency coordination of programs and resources identified in implementation strategies (see section [230.9](#)). Interagency coordination in the development of the agency strategic plan will help ensure the appropriate alignment of resources and strategies in instances where agencies have shared or overlapping strategic goals and objectives. Agencies that want assistance should contact OMB.

**230.21 How should agencies publish Strategic Plans and deliver them to Congress?**

The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 requires agencies to make the Strategic Plan available on both the public website of the agency as well as on a central website (i.e., Performance.gov) in machine readable format, and notify the President and Congress of its availability.

Agencies will publish Strategic Plans on the agency's website, and provide a hyperlink for publication on Performance.gov that directs readers to the agency plan on the agency's website.

To meet the GPRA Modernization Act's notification requirement to the President, agency PIOs will notify the OMB Director by emailing [performance@omb.eop.gov](mailto:performance@omb.eop.gov), and include in the email the URL to the agency's final Strategic Plan published on the agency's website so that the plan can also be made available on Performance.gov. Related submissions or questions may be emailed to the same address.

Notification to Congress of the availability of the Strategic Plan on Performance.gov (or the agency website, if applicable) is transmitted electronically by the agency head or other senior agency official in accordance with how agencies normally communicate with Congressional stakeholders. Transmittals are addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the President pro tempore of the Senate.

**230.22 Can Strategic Plans be updated in the interim, before the end of the four-year revision cycle?**

Yes. With OMB's collaboration and review, agencies may make adjustments to their Strategic Plans in advance of the four-year revision cycle prescribed by GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 as organizational learning generated through annual strategic reviews or external factors impact changes to long-term decisions. In order to ensure the strategic goals and objectives reflect agency efforts throughout the Administration, agencies are encouraged to consider changes to their strategic goals and objectives as part of the strategic reviews. Revisions may occur based on results of strategic reviews, information gained through evaluations, external events, changes in legislation, changes in strategy, or other factors to reflect significant changes in the environment in which the agency is operating such as new statutory requirements, new leadership and/or priorities, or major management initiatives. Agencies should also apply information and analysis learned from their annual strategic review assessment processes, in addition to other analyses associated with strategic planning best practices when considering revisions to the agency's Strategic Plan and strategies for implementation. While these changes will be encouraged to be made as part of the agency strategic review process, interim adjustments will also be considered throughout the year in response to major events. Interim adjustments do not alter the four-year revision cycle for Strategic Plans.

An agency does not need to consult with Congress or conduct outreach to potentially interested or affected parties when preparing interim adjustments, unless such adjustments reflect significant changes. Significant changes to an agency's Strategic Plan should be made using a more extensive update process

with review and consultation by OMB. Congressional consultation requirements apply in these instances of significant change. In general, any updates to an agency strategic objective(s) should be made during the annual update of the Agency Performance Plan, concurrent with the release of the President's Budget in February.

**230.23 How should interim updates be communicated or published?**

Interim adjustments to the Strategic Plan, such as new Agency Priority Goals or revised agency contributions to the CAP Goals, generally will not require a new publication of the full Strategic Plan. For example, an agency may append an interim adjustment (e.g., newly defined Priority Goals) to its budget submission or include the changes as a part of the annual Agency Performance Plan to OMB to address the needed adjustments to the Strategic Plan, if any. Such interim adjustments should be published in the annual Agency Performance Plan that is sent to OMB in September, and to Congress in February, and should be made easily accessible to the public. However, more substantive changes to the Strategic Plan, such as revisions to the agency's strategic goal(s) or strategic objective(s) framework, should be incorporated into a revised Strategic Plan that is made publicly accessible on the agency's website and on Performance.gov. Agencies seeking to revise their strategic goal(s) or strategic objective(s) framework should consult with OMB in reviewing these changes and collaborate on the process and timeline for reflecting updated goal frameworks in revised Strategic Plans and annual Agency Performance Plans. For information on updates to the Learning Agenda and Capacity Assessment, please see Sections [290.8](#) and [290.14](#), respectively.

