

**USING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS TO ACHIEVE GOVERNMENTAL
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: A CASE STUDY OF LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

By

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Declaration

I declare that the mini-dissertation 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.

Ramoshaba MA (Ms)

Date

Acknowledgement

The completion of this dissertation was made possible by people who contributed positively through encouragements, support and cooperation throughout the process and therefore, I would love to acknowledge every one of them. I might not be in a position to mention each one of you by name, please know that you will remain highly esteemed in my heart. Special thanks go to the following people: my supervisor Prof. MP Sebola, for his unwavering support throughout and for continuing to shine the light to give direction. Members of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture management team who participated in the study, for their enthusiasm and cooperation in responding to requests and follow-ups. All colleagues who took interest in the study by giving advices and words of wisdom. Master of Public Administration Degree class of 2010 for always challenging my commitment, all the lecturers who made it all an adventurer's journey, I enjoyed every moment of it.

Thank you!

Dedication

I would like to thank God Almighty for gracing me with an opportunity to be part of the class of 2010 and giving me the ability to see the completion of this mini-dissertation. This work is dedicated to the following people: my best friend and loving husband who encouraged me persistently to enrol for this Masters Degree. My kids, Oatlegile and Letago, who endured and understood when I sacrificed the time that I was supposed to spend with them but instead went for studies. My parents who took much interest in my personal development and of course, to my special brother and sisters whom I challenge to continue studying.

ABSTRACT

The importance of achieving governmental goals within the spheres of government is a valuable dimension of service delivery through which communities realise the fulfilment of promises made by government. The strategic management process is one of the tools to be used to achieve governmental goals. This study shows the importance of using strategic management process in achieving governmental goals: A case study of Limpopo Department of Agriculture. The problems and challenges identified during the process are highlighted for probing. There is a need for the department to acknowledge and recognise the strategic management function by fully utilising the process thereof in order to see its positive contribution to service delivery

The following areas were investigated by the researcher; demographics profile of the respondents; the challenges in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategy; the importance of proper management of strategy; the role of strategy in achieving governmental goals, the mechanisms of communicating departmental strategies. The collected data was categorised into themes and subthemes to accommodate proper analysis and interpretation.

In conclusion the study gave recommendations on how strategic management processes can be improved through proper consultations both internally and externally, effective communication processes, and bottom-up approach as part of the consultation processes. It also indicated the importance of management team taking ownership of the strategic management processes. However, the recommendations given are not cast in stone towards improving strategic management process. The senior management team of Limpopo Department of Agriculture should consider recommendations in this study together with other solutions to improve service delivery to the citizens of Limpopo in the agricultural sector.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The existence of strategic management function in an organisation is an important activity because it ensures success in achieving organisational goals. In other words, improper implementation of organisational strategy leads to unachieved goals that impact negatively on service delivery. Smit and Morgan (1997:337) assert that success is directly linked to the organisation's ability to value and manage the diversity of its human resources.

Strategic management has a direct link and influence on the performance of an organisation hence David (2001:5) defines it as the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. However, Ehlers (2004:65) states that in order to develop the most effective and efficient strategy, it is important to analyse the organisation internally, that is, to look more closely at the organisation's resources, capabilities and core competencies in order to have an informed understanding of its current situation.

According to the mandate of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, as captured in schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, the Department has a role to play in contributing and aligning with the government's vision of better life for all. Aggressive plans of eradicating poverty, contributing to economic growth and sustainable agricultural development should be implemented in order to fulfil the government's Mid-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) priorities, which spell out that the Department should take a lead in food security issues and rural development.

Planning within the department has become a repetitive exercise which ends up losing meaning to customers and employees and as a result, the quality of strategic documents being developed becomes compromised. It is necessary for everybody within an organisation to be aware of who the customer is, both internal and external

and that a customer should always be the next process or activity (Adendorff and de Wit 1997:187).

As an employee of the Department with enough background as to the proceedings within, it is therefore, necessary for the departmental management to revisit how the whole process of strategic management is managed, how the strategy is formulated, implemented and evaluated for service delivery enhancement. The findings and recommendations of this study will help to make a contribution to the Department in the development of strategies that will have impact on service delivery and improve the livelihood of communities.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is an acknowledgement of the need for a strategic management unit within the Department of Agriculture because departmental activities are not in synchronisation with one other. Proper coordination of activities and concrete management of strategy is lacking and as a result it affects service delivery. The strategic management function is newly established within the department. Previously, different functions within the unit were scattered across different units where they were happening on an *ad hoc* basis. After the establishment of the programme, some functions, which focused mainly on coordination, were introduced within this unit. There is a problem of managing strategically within the department of Agriculture

Strategic management is only viewed as a coordination unit that should only consolidate information for submission to relevant stakeholders while it (strategic management) is far more than that. According to Louw and Venter (2008:19), strategic management encompasses more than the management of the strategic decision-making process. The success of an organisation is mainly determined by the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. Strategic management is concerned with the overall effectiveness and choice of direction within a dynamic, complex and ambiguous environment.

Based on the above challenges on strategic management, it is necessary to probe systematic and acceptable ways of management of strategy and ways of shedding some light in understanding strategic management with the aim of improving service delivery.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the process of strategic management within the Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, its implementation, evaluation and effectiveness.

1.4 Objectives

- To identify challenges in development, implementation and evaluation of strategy
- To assess the level of management of strategy in the department
- To investigate the role of strategy in achieving governmental goals
- To investigate the mechanism of communicating strategy within the department
- To recommend solutions in managing strategy

1.5 Research questions

- What are the challenges in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategy?
- How does the Department manages its strategy?
- What is the role of strategy in achieving governmental goals?
- What are the mechanisms of communicating departmental strategies?
- What are the recommendations in the management of strategy?

1.6 Definition of concepts

Strategic management: It refers to all the decisions and actions arising from the formulation and implementation of strategies with the aim of achieving the organisation's objectives (Rossouw, 2007:3).

Strategic objectives: Implies challenge, establishing performance targets that require strength and discipline efforts (Miller, 1996:4)

Strategy implementation: It is the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan.

It is a process by which objectives, strategies, and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budget, and procedures (Wheelen and Hunger, 2010:320).

Strategic Plan: It is a broad master plan that states the organisational mission and objective, shows how this will be achieved over a five year period (Layton, 2002:1).

Annual Performance Plan: It sets out what the institution intends doing in the upcoming financial year and during the MTEF to implement its strategic plan (National Treasury 2010).

LDA: Limpopo Department of Agriculture

Performance Instruments: It is a document used to enter into agreements with employees on all levels within the Department of Agriculture

1.7 Outline of the Research Report

In evaluating the quality of the research report criteria such as understandability, relevancy, clarity, conciseness, organisation, timorousness, accuracy and comprehensiveness, will be applied (Van Der Walt and Strydom, 1997:161).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and background

This chapter outlines the importance of strategic management in Government, how this function is viewed in Limpopo Department of Agriculture. It also highlights the statement problem and indicates the aim of the study by emphasising what will be focussed on as objectives within the study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

The chapter focuses on strategic management overview within organisations with a view of showing and acknowledging the body of knowledge that is available on this field. Literature review will focus on how strategy is managed within organisation

covering issues around processes of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Information on the importance of strategic management and how strategic management links with organisational performance management will be covered.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology

The chapter deals with the study area, the population, choice/rationale of the study, sample size and selection method, data collection method, data analysis methods and ethical considerations and reasons why this methods were used.

CHAPTER 4

Research findings, analysis and interpretation

This chapter discusses research findings, data analysis and interpretation thereof. The findings and its interpretations will be outlined to contribute positively to the processes being followed within the department.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and recommendations

The chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings and interpretations of collected data.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Strategic management has emerged, over the years, as a very important pillar of organisational performance within both the private and public sector. It has become evidence to this day that many or most organisations still fail to master and excel in organisational performance management which is an indication that organisational strategies are not being properly managed at all or are managed minimally. As a result of these managerial weaknesses, there is a need for one to explore the topic further with the aim of adding to the body of knowledge already available around this topic.

Mark (2009:50) states that it is heartening to note, that the South African government has introduced a new portfolio that falls under former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel in the Presidency, namely the National Planning Commission. The establishment of a National Planning Commission is the embodiment of government's efforts to improve long term planning and rally the nation around a common set of objectives and priorities to drive development over a longer term.

The South African government also has seen it necessary that the effective and efficient running of its government rests wholly upon its ability to manage its strategies which are outlined through tabling of its plan. This has led to the inception of the planning, Monitoring and Evaluation functions within the presidency with the responsibility of overseeing how government deliver its services. Areas that will be covered include the following: Understanding Strategic Management , Strategic management Models, Strategic Management concepts, Strategic Planning, Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation, Linking organisational performance with planning, Role players in Strategic Management, Role of strategy in organisational performance.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

According to Thompson (2002:9) strategic Management is a process which needs to be understood more than as a discipline which can be taught.

It is the process by which organisations determine their purpose, objectives and desired levels of attainment, decide on actions for achieving these objectives in an appropriate time-scale and frequently in a changing environment, implement actions and assess progress and results. Whenever and wherever necessary, the actions may be changed or modified. The magnitude of this change can be dramatic and revolutionary or more gradual and evolutionary.

Thompson (2002:24) again indicates that strategic Management involves awareness of how successful and strong the organisation and its strategies are and of how circumstances are changing. At any time, previously sound products, services and strategies are likely to be in decline or threatened by competition. As this happens, new windows of opportunities are open for the vigilant and proactive companies. New strategies must be created which may change strategic ideas which emerges from formal planning processes, at other times and particularly in the case of functional and competitive strategies, changes will emerge as managers throughout the organisation tries out new ideas. The actual strategies being pursued reflect the organisation's strategy content, and the important issues are:

- The ability of an organisation to add value in meaningful ways, which exploit organisational resources to achieve synergy and
- Satisfy the needs of the organisation's major stakeholders, particularly its stakeholders and customers

According to Louw and Venter (2008:20), strategic management encompasses more than the management of the strategic decision-making process. The success of an organisation is mainly determined by the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. The management of an organisation can be divided into operational and strategic management. Strategic Management is concerned with the overall effectiveness and choice of direction within a dynamic, complex and ambiguous environment. Strategic decisions have long term implications and concern the entire organisation. Strategic management is not concerned with strategic planning only but has to ensure that strategy is also implemented.

Rossouw (2007:2) states that organisations want to ensure their survival and growth within the ever-changing environment. In order for organisations to survive and grow in this dynamic environment, a purposeful management, from top management to lower management is needed. This attempt is known as strategic management and can be used by all enterprises, institutions and associations. Strategic management can be seen as a gap which management needs to bridge. This gap is located within the current situation and the envisaged situation of the organisation. The bridging of this gap is an adjustment of the organisation from the current to the future situation. Such adjustments are made to keep up with the changing environment. They may take place regularly because the environment of the organisation changes constantly.

Wheelen (1996:7) indicates that the process of strategic management involves four basic elements, namely, environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation and control. The Factors that are most important to the organisation's future are referred to as strategic factors and are summarised with the acronym SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads). After identifying these strategic factors, the management evaluates its interaction and determines the appropriateness of the corporate mission. The first step in the formulation of strategy is the statement of mission which leads to the determination of organisational objectives, strategies and policies. Organisations implement these strategies and policies through programs, budgets and procedures.

David (2003:13) argues that strategic management process is dynamic and continuous. For instance, a shift in the economy could represent a major opportunity and requires a change in long term objectives and strategies. Failure to accomplish annual objectives could require change in policy or in the organisation's if change in strategy comes from a major competitor. Therefore, strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation should be performed on a continual basis, not just at the end of the year or semi-annually. The strategic management process never really end.

According to Henry (2008:22) if strategy allows an organisation to match its resources and capabilities to the needs of the external environment in order to achieve competitive advantage, the process of bringing about that strategy is called strategic management. All organisations set goals which they want to achieve. Strategic management is about analysing the situation facing the organisation and on the basis of this analysis, formulate a strategy and finally implement that strategy.

The end result is for the organisation to achieve competitive advantage over its rivals in the industry. A point worth noting is that these elements are co-dependent, that is, in formulating a strategy, an organisation must also consider how that strategy will be implemented. Failure to consider these issues in tandem will decrease the likelihood of success. It should also be noted that this neat sequential pattern might not resemble how a given organisation might undertake strategic management. Analysis, formulation and implementation need to be considered if the organisation's strategy is to meet the needs of its environment effectively.

Meyer and Botha (2000:60) pointed out that leaders play an integral part in the formulation and implementation of the strategy. They should lead by example during the execution of the strategy as they are key players in achieving the results of the strategy through a team of people. Top leadership provides a long term strategy and direction, generates the ideal environment for the organisation and sets the organisational norms and values. Top leadership determines specific competencies required of leaders within the organisation by means of competency profiling. Leaders are assessed, selected and developed in accordance with the set competencies. Team leaders are given the essential understanding of the strategy and their roles within the strategy. Team leaders are provided with the tools and techniques for "engaging the person". They understand the use of values and behaviours. They are set to be true role models.

Strategy should be an act of creativity but it will have little success if it cannot be linked to the balance sheet and basic economic principles. Strategy must be handled with robustness as it moves into its third generation. Competitiveness is an integral part of strategy and it can be called strategic competition in different and distinctive ways. A strategy is not rigid, but a direction an organisation is following.

Continuity of strategy contributes to sustainable competitive advantage. Successful organisations continuously improve the way they realise their strategy (Management Today 2003).

According to Anstey (2002:322), when implementing strategies, strategic decision making is usually reserved for an organisation's board of directors and senior managers. However, this does not mean that employees might not be involved in this process. Several design options are evident internationally.

Strategic planning is reserved for top management which is usually conducted unilaterally by this group, and takes place at a level of the conglomerate or the enterprise. In Germany, the situation is different. In terms of the codetermination Acts of 1951 and 1976, employees in large organisations, have rights to participate in supervisory boards tasked with strategic planning for the enterprise: a third of seats in organisations with more than 500 employees; and an equal number to shareholder representatives in those with over 2000 employees; parity in the coal-mining and steel industries, with a neutral chair.

Miller (1998:XXIV) states that strategic management integrates various functions. Excellence in a wide range of functional specialities is considered an absolutely essential requirement for success in today's highly competitive global market place. While functional excellence is necessary for success, this alone is not sufficient. There must be some broader form of management discharging various functions, a guiding force that integrates the efforts of specialists throughout the organisation. Strategic management is central to capitalizing on functional expertise.

Focusing more on government's perspective, Green Paper: National strategic planning (2009:9) explains that modern societies face complex challenges. The temptation to respond to these challenges in an ad-hoc and fragmented way can be strong. Their effect on the economy and the fabric of society can be damaging. A long term national development plans that has the support and backing of all sectors of society would help ensure that society shares common broad ideas. To change a society's social and economic structure and culture takes a long time. Policies to bring about such changes often take a long time to bear fruit. Long lead times often require long term planning. A popular national development plan can help in making things happen.

The strategic management process includes an understanding of the organisation's strategic intent and purpose, strategic analysis, strategy development, strategy implementation and future perspectives. The whole process is a combination of the commitments, decisions and actions required for an organisation to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above average returns.

Hunger and Wheelen (1996:3) states that strategic management is that set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of a corporation. It includes environmental scanning, strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), and strategy implementation and evaluation control. The study of strategic management, therefore, emphasises monitoring and evaluating environmental opportunities and threats in the light of a corporation's strengths and weaknesses. Hunger and Wheelen (1996:7) also indicate that the process of strategic management involves four basic elements: Environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation and control.

At the corporate level, strategic management process includes activities that range from environmental scanning to performance evaluation. Management scans both the external environment for opportunities and the internal environment for strengths and weaknesses. Factors that are most important to the corporation's future are referred to as strategic factors and are shortened with the acronym S.W.O.T analysis. After identifying these strategic factors, management evaluates their interaction and determines the appropriateness of the corporate mission. The first step in the formulation of strategy is a statement of mission, which leads to a determination of corporate objectives, strategies and policies. Organisations implement these strategies and policies through programs, budgets and procedures. Finally, performance evaluation and feedback ensures adequate control of organizational activities.

According to Saloner and Shepard (2001:382), principles of strategy process are: Strategic thinking is more important than strategic planning; the essence of a strategy is more important than strategic planning; strategy is an inherently creative process; strategy is not just the responsibility or domain of an organisation's most senior management; the organisation and its strategy are intimately interrelated, no matter how much planning an organisation does,

the strategy will still evolve in unintended ways and corporate strategy must add value to the business value strategy.

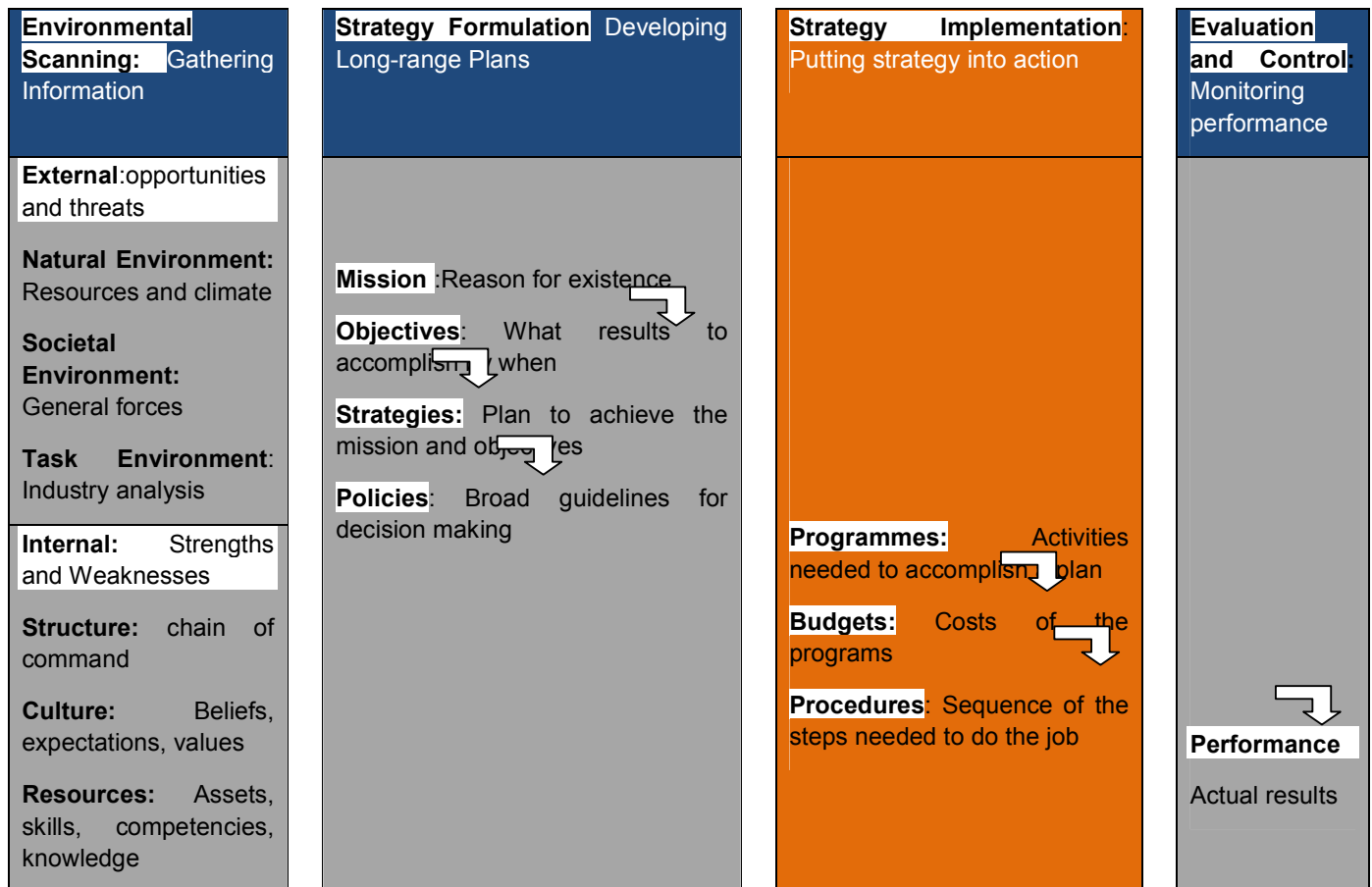
2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Lack of a coherent long term plan has weakened the government's ability to provide clear and consistent policies. It has limited the capacity to mobilise all of society in pursuit of its (government) developmental objectives. It has hampered all efforts to prioritise resource allocations and to drive the implementation of government's objectives and priorities. In addition, weaknesses in coordination of government policies have led to inconsistencies and, in several cases, poor service delivery outcomes (Green Paper on National Strategic Planning 2009:1). Strategic management has advantages such as: giving direction to the whole organisation, and, specifically, to what the organisation wishes to achieve; making management more aware of change, new opportunities and possible threats; serving as a rational basis for managing the allocation of resources; promoting a more proactive management style and opportunities and threats which can be identified in advance and adjustments can be made.

While it is important for divisions within organisations to operate as effectively as possible, it is equally important that there is an overview function which ensures that business units are aligned. Executives need to have their fingers on the pulse of an entire entity rather than a cluster of division that operate autonomously (Kobus,2009:50). Strategic management is like a road map which shows the direction to where an organisation is going. Every organisation should ensure that its executives are the drivers of the plan that are tabled and proper monitoring system with necessary resources available to support the plans. Evaluation is also compulsory because future plans will depend on those plans for improvement. Every organisation should deepen the level in which it manages its strategy to ensure optimal performance that it desirable.

2.4 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT MODELS

Figure: 1.1 Strategic Management Model



Source (Wheelen and Hunger 2010:319)

According to Macmillan and Tampoe (2000:22), strategy is an element of leadership. Strategy has a close association with leadership and setting strategy is one of the responsibilities of leaders. Nobody can lead an organisation if he/she does not agree with its strategy. Conversely, organisations that are leaderless or inadequately led have difficulty defining clear strategies even if they continue to function in their day-to-day activities. When leaders change, strategies tend to change. Conversely, if the strategy needs to change, it may be necessary to appoint a new leader. Leadership change may be both a symbol that a change in strategy has occurred and an opportunity to appoint an individual with a leadership style appropriate to the new strategy.

Dess, Lumpkin, Eisner (2008:8) indicate that Strategic Management consists of analyses, decisions, and actions an organisation undertakes in order to create and sustain competitive advantages. This definition captures two main elements that go to the heart of the field of strategic management. First, the strategic management of an organisation entails three on-going processes: analyses, decisions and actions. In other words, strategic management is concerned with the analysis of strategic goals along with the analysis of the internal and external environment of the organisation. Second, the essence of strategic management is the study of why some organisations outperform others.

Huff, Floyd, Sherman, Terjesen (2009:6) stated that determining organisational strategy is even more complex. Effective strategy has to do with several things simultaneously, such as communicating a compelling purpose or vision to others, connecting organisational strengths with environmental opportunities, generating more resources than it uses, coordinating and guiding activities, responding to new conditions over time.

Hunger and Wheelen (2002:2) highlight that strategic management is a set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of a corporation. The study of strategic management, therefore, emphasises the monitoring and evaluation of external opportunities and threats in the light of a corporation's strengths and weaknesses in order to generate and implement a new strategic direction for that corporation. However, David (2001:5) indicates that strategic management can be defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives. As the definition implies, strategic management focuses on integrating management, marketing, finance/accounting, production/operations, research and development, and computer information systems to achieve organisational success. The purpose of strategic management is to exploit and create new and different opportunities for tomorrow, long-range planning, in contrast, tries to optimise for tomorrow the trends of today.

Richard (2000:9) asserts that strategic management, in itself, has some benefits and using the strategic management approach, managers at all levels of an organisation interact in planning and implementing.

As a result, the behavioural consequences of strategic management are similar to those of strategy formulation on organisational performance which requires not only financial evaluation criteria but also nonfinancial evaluation criteria – measures of behaviour-based effects. Promoting positive behavioural consequences also enables an organisation to achieve its financial goals.

Miller (1998: xxiii) highlights the difference between Strategic Management and other management functions in the following ways:

- Strategic Management integrates various functions. It is central to capitalising on functional expertise and in order for functional specialists to make the greatest possible contribution, they must understand how their functions fits into a broader strategy
- Strategic Management is orientated toward achieving organisation wide goals. The most effective managers are those who understand their organisation's aims.
- Strategic Management considers a broad range of stakeholders. For an organisation to flourish, managers throughout its ranks must understand how their decisions affect various stakeholders involved.
- Strategic management entails multiple time horizons. Managers of functional areas tend to focus on short-term issues alone, but if they can broaden their time-frame perspective, they will understand how to position their functional discipline to make the best contribution both today and tomorrow.
- Strategic management is concerned with both efficiency and effectiveness. Managers who take a narrow view of their responsibilities often end up concentrating the majority of efforts on improving their own functional area, while neglecting the organisations overall operations.

Olsen, West, Tse (1998:3) states that Strategic Management refers to the ability of a firms management to properly align itself to the forces driving change in the environment in which it competes. This alignment requires that management invest in competitive methods that yield the greatest overall financial value to the firm.

To do this management must create a business structure that consistently allocates resources to those competitive methods that provide the most value over time. Rossouw, Roux, Groenewaldt (2007:2) indicated that strategic management can be seen as a gap which an organisation needs to bridge. This gap is located between the current situation and the envisaged situation of the organisation. The bridging of this gap is an adjustment of the organisation from the current to the future situation. Such adjustments are made to keep up with the changing environment. They may take place regularly because the environment of an organisation changes constantly.

Dynamic in nature, strategic management process is a full set of commitments, decisions and actions required for an organisation to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above average returns. Relevant strategic inputs derived from analyses of the internal and external environment are necessary for effective strategy formulation and implementation. In turn effective strategic actions are a prerequisite to achieving the desired outcomes of strategic competitiveness and above average returns. Thus, the strategic management process is used to match the conditions of an ever-changing market and competitive structure with a firm's continuously evolving resources, capabilities, and core competencies highlighted (Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson, 2005:5).

If a strategy allows an organisation to match its resources and capabilities to the needs of the external environment in order to achieve competitive advantage, the process of bringing about the strategy is strategic management. All organisations set goals which they want to achieve. Strategic Management is about analysing the situation facing an organisation, and on the basis of this analysis, formulating a strategy and finally implementing that strategy. The end result is for the organisation to achieve competitive advantage over its rivals in the industry. A point worth noting is that these elements are co-dependent. In formulating a strategy, an organisation must also consider how that strategy will be formulated indicates (Henry, 2008:8).

Strategic management is important to all organisations because it provides a structured process of analysis, using tools and frameworks to study the external and internal environment and provides a logical approach to strategic decision-making. It is the process of identifying, evaluating and implementing strategies in order to meet the organisational objectives asserted (Jefferies, 2008:13).

It consists of the decisions and actions used to formulate and implement strategies that will provide a competitively superior fit between the organisation and its environment, to enable it to achieve organisational objectives (Hannagan, 2002:3). It is also a process of management needed to enable an organisation to move from where it is now to where it wants to be in the future. It is about a sense of direction and aligning this with an organisation's aims.

2.5 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

Thompson (1995:27) states that David Marshal chose the E-V-R Congruence framework to demonstrate the underlying concept of Strategic Management. Strategies are being managed effectively when the organisation's resources are deployed in such a way that the business meets the demands and expectations of its stakeholders, and responds and adapts to changes in the environment and deal with potential threats in a climate of change pressures. Our basic understanding of this comes from an analysis of the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – a SWOT analysis. Sometimes a SWOT analysis is used to help clarify the current strategic situations. It is arguably more valuable when it is used as basis for projecting forward.

2.6 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Green Paper on National Strategic Planning (2009:11) indicates that each department, sphere of government and state agency should have planning capacity. The outcomes of their planning would feed into the development of the national strategic plan. The national strategic plan would, in turn, define high level outcomes and impact. Sector plans would take the national plan into account and define what role sectors would play in achieving the outcomes defined in the national plan. This, however, does not mean that the planning horizons of all sectors should be the same. The goal of strategic planning process should not be to make strategy but to build prepared minds that are capable of making sound strategic decisions.

Most organisations invest a significant time and effort in a formal, annual strategic planning process – but many executives see little benefit from the investment alluded (Kaplan, Beinhocker 2003:71).

According to Huff, Floyd, Sherman, Terjesen (2009:309) Strategic Planning is the process by which most organisations try to align vision, culture, people and structure with strategy. The planning process is typically organised around an annual cycle whereby managers reflect on their vision, analyse the business and corporate environment, formulate alternatives, select strategies, and then develop action plans to implement them. Although the range and amount of involvement vary, this kind of strategic planning often engages a very large number of managers and executives.

Those at the top of the organisation take responsibility by developing key premises and targets while the formulation and selection of strategies is negotiated in dialogue with the middle managers asserted (Smit 1999:17). Strategic planning plays a key role in achieving a balance between the short and the long term. An organisation which focuses strictly on the near term profitability is sailing a rudderless ship. An intense focus on the near term profitability also produces an aversion to risk that dooms business stagnation. However, overemphasis on the longer term profitability is just as inappropriate. Organisations that overextend themselves betting on the future may penalise near-term profitability and cash flow to such an extent as to make long term planning academic.

For strategic planning, to be effective, it must carefully consider the inputs into the system. These inputs include people, capital, managerial as well as technical knowledge and skills. In addition, various groups of people make demands on an organisation. Unfortunately many of the goals of these claimants (also Called 'stakeholders') are incongruent with one another, and it is the managers task to integrate these divergent needs and goals explains (Dyson,O'Brien 1998:70). According to Axson (2003:104) successful running of an organisation is a collaborative process. Nowhere is this more crucial than in planning. Unfortunately, for many organisations, the individual steps in the planning process are often completed in isolation from each other. This isolation may explain lack of creativity in many strategic plans. The smartest organisational heads are those who are able to identify and nurture a great idea.

Kenny (2005:68) explains that much strategic planning is undertaken, though without appropriate analysis. In some cases, teams do not do analysis at all. They simply develop strategy without taking the time to identify strategic factors – due to the fact

that this concept is unknown to many. Other planning teams do undertake analysis, but of the wrong type. Organisations dive into spread sheets of accounting results, analyse income statements and balance sheets, and get bogged down in finance and accounting without first getting a strategic perspective on the performance of their organisation or business unit. Strategic planning can in itself be equated to an effective tool which is well oiled to enable any organisation to achieve its goals. Many organisations ignore the valuability of strategic planning because of failure to recognise the positive influence it may have in the running of the organisation.

2.7 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Katsioloudes (2002:19) shows that the implementation of strategy is arguably the most important stage in the process for one reason: without successful Implementation, an organisation's strategy is a fantasy. One could very convincingly argue that implementation should not be a separate part of the process at all. Rather, it should be considered explicitly in the formulation stage so that any resulting strategy is in fact implementable.

Certo and Peter (1995:111) argues that the success of an organisation depends on how effectively it implements its strategies. Effective managers often work back and forth between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Many successful organisations do not plan in detail and then proceed to implement it according to the predefined schedule. Rather, strategies are often partially formulated, implemented, reformulated, and extended to rapidly capitalise on strategic opportunities.

Formulation and implementation influence each other and they often evolve together. Implementation of strategy draws heavily from leadership and administrative skills of a person or team. Top level executives in particular are responsible not only for the formulation of strategy but also for changing and implementing strategy. In order to be successful, these executives need to demonstrate strategic leadership.

There is a task that strategic leaders need to consider when implementing strategy, such as setting organisational direction to engender commitment, ensuring appropriate leadership at all management levels within an organisation to drive strategy, staffing the organisation and developing social capital, building and utilising core competencies, creating organisational alignment which includes the task of

building an organisational culture supportive of the strategy and the final task of leading change states (Louw and Venter 2008:368).

David (2007:306) indicates that strategy implementation directly affects the lives of plant managers, division managers, department managers, sales managers, product managers, project managers, personnel managers, staff managers, staff managers, supervisors and all employees. In some situations, individuals may not have participated in the strategy formulation process at all and may not appreciate, understand, or even accept the work and thought that went into strategy formulation. There may even be sluggishness or resistance on their part. Managers and employees who do not understand the business and are not committed to the business may attempt to sabotage strategy implementation efforts in the hope that the organisation will return to its old ways.

A good strategy always go with a good vision, a well-focused visionary and a team of committed executives who will perceive what the visionary is seeing and support the vision. It is not only good to have a well-structured strategy without an implementation plan and relevant resources to guide implement. It should not be realised during implementation that goals cannot be achieved due to lack of resources. As a result of an implementation plan that links to the strategy, implementation process becomes very crucial hence every team member must take responsibility of the roles that they play within the team.

2.8 STRATEGIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation is very crucial as it highlights organisational plight because the growth and stagnation of an organisation are easily measured and appropriate measures are taken to strengthen positive growth. Katsioloudes (2002:240) indicates that strategy evaluation is necessary for all sizes and kinds of organisations.

Strategy evaluation should initiate managerial questioning of expectations and assumptions, should trigger a review of objectives and values, and should stimulate creativity in generating alternatives and formulating criteria evaluation. Strategy evaluation activities should be performed on a continuous basis, rather than at the end of the year. Coulter (2010:236) states that the organisation's strategies might be evaluated by measuring goal attainment at the various levels. Strategy evaluation

might also include an assessment of certain performance trends and a comparison of the organisation to its competitors. The organisations strategic decision-makers need to know whether implemented strategies are working. If not, why not, and what changes might be necessary? The main difference between the strategy evaluation efforts of large and small organisations would be the extent of evaluation done.

Ehlers and Lazenby (2008:276) argue that strategic control provides feedback on the formulation and implementation phases of the strategic management process. Strategic control is, in essence, the phase of the strategic management process that concentrates on evaluating the chosen strategy in order to verify whether or not the results produced by the strategy are those intended.

Following strategy implementation, managers need to assess the degree to which strategies have been realised. This goes to the heart of strategic control. Essentially, it entails monitoring performance, keeping an eye on emerging developments and correcting unfavourable deviations from planned results. When an organisation or its subsidiaries consistently underperform, strategic interventions are required, the nature and intensity of which will depend on the causes of failure. Controllable deviations are those which lie within management's reach, while non-controllable variations denotes acts of nature or other causes that management can do little about, explains Louw and Venter (2008:238).

According to David (2007:338) strategy evaluation is necessary for all sizes and kinds of organisations. Strategy evaluation should initiate managerial questioning of expectations and assumptions, should trigger a review of objectives and values, and should stimulate creativity in generating alternatives and formulating criteria for evaluation. Regardless of the size of an organisation, a certain amount of management by wandering around at all levels is essential to effective strategy evaluation. Strategy evaluation activities should be performed on a continuous basis, rather than at the end of specified periods of time or just after problems occur.

Monitoring the development, implementation and evaluation process afford an organisation an opportunity to identify challenges on time and necessary steps are taken to address that.

2.9 ROLE PLAYERS IN THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

According to Coulter (2010:12), there is no doubt that an organisation's top managers play a significant role in the strategic management process. An organisation's top manager is the head who works with a management team that includes other executive or senior managers. Traditional descriptions of an organisational head is the chief strategist, structural architect and developer of an organisation's information/ control systems. The organisational head is also a key decision maker, visionary leader, political actor, monitor and interpreter of environmental changes and strategy designer.

No matter how the top management's job is described, be certain that from a perspective at the organisation's upper levels, it is like no other job in the organisation. Top managers are ultimately responsible for every decision and action of every organisational employee. All role players in an organisation should work as a team to ensure an open flow of communication on decision taken during meetings.

Faulker and Johnson (1996:243) highlight that within an organisation, the top team is the key forum for strategic dialogue. Top managers have in common, a high degree of discretion, that is, the ability to make strategic choices and decisions. It follows that both the performance and behaviour of individual top managers and the performance and behaviour of top teams has major implications for the strategic direction and ultimate success of the organisation.

Hitt, Ireland, Hoskisson (2005:375) show that it is through effective strategic leadership that organisations are able to successfully use the strategic management process. As strategic leaders, top level managers must guide the organisation in ways that result in the formation of a strategic intent and strategic mission. This guidance may lead to goals that stretch everyone in the organization to improve their performance.

Moreover, strategic leaders must facilitate the development of appropriate strategic actions and determine how to implement them. These actions, on the part of strategic leaders, culminate in strategic competitiveness and above-average returns.

Ehlers and Lazenby (2007:262) emphasise the role of policies in strategy implementation by stating that even though functional tactics provide guidance on the key routine activities that should be performed in the various functional areas, more detail is often required. Policies provide this detail. Policies can be defined as the specific guidelines, methods, procedures, rules, forms and administrative practices that direct the thinking, decisions and actions of managers and employees in strategy implementation. Policies inform employees on what is expected of them and clarify what can and cannot be done in pursuit of the short term objectives in the strategy implementation process.

Mintzberg (2003:345) argues that planners play key roles in planning namely, strategic programming and in using the resultant plans for purposes of communication and control. But many of the most important things planners do have little to do with planning or plans. Three roles seem key here:

- First, planners can find a role in finding strategies. This may seem curious, but if strategies really do emerge in organisations, planners can help identify patterns that are becoming strategies, so that considerations can be given in formalising them, that is, making them deliberate. Of course, finding the strategies of competitors for assessment and possible modified adoption is also important here.
- Second, planners play the role of analysts, carrying out *ad hoc* studies to feed into the black box of strategy making. Indeed, one could argue that this is what Michael Porter proposes with his emphasis on industry and competitive analysis. The *ad hoc* nature of such studies should, however, be emphasised because they feed into a strategy-making process that is itself irregular, proceeding on no schedule and following no standard sequence of steps and
- Third, the role of the planner is that of a catalyst. This refers not to the traditional role long promoted in the literature of selling formal planning as some kind of religion, but to encourage strategic thinking throughout the organisation.

Thompson (2006:748) states that basically, general managers co-ordinate the work of subordinates' specialist managers. They are responsible for the management of strategy implementation and, in certain cases, strategy formulation. The Chief Executive or Managing Director of the company, the overall strategic leader, is a General Manager. So too are the heads of divisions and business units, and the heads of operating units in a matrix structure.

Their task is to match the resources they control with their particular environment effectively. All indicated authors agree on the importance of every employee within an organisation. For the success of strategy there should be a buy-in from the majority of employees and stakeholders, support from all levels and understanding of key role players in making the strategy work. If strategy is left in the hands of few, the majority of employees will be left in the dark and there will not be any form of individual commitment from the whole organisation. As a result important decisions will not be communicated.

2.10 LINKING ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Many organisations interpret their performance away from the strategies outlined to achieve organisational performance. The way in which the strategy is managed will determine how an organisation will perform against the plan that is tabled. Unfortunately many organisations have not come to terms and realisation that strategic planning and implementation inform organisational performance which is regulated by how the whole strategy is managed which will include the strategic risks identified and managed within an organisation. Proper management of strategy in each department will ensure that government will achieve its goals.

Economic pressure has dealt a tough blow on many organisations and staff. Declining performance levels have led many down the much feared path of retrenchment and cost cutting in an attempt to stay afloat. With survival being the order of the day, sustaining and growing business seems to be more of a pipe-dream than possibility, especially as exhausted, stressed and anxious employees resist any additional pressure to perform (Haynes-Smart 2009:19).

Layton (2002:5) indicates that in organisational performance, an integrated and balanced individual performance management system can be used as a component of a corporate strategic management system. In itself it can become a “systematic, data-oriented approach to managing people at work that relies on positive reinforcement as the major way to maximise performance.” It is as such, a powerful tool to improve both individual and organisational performance.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Every organisation has a life that can be measured through managing its strategy, every strategy reflects the wellbeing of an organisation. If properly managed, it strengthens the heart muscle of an organisation which spills into the organisational performance. Organisations cannot survive the cruel competitive nature of profit and non-profit making operations of either production or service delivery.

Government has been pushed into looking at its way of serving citizens by way of managing the available resources in an accountable manner. Its entities are expected to follow suit in terms of monitoring and evaluating every level of organisational performance. This makes one to conclude that without proper strategic management, it will be difficult to gauge whether an organisation is growing, improving, expanding or even impacting the end users of its services or productions.

It is globally acknowledged that strategic management is an integral part of every organisation and should be given a place in every organisation to ensure that an organisation should survive the test of time. If proper attention is given to managing strategy, many organisations could have been saved from going through turbulence and unnecessary turmoil. Limpopo Department of Agriculture has established a unit with deals with the function of coordinating how the strategy is managed.

In the chapter that follows, the study focuses on research methodologies and the process involved in the collection and analysis of data which will help to assess how strategic management affects organisational performance in the Department of Agriculture.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers research methods and design, sampling, population of the study, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations in order to assess the impact of strategic management processes in achieving goals. The purpose of this study was to determine the understanding of strategy management within the Department of Agriculture. Questionnaires were used in this regard because of the literacy level of target group for the study.

3.2 Research Methodology

A research methodology is a description of the plan from which candidates who benefited from the research were selected. This plan is an explanation of what was done with the candidates, how the effects were measured, as well as how the results were analysed (Meyer 2001:33).

The main intention of research methodology is to present, explain and outline the methods used to collect data for the study. A field study was conducted in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture in Polokwane to establish the understanding of strategic management by the management team within the Department.

3.3 Choice and rationale of design

The definition of the research problems and requirements of the research objectives determined, to a large extent, the kind of research designs that is most suitable for the situation (Van Der Walt 1997:148). In this case, **qualitative method** was used.

This method seeks in-depth, open-ended responses. It is aimed at giving the respondents the latitude of generic approach to answering questions while on the other hand addressing all issues of concern. The research focused on investigating the contributions made by strategic management processes in achieving governmental goals and objectives.

Welman, Kruger, Mitchel (2005:188)The qualitative method is an “umbrella phrase “covering an array of interpretive techniques which seeks to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world”.

3.4 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, situated in Polokwane which is the capital city of the Limpopo Province. There are five District Offices: Sekhukhune District Office, Capricorn District Office, Vhembe District Office, Mopani District Office and Waterberg District Office. These offices report to the Head Office in Polokwane but are situated within the Limpopo Province.

The Department of Agriculture exist to promote economic growth and food security through sustainable agricultural and entrepreneurship development by delivering services which are aimed at achieving the goals as outlined in the strategic plan: sustainable agricultural natural resource base, improved agricultural production, safe and tradable animals animal, demand led training and research programmes, competitive agricultural sector and skilled and empowered farming community. However, the farming community and communities complained about the non-impact of service delivery from the department and an alarming number of food insecure household due to inadequate food security interventions.

3.5 Population

The population of this study comprised of all the 4355 officials of the Department. The study was conducted in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture whereby the Senior Management of the department was targeted because they are responsible for managing the departmental strategy.

3.6 Sample size and selection method

The subset of the whole population which is actually investigated by a researcher and whose characteristics will be generalised to the entire population is called the sample (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:84).The researcher targeted management team members who are on different levels within the managerial ranks in order to enable representation. 40 members of the management team were given structured interview questionnaires. The sample included:

HoD - Department of Agriculture, 4 General Managers, 15 Senior Managers and 20 Managers. As a result of the sampling frame not being enough, the researcher used the purposive or judgemental sampling within the non-probability sampling because

of the small number of the population. Managers who are in key components which are critical in decision making were also targeted for the study.

Kumar (1999:162) states that the primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study.

3.7 Data collection methods

The following data collection methods were used:

3.7.1 Structured interview questionnaires: The questionnaire was administered to departmental management group because they are familiar with the concepts and this minimised, if not totally dealt with, any form of misinterpretations.

3.7.2 Direct observations: Observation is the process of recognising and noting what is going on rather than asking for information (Van Der Walt 1997:152). In this case the researcher has observed the proceedings of strategy formulation/ planning as they are being unpacked in the departmental strategic planning session.

3.7.3 Documentations: A lot of valuable information is available through the departmental historical strategic management documents in the form of Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans and Annual Reports. The researcher has gone through historical data to see how things were done as compared to the current situation.

3.8 Data analysis methods

In this research, a qualitative approach was used because data was categorised into themes and sub-themes. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:38), in qualitative research words and sentences are used to qualify and record information about the world. After the collection of data, there was processing of gathered information that is verifications to enable analysis. The process of data analysis included the following:

3.8.1 Data preparation: Data collected was interrogated by adhering to clear decisions and rules. Data integrity was considered and inspected to check whether it is acceptable or not acceptable for data capturing.

3.8.2 Data analysis: Information was analysed manually through interpretation of responses from the respondents.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Considerations were given to adherence to all stipulated rules and regulations. The nature of information needed was not sensitive and therefore, no ethical consideration was required. Confidentiality was ensured by assuring participants that information will be confidential and the benefit of this research was explained to participants. All views and comments were kept private and personal particulars of the respondents would not be published in any way.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the processes that were followed in conducting the research. All techniques used in the research were outlined, data analysis and data processing were given, and ethical consideration was also a focus. The next chapter will deal with research findings and data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of results conducted in the Department of Agriculture in Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study is to present information on the importance of strategic management. This study used the structured interview questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. It was targeted at obtaining information from the management team of Limpopo Department of Agriculture which include observations of strategic planning processes and historical data in the form of strategic management documents that are found in the department.

The management team of Limpopo Department of Agriculture will, through answering the questionnaire outline the level at which the strategy is managed and the impact thereof. Questions were only directed to individuals within management who are exposed to dealing directly with strategic issues within the department.

4.2 Research Findings

The study used a structured interview questionnaire which was distributed to 40 members of the management team which comprised of 17 Managers, 10 Senior Managers, 4 General Managers and 1 Head of Department and 10 questionnaires were never returned. The purpose was to assess the impact of strategic management as a tool to enhance service delivery and in achieving the purpose, the structured interview questionnaire was constructed to investigate, first the demographic profile of the respondents, challenges in developing, implementing and evaluation of strategy, management of strategy, role of strategy and mechanisms of communicating departmental strategy. Results from the structured interview questionnaire unfolded as follows:

4.2.1 Demographics Profile of the respondents

In an attempt to determine the demographic profile of the respondents the researcher probed the following variables: Gender, Age category, Educational background, Experience in service and programmes within the department.

4.2.1.1 Gender

Gender was probed in order to determine how many females and males participated in the study:

Table 1: Gender of respondents

M	F
26	5

The picture painted in the above table indicates the environment within the Limpopo Department of Agriculture management team being dominated by male employees as opposed to female employees. This shows that the department is facing the challenge of gender equity. The department is obviously not meeting its employment equity obligations as it shows that not many female employees are part of the management team. This situation promotes agriculture as the male friendly environment as it accommodates mostly males. Most of the females represented here are from the administrative support functions whereas the males employees forms the core part of the agricultural support.

4.2.1.2 Age Category

Age category was probed to determine the age composition of the management team and its plan:

Table 2: Age group of respondents

<30	31– 40	41-50	>50
0	7	11	13

There are more officials above the age of 50 who occupy the management levels. This shows that the composition of the agricultural management has shortage of younger generation as part of its management. Most of the members of management team, especially in areas where there are critical skills shortages and there are no processes in place for skills transfer, are already towards retirement which can create a challenge for the department. Currently it creates a positive stable environment in the sense that most employees are settled in terms of career advancement and the department will not experience much of staff turnover.

4.2.1.3 Educational Level

Educational level was probed to determine the literacy levels of the management team:

Table 3: Educational level of respondents

Gr 12	Coll/Tech Diploma	University Degree/HD	Master	PHD
1	1	13	15	1

A fair number, in the 29 members of management team are highly literate when one considers the above formal educational qualifications. This contributes positively to management efforts because a level of understanding is attainable. This adds value to issues of policy interpretations, understanding of conditions of employment and understanding of the work environment. Educational levels of the management team reflect the department as an organisation whose employees are studious as they continuously grow in learning.

4.2.1.4 Occupational Category

Occupational category was probed to differentiate between the middle management and senior management participating in the study:

Table 4: Occupational category of respondents

Senior Management Services	Middle Management Services
15	16

The senior management team of Limpopo Department of Agriculture is comprised of the HoD, Senior General Managers (1), General Managers (7) and Senior Managers (34) who participated in the study. The HoD is currently acting, some of the senior management posts are vacant and as a result, the researcher had to sample. Middle managers were also considered for the study because some of them have been acting as senior managers and some hold key positions that are always included in the planning process hence the reflection of the table above.

4.2.1.5 Years of experience

This was probed to determine the years of experience within the management team:

Table 5: Years of experience of respondents

1-3	4-7	8-12	13+
2	4	5	20

Majority of officials at management level have a long service record within the department, with 20 having more than 13+ experience. This can contribute both positively and negatively, to the department. Positively, these are officials who are the cream of the department, who have the institutional memory regarding the department and can rescue the department in times of crises. Negatively, these ones can resist change and deny the department an opportunity to move forward because they do not support and approve new ways of doing things. As a result of the long-time serving employees, new ones can battle with acceptance because they might not be given an opportunity to implement new skills and ideas they will be frustrated and the department might end up losing them.

4.2.1.6 Programme which officials belong to.

This was probed to determine the programme location of the participants for the purpose of study:

Table 6: Programme which officials belong to:

Admin	Sustainable Resource Management	Farmer Settlement	Veterinary	Research	Agribusiness	Training
9	5	12	1	0	2	2

Farmer settlement programme is the biggest programme which is controlled by four General Managers. It has, within it, Extension and Advisory services which operates directly in the districts where service delivery happens. Administration also had lot of participants because it serves as a support to the core business of the department. This is the reason why it is fairly huge in number. The researcher could not get back the questionnaires that were distributed in Research because of a number of vacant post within the programme.

4.3 Challenges in developing, implementing and evaluating strategy

The researcher wanted to establish an understanding on the processes of developing, implementing and evaluating strategy, whether or not there is a process of environmental scanning done, steps undertaken by the department during implementation and monitoring of strategy to assess the impact, considerations of employee inputs in strategic planning, who gets involved and participate in the strategic planning process and whether or not decisions taken at the strategic planning sessions are cascaded down to the whole department.

4.3.1 Environmental scanning process conducted before engaging in strategic planning to ensure relevancy and alignment of services provided

The researcher probed this variable in order to establish if there are challenges during the processes followed when developing, implementing and evaluating strategy and identify the activities which happen during the process.

Table:7 Environmental scanning before engaging in strategic planning processes:

Yes	No
22	9

The table above illustrates a total of 22 respondents which indicates that the environmental scanning exercise is done by the department before engaging in strategic planning session. This exercise is done by different programmes regarding their environment where they have to obtain relevant information that will guide decision making. 9 respondents indicated that the department does not engage in environmental scanning because they have never been part of the exercises.

Normally, this is also done for compliance purposes because information is needed as part of the business plans for each directorate. Information is supposed to be used to make critical decisions which will help the department render relevant services and operate normally within the changing times and conditions

4.3.2 Steps undertaken by the department during implementation and monitoring of strategy to assess the impact of services rendered

This variable was probed to establish how the process of implementing and monitoring of strategy unfold and how assessment of impact of services rendered.

Table 8: Steps taken by the Department during implementation and monitoring of strategy

Yes	No
11	19

As indicated in the above table, 19 respondents indicated that currently, the department does not have a system in place to monitor the impact of service delivery. The only system in place is the reporting system which is carried out quarterly and annually to implement the strategy. Oversight bodies are also seen as an instrument to monitor implementation of the strategy.

However, 11 officials felt that the impact is not being measured. It is only the output which is measured through the annual performance plans. These officials feel that the new branch of strategic management will be able to deal with challenges of monitoring.

4.3.3 Considerations of employee inputs in strategic planning

Respondents were expected to show if their inputs were taken into consideration during the strategic planning process

Table 9: Considerations of employee inputs in strategic planning:

Yes	No
24	6

The above table shows that 24 respondents say that their inputs are considered during the planning sessions because most of them contribute through the branches and sub-branches which are the channels available within the department to escalate issues. 6 officials indicated that their contributions get lost in the process because the process is done for compliance and in most cases, only top management contributions are considered and recorded for decision making. Some managers felt that they are denied an opportunity to be part of the strategic planning because not all managers form part of the proceedings.

4.3.4 Involvement and participation in the strategic planning process

Participants had to indicate if they are directly involved and how far their participation is in the planning processes

Table 10: Involvement and participation in the strategic planning process

Yes	No
25	6

On the level of managers, some of them are directly involved in the planning process hence the majority of 25 respondents agree to have been involved during the strategic planning session.

To some, the involvement is limited to their programmes and there is not enough time to interrogate issues and bring new issues on the table because of compliance issues. Officials on the lower level felt that they are denied an opportunity to be part of this because not all managers form part of the proceedings and lower level staff do not have an idea of what has transpired in these sessions hence 6 respondents indicated that they are not part of the proceedings.

4.3.5 Cascading of decisions taken at the strategic planning sessions to all employees.

The researcher probed this variable to establish how decisions taken at the strategic planning are cascaded down to the lower levels within the department.

Table 11: Cascading of decisions taken at the strategic planning session

Yes	No
21	10

The above table show that 21 respondents say that information is cascaded downwards after the strategic planning session through the strategic planning documents that are available within the departments and also through meetings that are held in sub-branches because the senior managers are responsible for that. They indicated that Senior Managers are supposed to go back to the branches and come up with plans on how they are going to achieve the outputs set before them. They also brought up the issue of performance management whereby individuals are expected to align their performance contract with information which comes from strategic planning sessions. However, 10 respondents said that this is not done because all strategic documents end up with the management team and not all members of management take the responsibility of giving feedback from the strategic planning sessions.

4.4 Management of strategy

The researcher wanted to probe how the department manages its departmental strategy by determining if there are committees in place to monitor and evaluate implementation of strategy, the roles of this committees, whether or not there are measures/steps taken by management to ensure maximum performance of programmes, types of measures taken, the relevance of services offered to all clients, the role of strategic management as a unit, how the departmental strategy is managed, linking of performance management development system with organisational performance.

4.4.1 Committees monitoring implementation of strategy

This variable was probed to determine the existence of committees that are in place to help management in monitoring the implementation of strategy.

Table 12: Committees monitoring the implementation of strategy

Yes	No
18	11

The above table indicates that the availability of committees to implement strategy is not well known because only 18 respondents indicated that the HOD/GM's management meetings are seen as one committee that monitors implementation of strategy at the highest level. At this level, the HoD will also be involved in the issue if underperformance is identified. Once the issue is discussed at this level, no escalation can take place except that the concerned General Manager should release pressure down to his people by attending to the bottle necks for smooth flow of service delivery. Given the information above, 11 respondents highlighted that they did not have knowledge of these committees because the strategic planning unit plays the role of strategy management.

In most cases, when consolidated information reaches this level, it will be too late to take action because this is the top structure of the organisation. It is necessary to establish some level before this one so that remedial action can be taken in time to save the situation.

4.4.2 Role which is played by committees during the monitoring

As table 12 gave an indication of the availability of such committees, the researcher wanted to establish the roles of these committees.

Table 13: Role played by committees during monitoring

Yes	No
18	13

A total number of 18 respondents implied that the committee is responsible for monitoring of the Annual Performance Plan (APP), consolidations of reports, gathering means of verifications, compliance in terms of submission dates, doing site visit on projects and requesting the reasons for variance in terms of performance for mitigation purposes. In most cases, interventions happen when a flag is raised by external stakeholders through queries. 13 respondents said that top management team is responsible for playing the role of performance monitoring.

4.4.3 Measures/steps taken by management to ensure maximum performance of programmes

Organisational performance is one of the key managerial roles which has to be highly monitored by management. The researcher probed this variable in order to determine the steps taken by management to ensure maximum performance.

Table 14: Measures taken by management to ensure maximum performance

Yes	No
23	8

As a result of regular management meetings, 23 respondents agreed that measures are taken by management through holding the programme managers accountable for under performance.

However, the system is not practically effective in a way that some of the programmes are rewarded through the performance management system because implementation of the system does not properly align with organisational performance whereby the process can be taken to individual level. Quarterly reports are used to flag underperformance that necessitated remedial action to be taken, whereas 8 respondents showed that it is not clear on how much is done by management to ensure maximum performance because disciplinary actions are not taken against poor performance.

4.4.4 Types of measures/steps taken to ensure maximum performance of programmes within the department

This variable was probed to establish the types of steps taken by management in support of table 13 to ensure that there is commitment to the plans on the table because the performance of programmes within the department ensures organisational performance.

Table 15: Types of measures taken to ensure maximum performance

Yes	No
23	8

The table above presents that a total of 23 respondents indicated that monitoring of performance through reporting is done continuously. Individual performance agreements also help in terms of accountability. Monitoring and evaluation unit also compare the actual performance with the means of verification submitted. Budgets are allocated to ensure that service delivery happens. However, 8 respondents showed that not much is done during the course of the quarter to monitor performance. It is only at the end of the quarter when reporting takes place which allows to pick up underperformance which sometimes affects planned performance throughout the whole year.

4.4.5 Relevance of the services offered to all clients

The researcher wanted to probe if the department takes initiatives in determining the relevance of services offered by the department. This variable was necessary because people live in evolving societies whereby ways of doing things change rapidly. It is, therefore, important to establish the relevance of services rendered.

The department ensures relevance of services by consultations with farmers, communities and relevant stakeholders. Suggestion boxes are used to gather information, client contact forms are used and client services surveys are conducted. The Member of the Executive Council also does *Imbizos* to establish the need of the farming community.

4.4.6 Strategic management unit as a tool to drive service delivery

The researcher probed this variable in order to establish whether or not the department is informed as far as the role of the strategic management unit is concerned, whether or not management aware that the unit can be used to drive service delivery.

Table 16: Strategic management as a tool to drive service delivery

Yes	No
19	12

The strategic management unit has been seen mostly as an administrative function, hence 19 respondents believe that the role of strategic management is to coordinate, consolidate, quality assures information for purposes of alignment and compliance with oversight bodies hence it is seen as tool to enhance service delivery. No individual has mentioned the unit as a tool to give clear strategic direction in the organisations. It seems as if the unit has been reduced to a mere administrative function which is pure support. Whenever there are reports needed by oversight bodies the unit has to, in most cases coordinate collection of information for consolidation and submissions. A total of 12 respondents indicated that the unit is used as a tool in that it provides guidance in terms of strategic matters and gives guidance on strategic goals.

4.4.7 Role played by strategic management unit

The respondents were expected to give their understanding on what the unit is currently doing in order to determine whether the unit is fully utilised or not.

The role of strategic management branch is to guide programmes on information that is needed, consolidate strategic documents and reports, coordinate strategic planning sessions, do monitoring and evaluation and ensure that the department complies with oversight bodies. Respondents also indicated that the branch should interrogate departmental performance and make the necessary follow ups where performance is unacceptable.

4.4.8 Management of the departmental strategy

The respondents, as part of the management team, were expected to highlight the role they are playing in managing departmental strategy and show different roles played during management of strategy.

Table 17: Management of the departmental strategy

Yes	No
22	9

The table above illustrate that 22 respondents indicated that the strategic management unit is responsible for the management of strategy through development of plans, monitoring the implementations through the quarterly reports and evaluation of strategy through Annual Report (AR). The management of strategy is never seen as a concerted effort of every person who is a member of the management team. The executive management is seen as the sole committee that should plan, make decisions and drive the strategy since they are at the upper echelon of the organisation. A total number of 9 respondents said that they were not sure as to how the departmental strategy is managed.

4.4.9 The results of Performance Management and Development System aligning to organisational performance

The researcher wanted to establish how management within the department approaches individual performance against organisational performance.

Table 18: The results of Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) aligning to organisational performance

Yes	No
15	16

Officials in the Department seem to be divided in this area because 15 respondents said yes and the other 16 said no. The reason was that there are no guidelines which show a clear linkage because the exercises are done as compliance to Office of the Premier requirements and no interpretations of the results are discussed anywhere afterwards. The exercise of interpreting individual PMDS has not been done and hence organisational performance is interpreted from a totally different angle.

The results of the exercise that is conducted by the PMDS office in evaluating organisational performance are not discussed to inform future plans and decisions. The individual performance rewards should be informed by this exercise after thorough considerations.

4.4.10 The linking of Performance Management and Development System results with organisational performance

This variable was probed to establish if there is a link between individual performance and organisational performance because, in most cases, majority of individuals are rewarded for their performance whereas the overall departmental performance gives a different picture.

Table 19: Linking of Performance Management and Development System's results with organisational performance

Yes	No
15	16

The officials seemed to be divided on the linkage as 15 respondents believe that they are linked through the individual performance agreements because they should align to the APP. They believe that if individuals do not perform then it affects the department and if they perform the department performs. However, they think the two should be managed from the same branch because they will be able to talk the same language. Currently, the organisational performance is not being given the attention it deserves because some of the branches which are supposed to pioneer organisational performance do not play their role.

Given the above information 16 respondents indicated that they are not linked because even in the branches where performance is compromised, one will still find officials who are positively rewarded for their performance.

4.5 The role of strategy in achieving government goals

The researcher wanted to probe if the department normally engages in evaluation exercises to assess the impact of services offered to clients, if the processes which are being followed during the evaluations and different role players during the evaluation process, if managers are aware of the performance measures in their respective units, what their role is in contributing to organisational performance, if the departmental goals are aligned to the strategy, if there is a link between achievement of goals and departmental strategy, if the department engages in customer satisfaction surveys to ascertain relevancy of services rendered. The following are the results of the probe:

4.5.1 An exercise of reviewing or evaluating strategy by the department

This variable was probed to determine if the department engages in exercises of strategy reviewing and evaluation in order to determine which goals have been achieved.

Table 20: Reviewing or evaluating of strategy

Yes	No
23	8

More officials agree that the department engages in an exercise to review or evaluate strategy though not in a formal way because there are no systems in place to do this. Evaluating strategy is an exercise that has to do more with assessing the impact and can only be done at the end of the term which that strategy was operating under and it has never happened. Reviewing strategy can happen maybe mid the 5 year period which the strategy has to be implemented and the department has never conducted the exercise.

A total of 23 respondents said the review happens in the form of reporting whereas 8 respondents showed that because there are no systems in place to review and evaluate, the strategy is not being evaluated.

4.5.2 Process followed in strategy review exercise

The researcher wanted to probe the process that is followed by the department in reviewing strategy and what normally happens after the strategy is reviewed.

Table 21: Process followed in strategy review exercise

Yes	No
23	8

The above table depicts that 23 respondents expressed that the exercise of reviewing or evaluating strategy is done through meetings and workshops arranged by strategic planning unit.

It is reviewed when branches are invited to put their contribution together and managers are expected to do presentations of what they will be doing throughout the year. The reports of what happened throughout the year are used to give a reflection of what needs to be changed and what needs to be improved. A total of 8 respondents felt that there are no processes in place to guide the activities of the exercise.

4.5.3 Awareness of the performance measures in each directorate

The respondents were required to give information on what is expected from them in terms of deliverables and the performance measures used to measure performance.

Table 22: Awareness of performance measures in each directorate

Yes	No
30	1

Members of the management team are aware of the performance measures within their directorate, which is a positive contribution towards working to achieve that which they are expected to achieve. As shown in the table above, a total of 30 respondents know what is expected of them. It is the responsibility of every manager to understand the environment in which they are working and be able to measure and interpret performance in accordance with the set standards so as not to compromise quality. Only 1 respondent indicated that they are not aware and they are not even sure of what the performance measures are.

4.5.4 Role played by management in contributing to performance

The researcher probed this variable to determine the role played by management in contributing to performance.

Table 23: Role played by management in contributing to performance

Yes	No
28	3

A total of 28 respondents indicated that performance measures give a clear direction in terms of attaining set objectives and they enable every programme to be focused on achieving its targets. They also pointed out the importance of performance measures in managing performance because people know what is expected of them through their performance agreements.

Performance measures also strengthen monitoring and evaluation tools because it becomes easier to measure what has been achieved whereas 3 respondents seemed unsure of the role played by management.

4.5.5 Aligning departmental goals to strategy

This variable was probed to determine the extent to which management is aware of the alignment of departmental goals to strategy

Table 24: Aligning departmental goals to strategy

Yes	No
28	3

Due to the frameworks and guidelines regulated by National Treasury in terms of alignments, majority (28) of respondents cited that the strategic management team's role is to coordinate compliance issues, ensure that departmental documents aligns with relevant strategies, monitor performance by checking actual performance against the targeted one through validating means of verification, arrange meetings and workshops to help branches through planning their performance, provide guidance and facilitate the development of strategic documents, do quality control of all strategic documents. Only 3 respondents were not sure of the alignment.

4.5.6 A link between achievement of goals and departmental strategy

The respondents were expected to indicate the linkage between goals achieved by the department and the existing strategy

Table 25: A link between achievement of goals and departmental strategy

Yes	No
21	10

Most of the officials (21) stated that goal achievement is fully linked to departmental strategy through strategic goals that have been set as per the table above. The strategic goals are cascaded into strategic objectives that are easily measurable through outcomes, though in the strategic documents more emphasis is on output.

If there is proper alignment of all this activities from key result area to strategic goals then the realisation of achievement of departmental strategy is a sure case. A total number of 10 respondents indicate that there is a lot of refinement needed because the linkage is not clear.

4.5.7 Customer satisfaction engagements in order to ascertain relevance of the services provided to clients

The researcher wanted to establish if there are activities which the department engages upon to determine the relevance of the services rendered to its clients.

Table 26: Customer satisfaction engagements to ascertain relevance of services

Yes	No
18	13

All officials agree that there has never been a formal departmental customer service survey except the one that has recently been introduced through the service delivery unit and is currently running. However, 18 respondents stated that the department ascertains services provided to clients through feedback sessions in the form of customer consultations, *Imbizos*, feedback through established reporting systems, client contact forms and the green books which have been introduced to be signed by both the farmer and the advisor.

4.6 The mechanisms of communicating departmental strategies

The researcher wanted to probe the availability of mechanisms used within the department to communicate departmental strategy, their strength and effectiveness, whether or not they are reaching the target groups, if there can be measures in place to strengthen them more should there be a need as well as the roles played by different stakeholders in effecting communications.

4.6.1 Mechanism used to communicate departmental strategy

The researcher probed this variable to establish how the departmental strategy is communicated and whether or not there are mechanisms in place to do that.

Table 27: Mechanisms used to communicate departmental strategy

Yes	No
31	0

Mechanisms are in place but not fully utilised, agreed all respondents. Management structures are one area that can yield better results if used fully. Printed copies of written strategies are available on request. Many officials are not reached in terms of communicating strategy to their understanding.

In most cases, meetings are held but the approach in those meetings is not holistic to enable one to understand the direction of the department. All of the respondents said that mechanisms are in place but a lot needs to be done to support them.

4.6.2 Which are the mechanisms in place?

The respondents were expected to indicate the types of mechanisms used as a follow-up for table 27 above.

Table 28: Mechanisms in place

Yes	No
31	0

The above table illustrates that 31 respondents indicated that the mechanisms available to communicate departmental strategies are through the established communications unit which publish the strategic documents (Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Quarterly reports, Annual Reports, Budget Speech, citizen's report) to the public domain. The management structure is also responsible, meetings are held within different branches and also strategic planning sessions are held.

4.6.3 Effectiveness of the communication mechanisms

The researcher wanted to establish the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place by probing this variable

Table 29: Effectiveness of the mechanisms

Yes	No
17	14

There seemed to be a balance of responses on the effectiveness of the mechanisms as indicated on the table because 17 respondents said that the mechanisms are working although not as expected because information is readily available to anyone who is interested in agricultural related issues.

The remaining respondents (14) pointed out that the mechanisms are there, systems are established but they are not utilised. Some of the mechanisms create narrow-mindedness on officials because whenever they get hold of these materials, they only concentrate on their smaller part, which is their responsibility and forget about the bigger picture. In more than many ways the lower level staff members are left in the dark.

4.6.4 The extent of the effectiveness of the mechanisms

The researcher probed this variable to establish the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place

Table 30: The extent of the effectiveness of the mechanisms

Yes	No
16	15

According to the respondents, 16 stated that it is averagely effective because the printed documents are widely available to those who are interested, regular HoD/General Managers meetings keeps them updated so that they can update their staff. The challenge comes when officials do not have a culture of reading. 15 respondents outlined that the level of effectiveness is below average because most of the officials within the department are field workers who do not prefer to read these available documents.

4.6.5 Communication of departmental strategy to all employees

This variable was probed to establish if the departmental strategy is communicated to all employees within the department in a formal way to cover all different level of the department.

Table 31: Communication of departmental strategy to all employees

Yes	No
19	12

The department has lower level staff members who need to be workshopped on issues of understanding strategy to their level. As a result, 12 respondents indicated that the strategy is not communicated to all individuals because communication flows through meetings which are not held regularly and information loses its meaning along the way. In most cases, those who are not part of the management and those who do not attend the planning sessions struggle on their own to interpret the published documents. As one goes down, the lower level staff members are the ones suffering most. Not enough time is allocated to those who are illiterate so that they will also be taken on board. On this note, 19 feel that information is available and people can read on their own.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with analysis of research findings and interpretation thereof. Information was gathered in the form of questionnaires distributed, Biographical information of the respondents was analysed and also information regarding the understanding of strategic management by the management team was solicited. The next chapter outlines the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the summary of information gathered through the research process and draws conclusions from the research findings and results. Through the analysis and interrogation of the research information, a number of recommendations were highlighted in order to bring a balance to the identified gaps. This recommendations may be applied in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture or any other department which might find them relevant to their environment. Conclusions are also outlined as per the gaps identified during the research process. There are five chapters which aim at reaching the ultimate goal of the research and the research questions asked.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher developed the research chapters as follows in order to achieve the research objectives:

Chapter one: The chapter provided the introduction and background of the research, problem statement, the motivation and significance of study. It also included the aims and the objectives, ethical considerations and definition of concepts used to ensure understanding and clarification of any ambiguity in the research process. The chapter also provided a guideline on how the research project is going to be carried out.

Chapter Two: The chapter focused on literature review where information was gathered from different sources in the form of books, magazines, journals, articles, Planning Policy documents with the purpose of highlighting what has been done regarding the study. This chapter showed the importance of strategic management in organisations and why proper understanding of this role can build and strengthen an organisation. The chapter also showed the interdependency between strategic planning, strategic implementation and strategic monitoring and evaluation with the whole strategic management framework. A linkage between strategic management and organisational performance was also highlighted in the study. Different role players within strategic management are also outlined.

The chapter has shown how important it is for the management team within an organisation to understand strategy, take responsibility of implementing the strategy and the importance of visionary leadership in driving the strategy.

Role players can make a difference in taking up the responsibility of cascading the strategy and to ensure that everyone is on board and knows what is expected from them. This helps every individual in an organisation to be a proud member of the organisation and do their part in ensuring that the organisation reaches its goals.

The chapter also showed how organisational performance is directly linked to strategic management. Once the strategy is properly managed it automatically affects performance because all processes will be done properly and in a transparent manner where individuals will account for their responsibilities.

Chapter 3: This chapter covered the research methods and design, sampling methods, methods of collecting data, population of the study, data collection and analysis and reasons why these methods were used. Discussions on how the questionnaire was used to gather information that will help in the research are included. The research reliability and validity, ethical considerations were also outlined. Information on how the questionnaire was constructed and distributed is also included. The participants found it easier to deal with the questionnaire because they are a team of management.

Chapter 4: This chapter focused on the research findings, analysis and interpretations of the data collected. Interpretation of data was made through analysis of the information supplied through answering questions from the questionnaire. The answers were sorted out according to similar answers and individuals who shared the same sentiments.

The researcher had an opportunity to reflect on the views, opinions, perceptions and experiences with regard to how the strategy is managed within the organisation, their understanding of strategic management, what their role is, whether or not measures are taken within the department to deal with anything that hampers the implementation of strategy, whether the departmental strategy cascaded down to all employees within the department or not. The findings indicated that strategy management is regarded as the role of a unit called strategic management within the department.

When one talks about strategic management, to many people it means information gathering, consolidations and submission to relevant bodies for compliance. Members of the management team are not on the same page regarding what is this strategic management and how can it help improve organisational performance.

Chapter 5: This chapter dealt with the summary, recommendations and conclusion based on the findings and interpretation of collected data. After analysis of the collected data, recommendations were made which recommend change on strategic management the Limpopo Department of Agriculture.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the research was to investigate the process of strategic management within the Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo Province of South Africa and prioritise the implementation of a developed strategy, evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency. Considering the results of the research findings, the researcher made the following recommendations to the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. The recommendations were guided by the objectives the researcher was trying to achieve through the study.

5.3.1 The development, implementation and evaluation of strategy

Since implementation of strategy happens across all levels of the department to effect service delivery, emphasis should also be put also on the development and evaluation process for better understanding across different levels. In most cases, in Limpopo Department of Agriculture, officials hear that management has gone for strategy development and when they come back, information is not cascaded down as to what transpired in the meeting. They carry out their activities without knowing that they are part of strategy implementation. They will only know when they are given performance rewards that they have contributed positively towards achieving the goal.

It is, therefore, recommended that session or thorough workshops on strategic management be held so that officials can have an understanding of what is happening. As much as information is collected from the top, there is a need for it to be gathered from the bottom, consolidation of such information will lead to better plans and informed decisions in planning.

Local municipalities and districts should be targeted in bringing lower level staff on board in order to understand the plans of the department.

5.3.2 Management of strategy in the department

It is indicated that the executive management is responsible for managing strategy in that most of the information is shared in their meetings which, in most cases, does not cascade down to lower levels. Information on organisational performance is not formally interrogated by all levels of management because there are no committees where this exercise is happening. Middle and Senior managers do not view themselves as managers of strategy because the function has been pushed up to only the Executive managers.

It is, therefore, recommended that all layers of management should be initiated into managing strategy in their area of responsibility by ensuring that whatever is done in their environment, contribute positively in achievement of departmental strategy. There should be a performance monitoring committee where they should be part of, be allowed to interrogate departmental performance in terms of how they can differently contribute. The executive management team should play a role of decision making in terms of the direction of the department in the fulfilment of strategy.

It is also recommended that careful considerations should be given to the importance of the results of departmental performance evaluation because this exercise should inform performance rewards. Individuals within branches must be rewarded according to the performance of their branches, where there was no performance there must not be any rewards given.

The strategic management team should play the role of gathering relevant information for the purpose of decision making. The team should act as an overseer of departmental performance in order to highlight necessary and unnecessary deviations in strategy. Due to factors which negatively influence the agricultural sector and demands for rural developments, the team should also focus on research that will help the department remain relevant in offering services to communities.

5.3.3 The role of strategy in achieving governmental goals

The research indicated that the department engages in an exercise to review or evaluate strategy though not formally because it happens through reporting processes. Reporting is done by strategic management team because they consolidate, quality assure information for submissions to oversight bodies. Managers also indicated that the departmental strategy is linked to the achievement of strategic goals that are cascaded to strategic objectives.

It is, therefore, recommended that the department should formalise the review of the strategy by ensuring that mid-term and 5 year term strategy review exercises are conducted. Evaluation of strategy will highlight the relevance of services offered by the department and an impact caused by those services to communities. Reviewing exercise will enable the department to adjust its plans in case there is misalignment, strengthen its services that are achieving government goals of contributing to a better life for all. The reviewing exercise should be done by independent people who will be bold to highlight where there are failures and shortcomings.

5.3.4 Mechanism of communicating strategy within the department

It is indicated that there are mechanisms in place but they are not fully utilised. Documents which contain strategy are published and distributed to different points where they can be accessible. Employees do not normally consider this information as most of them do not have knowledge of the strategy. It is recommended that every sub-branch within the department should have its strategy sessions which feeds into the main strategy or flows directly from the strategy for the purpose of information dissemination and empowerment of teams to perform to their best ability. Management structures should be activated in the form of regular meetings at different levels and feed back on the decisions that are taken. This will help even employees who do not have the culture of reading.

Every employee within the department should be capacitated to know what the department wants to achieve. This will enable them to commit themselves to what is being done.

The strategic management unit should hold sessions from the lowest levels to the highest using both upward and downward approaches in order to bring everyone on board. The culture of knowing and being familiar with the strategy, mission, vision and values of the department should be inculcated within the ranks to ensure that employees are contributing towards achievement of departmental goals. This will help programmes focus on what matters in terms of service delivery. A positive organisational culture will also be reinforced by this endeavour.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, strategic management can be used as a tool to enhance service delivery within the department. All members of the management team within the department needs to know and understand that they are the drivers of strategy. Strategic management function should not be limited to administration where only consolidations, compliance, data collection for reports, quality assurance of information and meeting deadlines for submission of documents as this is paralysing the function.

The strategic management function needs to be driven from the HoD's office as this will enable the HoD, as a visionary, to be on top of his/her game because when planning, monitoring and evaluation are up to scratch, all other functions will find their places within the jigsaw puzzle.

The above mentioned recommendations do not necessarily address the challenges of strategic management function within the department. The Department can, however, act on them as a way of enhancing service delivery.

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ANNEXURE A

RESEARCH TOPIC: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL TO ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY (A CASE STUDY OF LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE)

General information

Confidentiality

You have been selected to take part in this survey for strategic management that is conducted by **Ramoshaba MA**. The information that you supply will be treated in the strictest confidence and anonymously, and will be used for the sole purpose of the survey only.

Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to get your opinion regarding the impact of strategic management as a service delivery tool within the department. The results of this survey will help the department to improve the usage of strategic management as a tool to enhance service delivery.

Instructions

Please indicate your answer by ticking in the appropriate block

1. Demographic profile of respondents

1.1 Gender

1. M 2. F

1.2 Age category

1. <input type="checkbox"/>	<30	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	31 -40	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	41 -50	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	>50
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1.3 Educational level

1. Gr 12 2. Coll/Tech Diploma 3. University Degr/HD 4. Master 5. PHD

1.4 Occupational category

1. SMS 2. MMS

1.5 Years of experience in agriculture

1. 2. 3. 4.

1.6 Which programme do you belong to

1.	Admin	2.	SRM	3.	Farmer Settlement	4.	Veterinary	5.	Research
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6.	Agribusiness	7.	Structured Training
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2. Challenges in developing, implementing and evaluating strategy

2.1 Does the department do environmental scanning before engaging in strategic planning to ensure relevancy and alignment of services provided?

1. 2.

2.2 Which steps does the department takes during implementation and monitoring of strategy to assess the impact of services rendered?

2.3 During strategic planning, are your contributions considered to add value to the process?

2.4 How far do you get involved in participating in the strategic planning process?

2.5 Are decisions taken at the strategic planning sessions cascaded down to all employees?

1. 2.

2.6 How is it done?

2.7 How is information from research, GIS and Service delivery used as part of an overview to the introduction of strategy formulation?

3. Management of strategy

3.1 Are there established committees within the department which monitors implementation of strategy?

1. Yes 2. No

3.2 Which role do they play during the monitoring?

3.3 Does management takes measures/ steps to ensure maximum performance of programmes within the department?

1. Yes 2. No

3.4 How?

3.5 How does the department ascertain relevancy of the services offered to all clients?

3.6 Is strategic management unit currently used as a tool to drive service delivery?

1. Yes 2. No

3.7 Which role is it playing?

3.8 How is the departmental strategy managed?

3.9 Does the results of employee performance management and development system directly communicate with organisational performance?

1. Yes 2. No

3.9 How are they linked?

4. The role of strategy in achieving government goals

4.1 Does the department often engage in the exercise of reviewing or evaluating strategy?

1. Yes 2. No

4.2 How is the exercise conducted?

4.3 Are you aware of the performance measures in place for your directorate?

1. Yes 2. No

4.4 Which role are they playing in contributing to performance?

4.5 What are the roles played by strategic management team in aligning strategy to the departmental goals?

4.6 During monitoring of strategy, is there a link between the departmental strategy and achievement of goals?

1. Yes 2. No

4.7 How does the department approach customer satisfaction engagements in order to ascertain the services provided to clients?

5. The mechanism of communicating departmental strategies

5.1 Does the department have a mechanism to communicate departmental strategies?

1. Yes 2. No

5.2 Which are the mechanisms in place?

5.3 Are you of the opinion that such mechanisms are effective?

1. Yes 2. No

5.4 To what extent are they effective?

5.5 Are you of the opinion that your departmental strategy is communicated to all in the organisation?

1. Yes 2. No