Exercise Guidance:
Creating a National Countering Transnational Organized Crime Strategy
Strategic Concept
The following pages serve as a guide for developing your National Countering Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC) strategy.

It is important to understand that there are no universally agreed upon rules or methods for writing any strategy—let alone a CTOC strategy.

In basic terms, a strategy is a plan to achieve an objective. In its purest form, a strategy simply tells a story about what you want to accomplish, and it instructs those involved what to do, why, and how. The most critical aspect of a strategy lies in its ability to connect with its intended audience. If a strategy fails to connect, then it will fail to motivate the people who will implement it — and it will likely fail.

Developing a strategy can be a very subjective process based on the experiences of the individuals involved in writing the strategy. As you think about writing your strategy, it may be helpful to discuss desired objectives among colleagues with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Soliciting different ideas is one of the best ways to inform your strategy and an effective way of avoiding mistakes.

A good strategy needs to be clear and brief in order to instruct your audience as to what needs to be accomplished. Your strategy must also be written to inform the many individuals who will be involved in the development of the supporting strategic plans, action plans, or implementation plans.

The very best strategies are those that are clearly written and short. The longer the document, the less likely that it will be read. The following steps provided below will assist in guiding the development of a CTOC strategy.

**Structured Approach**

Before you begin writing your strategy, you should structure your approach. This will help guide your efforts. The numbered steps below are provided to help you structure and manage the development and content of your strategy. Each step will be discussed with more detailed guidance and recommendations below.

“IT IS MY AMBITION TO SAY IN TEN SENTENCES WHAT OTHERS SAY IN A WHOLE BOOK.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

“You know that I write slowly. This is chiefly because I am never satisfied until I have said as much as possible in a few words, and writing briefly takes far more time than writing at length”

—Karl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855)

“The more you say, the less people remember. The fewer the words, the greater the profit.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

“How do you get to ‘Yes’! First, you better have a solid idea on what you want to achieve. Then you have to share that vision broadly in the simplest way possible, providing a clear roadmap on how to achieved effective results within your means and capabilities”

—Joe Vann
The Eight Step Overview

Strategy Process

STEP ONE: Visualize the Desired End State

**Conceive your end state objective.**
Conceiving your end-state objective is the initial step in strategy development. This is the time when you decide what you want your strategy to accomplish. However, the path from an initial idea to producing a written strategy is a complex one.

Once you decide on your end-state, you need to determine if it is actually viable. To do this you will need to conduct an assessment supported by research and analysis. Once your assessment is completed, you will be able to make a better informed decision on the best way to proceed. This process requires a great amount of organizing and team building before you even begin writing your strategy.

The following sub-steps can guide you in your efforts.
Build Your Team

Identify the essential individuals who will make up your strategy development team. Putting together a good team of individuals who can work toward a common purpose is essential. The more expertise and the more diversity on your team, the greater the likelihood that your strategy will be accurately informed.

Creating Strategy Development Teams

Balancing Personalities—A Delicate Balancing Act

- Technical Thinkers
- Artistic Thinkers
- Extroverts
- Introverts
- Oxygen Depleters
- Visionaries
- Arrogant Personalities
- Optimist Personalities
- Pessimist Personalities
- Dismissive Personalities
- And more...

Establish a Schedule

Establish a schedule. It is important to identify a schedule of what you want to accomplish by a certain date. You should assign someone the responsibility of tracking the various tasks and due dates.

Assign Roles & Responsibilities

Organize and assign responsibilities to team members. Each member of your team will have different strengths and weaknesses. Attempt to assign responsibilities according to the skills and expertise of your strategy team.

Plan Ahead

Identify and establish points of contact in other government organizations, and civil society with whom you can share your work and solicit their advice. It is important to solicit the support of other government organizations and civil society when possible. Other government institutions can provide useful guidance and identify obstacles or challenges of which the strategy team may be unaware. This is true for civil society as well. Additionally, involving other individuals invites a degree of ownership in the process.

Develop a strategic communications plan. Developing a comprehensive national level strategy will require the involvement of many individuals. Developing a communications plan to keep everyone informed about what you are doing is important. This will ensure that everyone understands what you are doing and why and can be used to gain the support of outside agencies and organizations.
STEP TWO: Conduct Analyses

Develop your process for conducting research and analysis. Similar to establishing your core strategy team, it is important to establish a team and a process to conduct the necessary research and perform the analysis needed to inform your strategy. Again, this is a complex process that requires a great amount of organizing before you begin.

Conduct Research

Examine what has been done already. Plenty of great work and strategies have been completed. It would be worth the time and effort to see how others have approached this problem and learn from their insight.

Establish your research and analysis team and select a team that has expertise in a broad range of skills. This will increase the likelihood that you will get a comprehensive assessment from a variety of perspectives.

Conduct Analysis

One common method for conducting strategy research is to use an analysis process known as a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis is used to better understand your operating environment.

When you conduct a SWOT analysis, it is important to focus on specific challenges. Conducting a detailed analysis is the most critical aspect of strategy development. An in-depth analysis will inform decisions and lead to the development of a good strategy. Your SWOT analysis should address the issues created by the activities of current and anticipated transnational organized crime elements.
Adjust End-State

*Based on your research, adjust your realistic end-state objectives.* Your research and analysis will provide you with new information and options that will better inform your strategy. Using the information surfaced during your research and analysis, adjust your end-state objectives to reflect what can be realistically accomplished. This will become the basis for your written strategy’s *Vision Statement.*

**STEP THREE: Draft a Vision Statement**

*Draft a single sentence vision statement to explain your end-state objective.* A vision statement is used to explain what is to be accomplished. It should be simple and memorable and serve to motivate the audience.

*Example: Our vision is to provide our citizens a safe and secure environment free from the effects of Organized Crime.*

**STEP FOUR: Draft a Purpose, or Mission, Statement**

*Draft a short mission statement that explains why you want to do what the strategy sets out to accomplish and who will take ownership for getting it done.*

Similar to the *Vision Statement,* the *Purpose Statement,* or *Mission Statement,* should be written so that it serves to motivate all involved in implementing the strategy. It should be clear, memorable and concise.

**STEP FIVE: Determine Goals and Objectives**

*Establishing your goals and objectives* is a multi-phased process. To establish your goals and objectives you must first describe the *strategic assumptions* and *implications* and the accompanying *strategic imperatives* that fully articulate why you are pursuing your describe goals.

**List and Prioritize Your Strategic Assumptions and Implications**

Strategic assumptions form the underlying foundation for your strategic plan. They underpin everything contained therein—and thus reflect the vision, mission, and implementation plans, which subsequently follow.

Your strategic assumptions and implications are what your analysis determined to be of critical importance. In a few sentences, describe each of your strategic assumptions and match the assumptions to the corresponding implications that your research and analysis revealed. It is advisable to list only the top three to five strategic assumptions and their correlating implications.

This is where you make it clear that your strategy is based on current analysis and that the analysis revealed the necessity of taking the actions to be described in the strategy. It is not necessary to provide the actual analysis to convince the audience.
Structure your *strategic assumptions and implications* so that they align in a logical manner. As you define your assumptions and implications, it is important to structure them so that they tell the story that you wish to convey. When you write an assumption, it is important to identify the requirements and constraints followed by the specific implication.

**Develop Your Strategic Imperatives**

Your strategic imperatives explain why it is critical that you take specific actions—or, what will likely happen if you do not take action. Structure your *Strategic Imperatives* so that they align in a logical manner following your assumptions and implications. You should match your strategic imperatives to answer your strategic assumptions and implications.

**Establish Strategic Goals**

Now you can begin to identify your strategic goals. You will want to identify the top tier goals that you want to accomplish. Achieving the top goals will set conditions and create positive momentum towards your end-state objective.

Again, you should limit the number of goals to between three and seven. This guidance is based on the concept that if everything becomes a priority then nothing is a priority. It is acceptable to address more than one topic in a specific goal as long as they are related and you can link them together.

In describing your strategic goals, it is often helpful to use action words to express your thoughts. Such words include limit, prohibit, interdict, contain, promote, deny, interfere, track, monitor, create, identify, and other similar words that are instructive. Incorporate the specific purpose or reason for each of your goals and the benefits you expect to realize when achieved. Goals should be designed so that you can measure your progress and success.

**State & Align Strategic Objectives**

Next, you will state your strategic objectives and align them to your specific strategic goals. It is desirable to have at least three objectives listed and aligned under each goal. As you craft your objectives, imagine who will be responsible for satisfying or achieving your objectives.

Like goals, you should develop objectives that allow you to measure your successes. Use of project management methods will help you develop objectives that can be assessed. One project management method is to assess each of your objectives using the *SMARRT* acronym. *SMARRT* stands for:

- **S**—Specific. Your objectives be specific in describing what needs to be done.
- **M**—Measurable. You must be able to measure the results of your objectives.
- **A**—Assignable. You must assign your objectives to specific organizations.
- **R**—Realistic. Your objectives must be realistic and attainable.
- **R**—Relevant. Your objectives must be relevant and support your strategic goals.
- **T**—Timely. Your objectives must establish a target date and a sense of urgency.
Strategic Communications Plan

For a strategy to be successful, it must be written in a manner that is easily communicated to the intended audience. As you articulate your objectives it is important to think through how you will coordinate and communicate your strategy to your intended audience. To succeed in this regard, it is important to develop a coordination and communications plan. Your plan should detail how to invite outside parties to review and contribute to your strategy and how you will communicate your strategy to your audience for maximum effect. Asking and answering simple questions such as the ones listed below will help to inform your strategic communications plan.

- Who should be the outside members of the strategy development team?
- Who should be invited to review our work?
- What is our plan for engaging with interagency partners?
- What is our plan for engaging with the other government partners?
- What is our plan for engaging with private industry?
- What is our plan for engaging with the press?
- What is our plan for engaging with civil society?

Horizontal Coordination and Communication

STEP SIX: Form an Implementation Plan

After you finish with your goals and objectives you will want to describe how your strategy will be implemented and who will be responsible for its execution. This is where a particular organization or ministry is given responsibility or assigned accountability. In this section it is important that you assign high level responsibilities. Do not describe specific actions or tactical level expectations. Empower the assigned entity or organization. It will be their responsibility to develop strategic plans or action plans, and proposing the associated policies.
Exercise Guidance: National Security Strategy Development

These first six steps form the basis of your framework for a complete national security strategy. These will also structure your framing document. Your framing document will articulate the nation’s CTOC vision, mission, goals, objectives, and desired outcomes.

It will be used to guide and inform other ministries, agencies, departments, and organizations on the strategic scope of the strategy and solicit their input as a method of informing the development and implementation of the strategy.

Complete your strategy with a conclusion paragraph. This is a short paragraph to summarize the intent and purpose and expected outcomes of your strategy. This paragraph should provide a high-level overview that succinctly describes what you will accomplish by successfully realizing your strategy.

**STEP SEVEN: Implement the Plan**

Once your strategy and implementation plan is complete, it is time to implement the plan and begin executing the initiatives that will lead to realizing the goals and objectives. This is typically done through a formal release: the strategy is published and disseminated to the public and other government organizations through official channels.

**STEP EIGHT: Monitor, Measure, and Adjust**

Executing the strategy is critical. To be successful in the execution phase, it is important to establish a monitoring and measuring capability to analyze your progress and adjust where necessary.

It is also critically important that you develop a process to assign responsibility and track the performance of those individual entities implementing your strategy. In defining this process, it is important to set target dates and to establish a system of accountability for those responsible for implementing the various components of your strategy. As you monitor the activity, measure successes and failures, and analyze results, you will be able to make recommendations to improve your performance.

Finally, strategies must be adjusted as they are implemented so that they are responsive to changes in the environment. Therefore, developing a capability to monitor and measure your effectiveness is critical. This capability will allow you to communicate what you learn to your stakeholders while serving to keep everyone focused on carrying out the strategy. Ultimately, this process allows all involved to better understand the successes and adjust where required to pursue success.