

California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project

Definitions for Commonly-used Terms

Revised November 4, 2011

During the October 6, 2011 joint meeting of the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission and Stakeholder Advisory Group, it was highlighted that a variety of terms were being used that may not have shared meaning. To help facilitate a common understanding of terminology, this document provides definitions for various terms being used in developing the California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision.

Internal communication: Refers to the exchange between and among organization management and employees. The function of internal communication is to let employees know what management is thinking, to let management know what employees are thinking, and to share information and ideas among employees.

External communication: Refers to communication with individuals, groups or other organizations outside an organization's own formal structure – general public, stakeholders, other government agencies, legislators.

Education, Outreach and Engagement: Often public education, outreach, and engagement/participation are used interchangeably, which leads to confusion; the appropriateness of each term depends on the goals set by an organization.

- a. **Public education** provides members of the public with objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. Tools include fact sheets, web sites, open houses, classes.
- b. **Public outreach** provides information/education opportunities and then obtains public feedback on analyses, alternatives and/or decisions. Tools include public comment, focus groups, surveys, and public meetings.
- c. **Public engagement/participation** includes working directly with the public throughout a process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered, as well as partnering with the public in each aspect of decision-making including developing alternatives and identifying a preferred solution. Tools include workshops, deliberative polling, and citizen advisory committees.

Efficient: Acting or producing with a minimum of waste, expense, or unnecessary effort.

Effective: The degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In contrast to efficiency, effectiveness is determined without reference to costs and, whereas efficiency means "doing the thing right," effectiveness means "doing the right thing."

Enhance: Heighten, increase; especially to increase or improve in value, quality, desirability or attractiveness.

Improve: To enhance in value or quality: make better. To make more acceptable or to bring nearer a standard.

Science: 1: The state of knowing; knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding. 2a: A department of systematized knowledge as an object of study. 2b: Something that may be studied or learned like systematized knowledge. 3a: Knowledge or a system of knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws especially as obtained and tested through scientific method. 3b: Such knowledge or such a system of knowledge concerned with the physical world and its phenomena. 4: A system or method reconciling practical ends with scientific laws.

Scientific Method: The principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses.

Sustainable: Capable of being sustained. Of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged.

Strategic Planning Terms

Organization: An organization is a person or group of people intentionally organized to accomplish an overall, common goal or set of goals. There are several important aspects to consider about the goal of the business organization. These features are explicit (deliberate and recognized) or implicit (operating unrecognized, "behind the scenes"). Ideally, these features are carefully considered and established, usually during a strategic planning process.

Mission: An organization operates according to an overall purpose, or mission. In government the mission is typically influenced by a mandated responsibility (e.g. statute, policy, etc.) and/or inherited values (e.g. good steward, etc.).

Vision: An image about how an organization should be working or how it should appear when things are going well; it is often expressed as a future, forward-thinking condition.

Strategic Vision: A picture or mental image of what an organization should look like in the future with strategic elements that support successful achievement of the vision under a variety of external and internal conditions.

Values / Core Values / Operating Principles: All organizations operate according to a set of explicit or implicit values; these represent priorities in the nature of how people within the organization should carry out their activities. These values create the culture or "personality" of the organization. It is important to note any discrepancies between stated and operating values. Examples include service, integrity, fairness, quality, diversity, optimism, learning, discipline/order, fun/humor, etc.

Strategic Priorities: Overarching strategies that apply to everything an organization does, no matter the subject area or process (i.e., simplified decision-making, excellence in customer service, building relationships, work teams).

Goals: It is best if goals are defined by the overall impact desired (outcomes) to describe *what* an organization will achieve.

Objectives: Smaller goals that help achieve each overall goal. Objectives should be SMART: Specific (concrete action, step-by-step actions needed to make the goal succeed), Measurable (observable results from accomplishing the goal), Attainable (it is both possible and done at the right time with sufficient attention and resources), Realistic (the probability of success is good, given the resources and attention given), and Time-bound (goal is achieved within a specified period of time in a way that takes advantage of the opportunity before it passes by). Achieving several of the objectives usually means you are achieving the goal.

Action: A specific task that, when carried out with other actions, helps to achieve the objective and, ultimately, a goal.

Strategies or Tools: These are methods by which to achieve objectives and goals; this is *how* an organization will achieve its goals. An organization will often use several, overall, general strategies (see strategic priorities) or tools and then tailor appropriate, specific strategies to individual goals and objectives.

Organizational Vitality: Measured in various areas, including vision, communication, decision-making, adaptability, leadership, productivity, and quality.

Organization Systems and Processes: Organizations have major subsystems, such as departments, programs, divisions, teams, etc., with a particular way of doing things to achieve the mission and goals of the organization; plans, policies and procedures often define these systems and processes. Various inputs to these systems are processed in some way to create outputs and outcomes that, together, should accomplish the mission and goals of the organization.

- *Inputs* to the system include resources (e.g. raw materials, money, technologies and people). Inputs should be defined by who provides them and when they should be provided.
- *Outputs* are tangible results produced by processes in the system, such as products or services for consumers.
- *Outcomes* are the overall impacts of, or benefits received as a result of, the processes applied to inputs and resulting outputs.