

SASOL STRATEGIC PLANNING

WORKSHOP REPORT

MASINGA DAM RESORT APRIL 6-9 2009

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Introduction

The Sahelian Solution Foundation, SASOL, was founded in 1990 to assist Kitui communities address water scarcity through sand dam water storage technology. Over 700 sand dams have since been constructed thus creating a Water Platform which now needs strategies to realise its immense potential. SASOL identified the need to go through a Strategic Planning process to look at ways and means of assisting the Kitui communities and beyond realise the full potential of the water platform.

Washington M. Njuru, executive director of Debways Resources Systems Ltd was hired to facilitate the Board, Management and Staff of SASOL in the process of formulating their 10-Year Strategic Plan. He was aided in no small measure by G-C. M. Mutiso, the SASOL National Chair who doubled as a participant. Both are process technique consultants who have worked together in many national and international assignments.

The Process: Merit of the Technique

Critical to the success of any plan is ownership by those who will implement it. Critical to this ownership is the process of formulating the plan. Strategic Plans are best done through process techniques involving all the critical staff and board members. This way, consensus and ownership is negotiated and built in at every step. This may take longer than the direct approach but it builds consensus on all the otherwise disagreeable issues and planned actions. A well managed process that ends in an agreed strategic plan validates future management actions as they work their staff towards the achievement of the plan's goals and objectives. It is a critical success factor to the success of any organisation.

The workshop was held in the Masinga Dam Resort built in a picturesque area by the banks of Masinga Dam. A good choice for an exercise of this nature though the resort seems to have known better times and is now in urgent need of repair and refurbishment. The workshop lasted three full days; made up of two half-days and two full days.

Workshop Process

Introductory addresses by the National Chairman and the SASOL Manager started the activity. Both underlined the importance of the Strategic Plan and the process that would birth it.

The facilitator kicked-off the actual process with a presentation on the demands on the strategic thinker, the issues and aspects to focus on. The strategist, while guided by the realities of the present must focus on the future and the opportunities it presents. The attendees were then divided into three working groups. Each group was composed of board, management and staff of different seniority and technical skills. A short

case study was then used to enable the groups form and settle for the intensely interactive work ahead. This case proved very successful as the groups toiled over a new and near impossible scenario. This was important as future workshop outputs would depend on the work groups.

The workshop was light on facilitator presentations but intense in group tasks where all the action was planned to take place. The Strategic Planning Process started with a presentation of the expected outputs of the combined teams' effort: the contents of the expected SASOL Strategic Plan. This was meant to keep the individual and the teams focused on the end result, they were reminded constantly of the expected outputs as the workshop progressed.

Vision

The first task was to come up with a realistic Vision for SASOL. Facilitator made a brief presentation of what a vision and mission statements should contain and drew the difference between the two. Each group worked on their notion of what should be SASOL's vision. Group presentations were made in the plenary where they were discussed, negotiated and agreed on. The following was the agreed SASOL Vision.

'To be a leading organisation in enhancement of sustainable Community development in Africa'.

Mission

The next to be worked on was the mission. This was to specify the ways and means to achieve the vision. Again, each group was assigned to work out a fitting mission for SASOL to be presented at the plenary. After thorough work in the groups, each made their presentation in the plenary where intense discussion ensued, resulting in the following which was adopted as the SASOL Mission._

'To empower and support communities' structures and skills relevant for sustainable utilization of resources to improve their livelihoods'.

Core Values

While strategic planning is mostly about actions and priorities, it is also about values, meaning and purpose. It was necessary to do a core value audit to arrive at the main values that should guide SASOL in pursuit of its vision and mission. A value system shapes the organisation's distinctive culture setting it apart from others. The groups were tasked to do a core values audit; results of which were then presented in the plenary. These were then discussed, ranked and approved as follows:

1. Integrity
2. Professionalism
3. Innovation and creativity
4. Client First

5. Equity and Equality

Mandates and Responsibilities

Whereas the details of the mandates and responsibilities change as plans are achieved or abandoned, as the environment and focus changes, SASOL has permanent auto generated mandates and responsibilities. These are:

1. That all programs be done in a participatory manner with respect to target communities.
2. That program activities be planned with the partners.
3. That the overhead and operating costs be kept at a minimum so as to support activities, which are of benefit to the target communities.
4. Those activities are based on knowledge and not development whims.
5. That local and external knowledge be utilised to solve problems.
6. Protect humanity and ecosystems with impartiality.

Key Stakeholders

In addition to board, management and staff, each organisation will have wider 'owners' and beneficiaries in form of stakeholders. Stakeholders have major influences in an organisation's strategic plan. Some of the stakeholders could also place restrictions on the organisation's plans while others present opportunities and resources. It was therefore necessary to acknowledge SASOL's main stakeholders. The varied groups' lists were collapsed into the following:

1. Community
2. Institutions
3. Development Agencies
4. Collaborating Agencies
5. Donors

SWOT Analysis

Any organisation will be stronger and better prepared when it knows its strengths and weaknesses as this way it will know the size and type of opportunities it can appropriate and type of threats it is able to handle. This was therefore the next task for the groups, a SASOL SWOT Analysis.

Strengths

1. Committed, competent multidisciplinary staff
2. Accountable and transparent track record
3. Good internal governance systems
4. Focused policy and program formulation

Weaknesses

1. Donor dependency

2. Inadequate office space, equipment and property
3. Lack of follow up programs (M&E)

Opportunities

- 1 Extension of sand dams as an appropriate technology to mitigate climate change effects.
- 2 To expand programs in ICT, vocational education and renewable energy sectors.
- 3 To trade the water platform
- 4 Proper utilization of existing resources (human and capital) for income generation.
- 5 Offering consultancy services based on research, innovation, accumulated knowledge and experience.

Threats

- 1 National political instability
- 2 Local, National and Global Economic turbulence
- 3 Local and National Drought/famine
- 4 Climate change (global warming)
- 5 Different approaches by other agencies offering incentives for participation in development activities in same areas
- 6 Interference by mining companies

Trends and Impacts

Noticeable trends and impacts are important inputs in strategic planning and are gleaned from the environmental scanning in SWOT analysis. The groups developed the following as trends and impacts expected to have profound impact on SASOL in the coming years.

Trends: External

1. Climate change
2. Environmental degradation
3. Demographic Changes
4. Evolving of Social Structures
5. New business patterns
6. Global and national Recession

Trends: Internal

7. Demand of sand dam technology
8. Increased programme sectors and specialisation
9. Wider geographical area coverage
10. Gender equity in employment

Impacts

1. Food Insecurity
2. Creation of more dams
3. Skills training
4. Increased community income and better livelihoods
5. Increased budgetary requirements
6. More regional and global contacts

Major Strategic Planning Issues

Based on the work done so far, the work groups, in one of the most important tasks, were required to come up with the main planning issues that SASOL needs to address in its strategic plan. The individual group presentations were presented to the plenary, debated and agreed. The following is the agreed list of issues which became the strategic plan planning initiatives.

1. Dry land agriculture
2. Value addition processes
3. Entrepreneurship skills training
4. Vocational education training
5. ICT centres
6. Life skills development
7. Community organization
8. Catchment protection
9. Water harvesting
10. Facilities' development
11. Renewal energy development

Strategic Initiatives

The next and final act for work groups was to work on the Strategic Issues as Strategic Plan Initiatives. The process was varied a little so that each group was now allocated three to four specific issues out of the eleven above. Each team was to develop activities for each initiative that would ensure comprehensive dealing with the issue thus converting each issue into a plan initiative. The timing of the start of the initiative would be done in the plenary after groups' presentations.

All the groups proved very effective and efficient in arriving at the activities and this became clear during their presentations in the plenary. Minor adjustments and alignments were done in the plenary as well as agreeing on start times on new initiatives. As can be expected some of the initiatives were already on-going; needing deepening and enlargement. The following are the agreed SASOL Strategic Planning Initiatives.

Dry Land Agriculture: January 2010

1. Resource mobilisation
2. Training farmers on appropriate farming methods
3. Promotion of drought resistant and traditional crops
4. Establishment of contact and demonstration farms
5. Linking farmers to other relevant institutions
6. Promotion of waste water recycling
7. Monitoring and evaluation

Value Addition Processes: January 2010

1. Community training on traditional and modern food reservation methods
2. Training and promotion of traditional food preparation methods

3. Training and promotion of resource use and management (wood carving, quarry stone, etc)
4. Monitoring and evaluation

Entrepreneurship Skills Training: January 2010

1. Baseline data and training needs assessment
2. Curriculum development
3. Development of training manual
4. Training of target group on identified skills needs
5. Linking target group to relevant institutions for more training, exposure, financial and technical assistance
6. Monitoring and evaluation

Vocational Education: August 09

1. Mapping the market
2. Resource mobilisation
3. Selection of approaches
4. Curriculum development
5. Trainee selection and placement
6. Linkage to market and institutions
7. Alumni formation
8. Monitoring and evaluation

I.C.T. Centres: September 09

1. Mapping the market
2. Resource mobilisation
3. Establish physical, hardware and software infrastructure
4. Curriculum development
5. Selection and placement of trainees
6. Alumni formation
7. Monitoring and evaluation

Life Skills: August 09

1. Mapping the market
2. Resource mobilisation
3. Establish physical, hardware and software infrastructure
4. Curriculum development
5. Selection and placement of trainees
6. Alumni formation
7. Monitoring and evaluation

Community Organisation: On-going

1. Needs assessment survey
2. Resource mobilisation
3. Development of training materials
4. Identification of target groups
5. Training approach selection and implementation
6. Linkage of the trained groups
7. Monitoring and evaluation

Catchment Protection: On-going

1. Identification of catchment areas
2. Baseline data collection
3. Organisation, mobilisation and formation of catchment groups
4. Training of catchment groups (NRM)
5. Layout and digging of terraces
6. Establishment of grass and tree nurseries
7. Trees and grass planting
8. Monitoring and evaluation

Water Harvesting: On-Going

1. Identification of areas of operation
2. Baseline data collection
3. Mobilisation of target groups
4. Identify approaches
5. Monitoring and evaluation

Facilities Development: On-going

1. Needs assessment
2. Site identification and confirmation
3. Architectural design development and approval
4. Resources mobilisation (materials and human)
5. Construction of MPCs, offices, labs, etc
6. Monitoring and evaluation

Renewable Energy Development: On-going

1. Needs assessment
2. Technology identification
3. Sites identification
4. Resources mobilisation (materials and human)
5. Construction and installation
6. Monitoring and evaluation

Resources: Human and Financial

These concerns mark what must now be done to anchor the Strategic Plan into the fabric of the future of SASOL. It should become a rallying call to all friends of SASOL. On each initiative, whenever there are insufficient funds, there should be a Project Proposal for seeking funds.

Human Resources Needs

SASOL has, within its current staff establishment, sufficient and capable staff to carry most of the planned initiatives. However there will be need to recruit ICT/Data Analysis anchor staff for the ICT initiative

1. Financial Resources

Most of the planned activities are about expansion and deepening since there are already on-going activities in most of the initiatives with some seed money. All the initiatives are about building upon the already developed Water Platform to intensify 'trading the water' made available through the over 700 sand dams. There is need to raise more funds for the expanded programs.

Conclusion

There was a great sigh of relief in the plenary at the arrival to the Initiatives, their Activities and Timings as the participants saw it all in broad perspectives the ultimate SASOL Strategic Plan. There was a great feeling of satisfaction, widely shared.

Use of process technique carries within it great risks of failure, especially when the participants are as diverse as was the case with the SASOL process. Conversely the process also carries great rewards when it works well as was the case with SASOL. The process is initiated by the facilitator but owned by the participants. Its success is equally owned by the participants.

At the conclusion of the workshop, a staff spokesperson, the SASOL Manager, the SASOL National Chair and the SASOL Executive Chairman all expressed satisfaction that all had gone very well.

The successful process and conclusion of it with all the planned outputs in is owned collectively and to a very large measure to the diverse group of participants:

- The cheerful demeanours of the staff;
- Their adventurous can-do attitude;
- Their firm, focused and knowledgeable manager;
- The steadying and experienced hand of the Board members attending;
- A deeply knowledgeable and focused National Executive Chair;
- To all, the collegial environment that everyone created; and
- And the passionate connection to an organisation that offers hope to so many.

It is to these few that the many individuals and communities who will come to benefit from this SASOL Strategic Plan will owe eternal gratitude.

Those Involved in the Strategic Planning

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Evans M. Ngava | Board Member |
| 2. Mathew I. Kitema | Community Trainer |
| 3. Franciscar K. Kimangau | Intern from KEWI |
| 4. Kennedy Paul Mutati | Technical Assistant |
| 5. Peris Mumbi Munyaka | Community Trainer |
| 6. Onesmus K. Mwangangi
Coordinator | Sasol Exchange |
| 7. Fredrick P. Kimwilu | Community Organiser |
| 8. Aziz S. Bajaber | Executive Chair Designate |
| 9. Bernard N. Muendo | Technical Supervisor |
| 10. Elisah Mweti | Board Member |
| 11. Elijah Kamama | Community Organiser |
| 12. Francis Maluki Katua | Executive Chairman |
| 13. Anna E. Mutuku
Coordinator | Exchange Assistant |
| 14. G-C M. Mutiso | SASOL National Chair |
| 15. J Mutinda Munguti | Manager |
| 16. Jemima Sila | Board Member |