Strategic approach for co-creating goals and actions for HELPING

Mojtaba Shafiei and Berit Arheimer

1 - Introduction

The aim of this document is to suggest the methodology for a Strategic Planning Process (SPP) to translate the community's vision into actions by engaging the IAHS members. The proposed SPP is envisioned to serve as a guide for mapping out goals and activities for aligning and implementing IAHS-HELPING program.

The SPP is described in four main steps at two levels (Fig. 1). The four steps include envisioning, setting goals/strategies, defining actions and, implementation and evaluation. We have a specific and ambitious vision (HELPING). Through analysis of the current situation and depicting a desired possible future, several goals can be identified. In the SPP context, each goal will follow with several actions. We can combine and categorize these actions into 'areas of action', which then correspond to a specific goal. Each goal should ideally correspond to a specific need, and to fill specific gaps. Then, actions will be defined to overcome gaps and barriers in each goal.

Fig. 2 shows the relations between the vision, goals, and actions. For achieving the vision, several actions should be defined in different categorized areas (i.e., goals/strategies), and the move from the vision towards actions should be done by increased engagement of stakeholders (member of our community).

There are generally accepted criteria to better co-create goals, e.g., the SMART criteria that requires goals to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Since in the last step of SPP (implementing and evaluation) we need to monitor the progress toward each goal, it is important to have SMART goals.

As a short explanation for the two levels, these levels work simultaneously and support each other. For the second level we also need to look at our guidelines, previous programs, global goals such as:

a) The results of IAHS initiatives (PUB, Panta-Rahi and UPH),

b) UNESCO-IHP recent plans (IHP-IX and Open Science) and initiative on Game changer

c) UN-SDGs, IPCC and WMO research plan.

In the following sections the proposed methodology for co-defining goals and actions is presented.
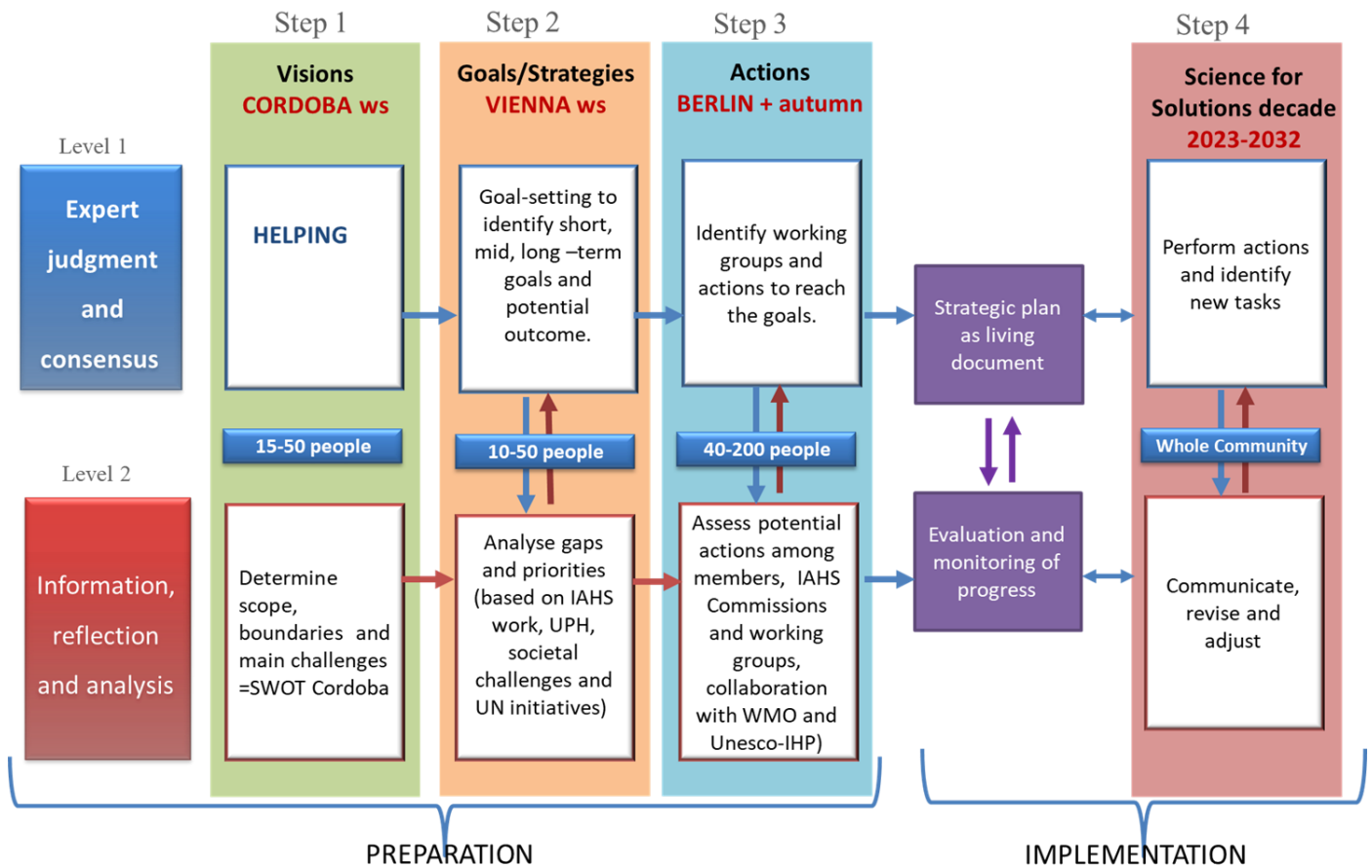

Fig 1. The proposed strategic planning process (SPP) version 1.0

Fig 2. the relations between vision, goals, actions and level of community engagement

2 – Co-defining goals/strategies

Goals/strategies (step2, Fig.1) are different and needed paths towards our unique and common vision. Each goal can be achieved through several actions, i.e., a goal is representing "area of actions".

Each goal should focus on specific gaps possibly in different dimensions of "sustainable development" (as a main global goal). Moreover, in order to define a draft for the goals we need to consider/analyze some future scenarios of hydrological science advancements as well as global challenges.

Some criteria to evaluate and finalize our goals:

I.   SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound), which is shown in Table 1.

II.   The most important point is that our final goals should be in synergy with each other, and we need to carefully consider and alleviate possible trade-offs. We can envision each goal as a Markov Chain which moving through the solution's space towards the specific vision (HELPING) and hopefully they can learn from each other to increase their speed.

III. Finally, our goals should support, or be supported by, some of the global initiatives as well as IAHS initiatives. Examples of related initiatives are presented in last paragraph of Introduction section.

Table 1. The characteristics of SMART as a selection criteria

Criteria		Description
SMART	**S**pecific	Specific goals have a desired outcome that is clearly understood.
	Measurable	Refers to ensuring there will be evidence that can be tracked to monitor progress.
	Attainable (Achievable)	Goals need to be realistic in order to maintain the enthusiasm to try to achieve them.
	Relevant (Results oriented)	Goals should be aligned with the mission and values of the IAHS (+).
	Time-framed (Timebound)	Goal should track change over a particular period of time and present necessary information to assess progress towards the vision.

At the final stage, based on three mentioned criteria, we can create a table to evaluate the suggested goals (Table 1):

Table 1. Proposed form for evaluating potential goals

Suggested goals	Evaluation Criteria			Final decision (& Creating Workgroups)
	SMART	Level of synergy and trade-off	Relation to other global initiatives	
Goal 1				
Goal 2				

In order to successfully implement this stage, we need to engage 10-50 experts (Fig. 1). The Vienna workshop (29 April) provide a great opportunity to draft our goals. For each goal, we need to assign a workgroup and its volunteering members. This work will continue during the Autumn, to ensure engagement from the new Bureau, which will be elected in Berlin. The goals should be linked to the concept note for HELPING.

Here, are also some practical suggestions as themes for co-creating the goals:

- Explore concrete ways to "localize" global hydrological goals
- Find ways to transfer "local knowledge" into "information" to be use in simulation and planning.
- Consider AI-based technologies in Hydrology and water management
- Discuss and elaborate the role of IAHS in implementing Open Science

3 – Co-creating actions according to the generic process

Actions (step3, Fig.1) can be co-created based on each workgroup activities. Structure of a workgroup should normally consist of three experts as main committee and at least 30 to 50 members to brainstorm and co-create the actions.

Actions are defined to overcome gaps and barriers in achieving each goal. They are the most concrete elements of a strategic plan which can be defined in terms of policy, intervention, or project. Each goal can contain 3 to 15 actions to be achieved in a specific period.

Sometimes we also need to prioritize our actions or prioritize them. Moreover, in co-creating the actions we need to consider the scale and scope of the corresponding goal.

4 – Time schedules for co-creating the HELPING Strategic Plan

Figure 3 shows an overview on time schedule of the process of co-developing the HELPING strategic plan.

Fig 3. A schematic of time schedule for HELPING Strategic Plan development

References:

Cudennec, C., Sud, M., & Boulton, G. (2022). Governing open science. Hydrological Sciences Journal, 67(16), 2359-2362.

Ind, N., & Coates, N. (2013). The meanings of co-creation. European business review, 25(1), 86-95.

Shu-Hsiang, C., Jaitip, N., & Ana, D. J. (2015). From vision to action–a strategic planning process model for open educational resources. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 174, 3707-3714.