

Commonwealth Secretariat Revised Strategic Plan

2013/14 – 2016/17



The Commonwealth



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2013/14 – 2016/17

December 2015



The Commonwealth

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Printed and published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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Acronyms

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AU	African Union
BoG	Board of Governors
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CEN	Commonwealth Electoral Network
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
CPP	Civil Paths to Peace
DFID	Department for International Development
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
EU	European Union
ExCo	Executive Committee
HRD	Human Resources Division
ICTs	information and communication technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	information technology
LDCs	least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ME&R	monitoring, evaluation and reporting
MTR	Mid- term review
PCP	Primary Contact Point
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PMIS	Programme Management and Information System
RBM	results-based management
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
S-G	Secretary-General
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPED	Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TA	technical assistance
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WTO	World Trade Organization
YDI	Youth Development Index

Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Secretariat is the principal intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth. The Strategic Plan for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17 has been developed after extensive consultation with member governments. It is more narrowly focussed than previous plans, as directed by Commonwealth Heads of Government. Nevertheless, it maintains a balance of outcomes and allocation of effort between the longstanding 'democracy' and 'development' pillars of the Secretariat's work. The Plan takes into account agreed recommendations of the 2011 report of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). It also includes the orientation to a strategy to collaborate with Commonwealth organisations.

The Plan reflects the shared priorities of member governments. These include three longer-term goals for the next eight to ten years, and six strategic outcomes to be pursued during the next four years.

The **three goals** are:

1. Strong democracy, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and respect for diversity;
2. Inclusive growth and sustainable development; and
3. A well-connected and networked Commonwealth.

The Plan is based on a Strategic Results Framework (SRF), which provides intermediate outcomes and indicators to support these six strategic outcomes:

1. **Democracy** – greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles;
2. **Public institutions** – more effective, efficient and equitable public governance;
3. **Social Development** – enhanced positive impact of social development
4. **Youth** – youth more integrated and valued in political and development processes;
5. **Development: pan-Commonwealth** – more effective frameworks for inclusive economic growth and social and sustainable development; and
6. **Development: small states and vulnerable states** – strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states.

In addition to the strategic and intermediate outcomes, the SRF also has four enabling outcomes and three internal result areas. The enabling outcomes are those results that underpin the intermediate outcomes. The internal outcomes, on the other hand, will ensure an efficiently run organisation that promotes the delivery of the enabling and intermediate results.

Indicators are provided against which the impact of the Secretariat's work can be measured.

A Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (ME&R) Framework complements the SRF to help the Secretariat monitor and evaluate results, as well as report on progress in achieving the agreed outcomes.

A mid-term review (MTR) was conducted at the mid-way point of the Plan in the summer of 2015. This revised edition of the Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 reflects the finding of that review. The review started in June with two independent audit reports by KPMG. The Secretariat received ratings of substantial assurance for its strategic and business planning as well as for its project outcomes and delivery. Internally, divisions across the Secretariat focused on the result areas for which they were responsible and worked to improve the indicators for these intermediate outcomes. The indicators were revised to ensure they were specific, measurable, achievable, and time bound. In addition, baselines were determined and targets added. The revised Strategic Results Framework is included at Annex III.

The MTR was informed by results from DFID's annual reviews, feedback received in monitoring progress through our own six monthly and annual results reports, evaluations undertaken, and internal audits. As a learning organisation, the Secretariat looks to all of these review mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.

The Plan reduced the number of activities undertaken by the Secretariat. It also envisaged a number of fundamental changes in the way that the Secretariat delivers its work, including greater use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), strategic partnerships, promotion of collaboration between member states and referral elsewhere for requests for work that the Secretariat itself is unable to provide.

The Plan was developed assuming a continued 'zero real growth' financial climate based on the 2012/13 budget. However, the financial assumptions upon which the Strategic Plan was developed have changed substantially in two years. In financial year 2011/12, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) funding stood at £31.8M. By the next financial year, it had decreased by 30 percent to £20M in 2013/14 and stayed at that level for 2014/15. While 2015/16 results are not available to inform, the budget indicates both a continued lower CFTC budget, and a 'Zero Nominal Growth' budget for all funds.

The Plan was scheduled to be rolled out from 1 July 2013. The implementation, however, started only after the results-based work plan and budgeting was completed and approved by the Board on 31 October 2013.

Message from the Chair, Board of Governors

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17 was built on a strong foundation of consensus and reform. It was developed through two years of research and consultations, including more than 30 meetings of Board members. It is inclusive and reflects the shared priorities of member states as well as the reform that was mandated by Heads of Government.

Fully engaged in the development process, the Board of Governors has continued to provide both scrutiny and support during the implementation of the Plan. The Board and the Executive Committee have reviewed results-based work plans, budgets and annual reporting, as well as received reports on corporate reform. Our feedback and direction have helped the Secretariat improve, adjust and perform better.

A number of tangible outcomes were delivered in the first two years of the Strategic Plan. This included restoration of Fiji as a full member of the Commonwealth; work on strengthening of Human Rights Institutions in many Commonwealth countries including Kigali Declaration to eliminate Early and Forced Marriages; successful Election Observation in 22 member states; reform of the youth programme; settlement of Maritime boundary issues in some member states; and support to the establishment and strengthening of the Debt Management Systems. On the corporate side, systems were strengthened, internal processes were reviewed and improved, the risk management strategy was developed, and restructuring was planned and delivered.

The Mid-Term Review has allowed the Secretariat to reflect on its strengths as well as make improvements to continue its work creating an enhanced, focussed and results-oriented organisation. A key improvement is the revision of the indicators for the Intermediate, Enabling and Internal outcomes to make them more specific and measurable.

The improvements made in the Strategic Plan will help the Secretariat better steer the second half of the Plan. The establishment of baselines and targets will help plan and track the results better. The Secretariat, I am sure, will continue to strive to help members adhere to Commonwealth values, develop and strengthen institutions for economic and social development, empower youth, and assist small states as well as advocate their cause at the international fora. The Board of Governors will continue to provide guidance and support to the Secretariat in this endeavour.

HE Williams NKURUNZIZA
High Commissioner
Rwanda

Foreword

This Strategic Plan is our clearly signposted roadmap for the Commonwealth Secretariat, following implementation of the most fundamental reforms for a generation, both of the work we do and of the way we do it. Change has been embraced with enthusiasm, and adoption of the Plan marked the opening of a fresh era of significant opportunity for the Secretariat and the member states we serve. Building on our reputation and impressive track record, we are able to capitalise on many notable successes and organisational brand strengths, with renewed focus on the unique trust and advantages the Commonwealth offers, and with practical outcomes as our orientation.

Detailed thought and views received widely from the Commonwealth laid the groundwork necessary to bring this Plan to fruition. It was the culmination of a deep and extensive process of consultation, appraisal and review. By taking stock, and considering both national priorities and the global context within which we need to operate in future, we have been able to move forward with a reconfigured approach during the first two years of the Plan. We are now delivering more efficiently and cost-effectively for the benefit, collectively and individually, of all Commonwealth member states and citizens.

Results Based Management (RBM) is firmly embedded across the Secretariat, with staff trained to focus on evidence-based impact when planning and reporting on programmes and projects. Levels of attainment will rise still further in the remaining two years of the Plan with the development of an even more robust Strategic Results Framework (SRF) as part of the Mid-Term Review (MTR). In addition, rapid digitalisation through Commonwealth Connects and other contemporary ICT networks—in areas such as election management, health, education and climate change—is modernising and redefining the convening power and capacity-building strength of the Commonwealth.

The mid-term in the delivery of the Strategic Plan coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Secretariat. We can be confident that, through continuing reform and renewal, the vitality and upward trajectory of our organisation will be maintained, laying a firm foundation for adding global value in the decades to come.

Kamalesh Sharma
Commonwealth Secretary-General

Commonwealth Secretariat Revised Strategic Plan

2013/14 – 2016/17

1. Introduction

1. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent and equal sovereign states. Its special strength lies in the combination of its diversity and shared inheritance. Its members are bound together by respect for all states and peoples; by shared values and principles; and by concern for the vulnerable.
2. The Commonwealth Secretariat in London is the backbone of the Commonwealth. It convenes summits and high-level meetings; executes plans agreed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government; promotes Commonwealth values and principles; and facilitates the work of the Commonwealth family of organisations.
3. At the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), leaders asked the Commonwealth Secretary-General to develop a Strategic Plan for the next four-year period that was more focussed and reflected the Secretariat's size and resources. This direction echoed recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which proposed a narrower focus of effort by the Secretariat and emphasised sharpening the impact, strengthening the networks and raising the profile of the Commonwealth.
4. The New Strategic Plan (Plan) marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Secretariat. It focuses on those areas where the Commonwealth and the Secretariat in particular have distinct strengths. It is prioritised, flexible and result oriented. It is 'designed to deliver' what is envisaged in the recently agreed Charter of the Commonwealth.
5. The new Plan was prepared in light of the guidance from the Heads of Government, EPG recommendations, as well as the Secretary-General's consultations with the Board of Governors, senior management and staff of the Secretariat,¹ and input from other Commonwealth organisations. It takes into account the recommendations of recent evaluation and impact studies,² management reviews by some member states, the results of the Priorities Questionnaire survey, feedback from the Primary Contact Point (PCP) meetings and regular guidance from the Board of Governors (BoG) and its Executive Committee (ExCo).
6. The EPG report of 2011 made 106 recommendations, most of which have been adopted by Heads of Government, either as drafted or with agreed modifications. Where appropriate, the adopted recommendations are reflected in this Plan. [For instance, it is envisaged that the ability of the Secretariat to support the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in its enlarged and positively oriented mandate will be enhanced; that the technical assistance services provided to member governments and sharing of knowledge will be strengthened; that the Secretariat will work in closer partnership with the Commonwealth Foundation and accredited Commonwealth organisations; and also that a number of one-off mandates will be delivered.

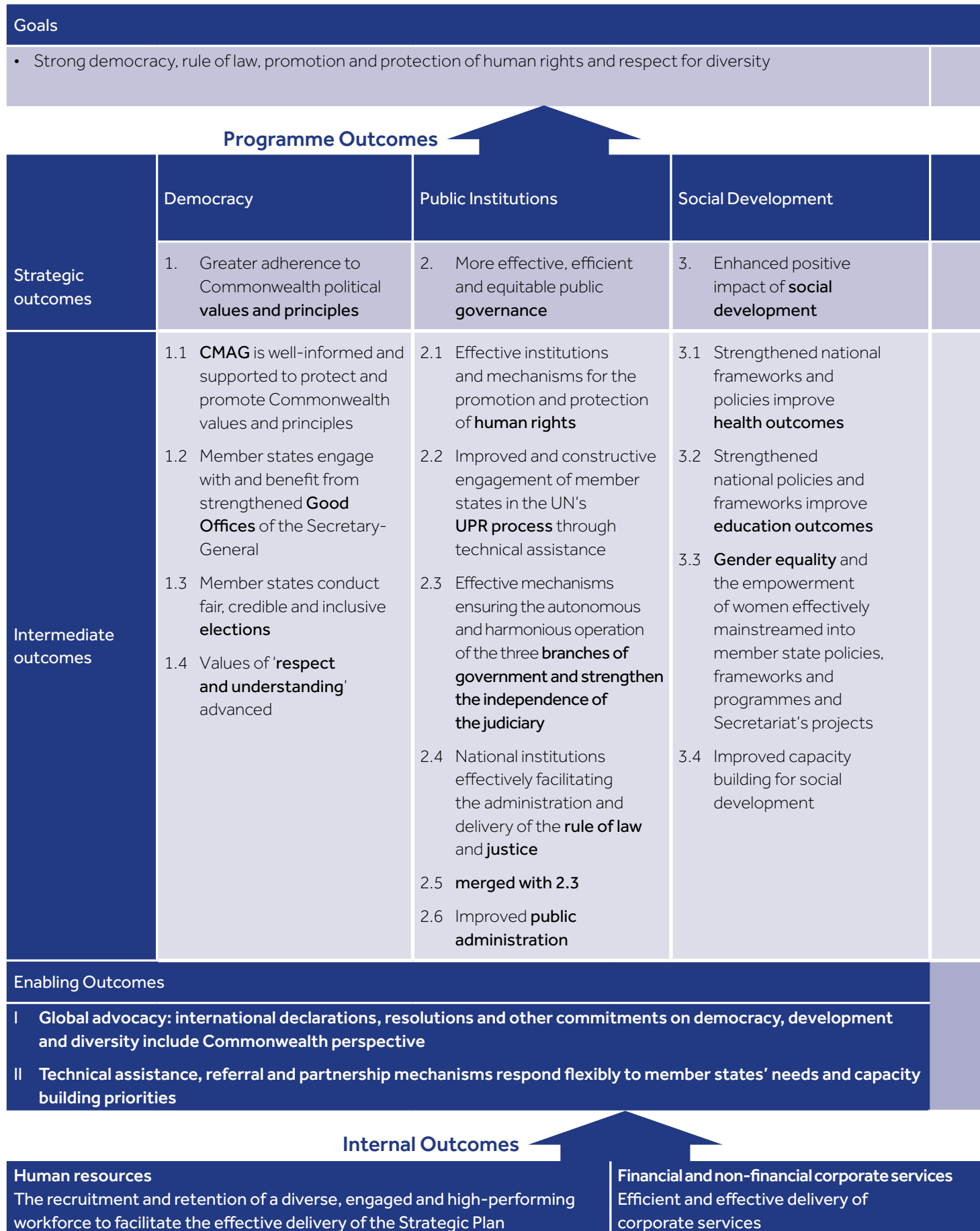
1 The Strategic Plan Development Consultative Process is at Annex-I.

2 The List of Evaluation Studies (2013-2015) is at Annex-II.

7. The Strategic Plan is guided by a set of principles. It is prioritised, sharply focussed, realistic, impact-oriented and in line with the Commonwealth Charter and adopted EPG recommendations. It reflects the Commonwealth's distinct and comparative strengths, and avoids duplication of work with other organisations. It embeds learning from past planning periods. It addresses the membership's diverse needs and perspectives and manifests innovative and contemporary approaches (such as projectising) to securing outcomes.
8. This Plan reflects some guiding considerations: the global context in which the Commonwealth operates; the key priorities of member governments collectively; and, the resources available to deliver the Plan. The Strategic Plan takes into account the rapidly changing global environment in which the Commonwealth and other multilateral organisations have to pursue their goals. It is reform oriented and aims at strengthening organisational effectiveness and value-added.
9. The Plan strives to reflect the shared key priorities of members. It has retained the balance that has existed in the Secretariat's work and priorities since its establishment in 1965, and which is reflected in its founding Memorandum. The number of work areas has been rationalised, yet a balance of priorities between 'democracy' and 'development' work continues.
10. In recognition of the Commonwealth's strength as a community of diverse states and peoples united by common goals, values and principles, the Plan has a new focus on 'diversity' which takes the form of practical initiatives to give effect to the 'Civil Paths to Peace' (CPP) report adopted at the 2007 CHOGM arising from the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding.
11. With regard to available resources, the Plan was based on the envelope of funds available in the 2012/13 financial year, adjusted annually on a 'zero real growth' basis. However, the reality has been a drop of £11 million a year in funding. Budgets and work plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16 have reflected the reduced available resources.
12. The approved Plan was operationalised in November 2013 after the approval of results based planning and budgeting. A mid-term review (MTR) of the Plan was conducted at the mid-way point in the summer of 2015. It was carried out to make the Plan more results-focused and to bring it up to speed with the developments that have taken place in the last two years.
13. This revised document reflects the MTR and the lessons learnt from implementing the Plan for two years. In reporting on the Plan's progress in the first two years, it became clear that the indicators in the Strategic Results Framework needed to be more specific and measureable. The MTR was also seen as an opportunity to determine baselines and targets for the indicators. A revised SRF is found at Annex III.

14. The schematic diagram (Diagram 1) provides a strategic overview of the Commonwealth Secretariat from a results perspective. It has three overarching goals at the top, indicating that all organisational efforts will be directed at achieving these results. The Secretariat's programme is planned in light of these goals. It is divided into six inter-related work areas: Democracy; Public institutions; Social Development; Youth; Development: pan-Commonwealth; and Development: small states and vulnerable states. Priority themes have been defined within these work areas in terms of strategic and intermediate outcomes, with a timeframe of ten and four years respectively. This is followed by four enabling outcomes that underpin the achievement of results and are an integral part of the programme. Finally, forming the bedrock are the three corporate outcomes (hereafter called internal outcomes) which ensure that the Secretariat is able to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Diagram 1: Strategic Plan Overview REVISED



- Inclusive growth and sustainable development
- A well-connected and networked Commonwealth

Programme Outcomes

Youth	Development: pan-Commonwealth	Development: small states and vulnerable states	Strategic outcomes
4. Youth more integrated and valued in political and development processes	5. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development	6. Strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states	
4.1 National and pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people 4.2 Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully and to take forward youth-led initiatives	5.1 Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system 5.2 Commonwealth principles and values advanced in global development and financing decisions (e.g. G20 and post-2015 MDG framework) 5.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management 5.4 Effective, equitable, transparent and sustainable management of marine and other natural resources	6.1 International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs 6.2 Small states enabled to effectively participate in international decision-making processes 6.3 Improved climate financing frameworks	Intermediate outcomes

III Commonwealth profile: profile of the Commonwealth is strengthened at all levels

IV Knowledge management and exchange leads to sharing of good practices and strengthened Commonwealth network (Formerly 5.5)

Internal Outcomes

Quality and results
 Effective planning, quality assurance and ME&R system to facilitate the delivery and reporting of the Strategic Plan

2. Context: Challenges and Opportunities

15. Due to the interconnected nature of the global economy, the **economic and financial crises** in the five years preceding the Plan had global ramifications and led to a global economic downturn, affecting both developed and developing countries. The economic crisis has had serious implications for the least developed countries (LDCs) and smaller states: they experienced reductions in commodity prices, remittances, exports, tourism revenue and foreign direct investment, which has resulted in diminished revenues, an increase in the demands on socio-economic safety nets and increasing levels of unemployment.
16. Despite the recent global downturn, the economic **prospects** of the Commonwealth as a group of countries are encouraging. The Commonwealth embraces vibrant **regional networks**: 18 Commonwealth states are members of the African Union (AU); 12 of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); 11 are members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF); seven of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); five of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC); and three are members of the European Union (EU). Keeping in view the growing importance of regional networks, the Secretariat's work with these networks has grown during the new Plan period. In addition, regional strategies have been developed for the Caribbean and the Pacific.
17. **Climate change** and environmental issues remain a global challenge and a major concern for the Commonwealth. It is noteworthy that out of 100 countries classified as most vulnerable to climate change, 45 are Commonwealth states, 31 are Commonwealth small states and 27 are Commonwealth small island developing states (SIDS). The Commonwealth has proved itself to be a global player in promoting awareness of these issues, devising strategies for climate change finance and acting as a champion advocating the case of small states and vulnerable states.
18. Global demand for energy and **natural resources** is increasing while finite natural resources are declining. Commonwealth states rank prominently as producers of many precious metals including gold, diamonds, platinum and copper, as well as natural gas. Many Commonwealth states also have extensive coastlines. The Secretariat will continue to provide assistance to members in strengthening equitable and sustainable management of maritime and other natural resources.
19. **Technology** is radically changing the way in which individuals, organisations and the world work and interact. The world's internet population is predicted to reach 3.4 billion by 2016. There is a huge potential for the countries and peoples of the Commonwealth to leverage this technological resource. The Commonwealth Secretariat is poised to benefit from this opportunity. 'Commonwealth Connects'³

3 Commonwealth Connects is a digital platform for professional networking and collaboration. This secure platform supports networks of expertise and communities of practice across the Commonwealth to be in contact with each other, to share knowledge and to collaborate in developing best practice, managing projects and coordinating events. Using cloud-based technology, Commonwealth Connects enables people to build working partnerships using their internet-enabled communication devices such as desktop/laptop computers or mobile smart-phones.

and other ICT tools will be used to facilitate intergovernmental linkages and pan-Commonwealth interaction among practitioners and people of the Commonwealth.

20. Demographic shifts in recent years have changed the outlook of populations and regions affected by such shifts across the globe. In Commonwealth countries, more than 50 per cent of citizens are under the age of 30. In 31 of the 54 Commonwealth states, more than one-fifth of total population is under the age of 14. The Commonwealth views **young people as assets** and works with them to enhance their political and developmental role.
21. The G20 has emerged as the major grouping in the global economic and developmental arena. **The Commonwealth–G20 relationship** has grown as the Commonwealth has served as a vehicle for bringing the perspectives of developing countries to the G20, and also for suggesting practical solutions to difficult development challenges. This engagement has been rooted in the 2009 CHOGM mandate, which urged the Commonwealth to work with the G20 and to strengthen the voice and representation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting. The Secretariat has expanded the G20 discussions through a partnership with la Francophonie and facilitated an Annual Commonwealth G20-Francophonie Dialogue.
22. The Commonwealth focuses its '**soft power**' in several areas, including peace building and democracy, respect and understanding, the rule of law and constitutionalism, and human rights. The Commonwealth has excelled in fostering an atmosphere of peer-to-peer influence. The Commonwealth values, which have been agreed and demonstrated by the members over the duration of its existence, remain a benchmark by which members continue to hold themselves and each other accountable.
23. There will continue to be opportunities to influence this reform by advocating **the Commonwealth's perspectives** – including its principles of inclusiveness and equity, its fundamental values, and its concern for the small and vulnerable, reflected in the Marlborough House Declaration of the Heads (2008). Most recently, the Secretariat contributed to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals; influenced the global debate on climate change and sustainable development and provided inputs to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) summit in 2014. It continues its advocacy in support of global trade negotiations and rules-based order.
24. The **Commonwealth family of organisations** is a valuable network for the Secretariat. Forging stronger partnerships with accredited Commonwealth organisations is vital to strengthen the network and to create greater impact. Similarly, **strategic partnerships** with other organisations will be strengthened in order to ensure Commonwealth values and developmental priorities are advanced through wider collaboration and co-operation.

3. Strategic Results Framework (SRF)

25. The Strategic Plan focuses on results that the Secretariat aims to achieve during the life of the Strategic Plan. These outcomes are summarised in the SRF, which is the core of the Plan (Annex-III). The SRF will guide the Secretariat's planning and budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting during the Plan period.
26. The SRF focuses at two levels of outcomes – strategic and intermediate. **Strategic outcomes** reflect the long-term change the Secretariat aims to strive for over the next eight to ten years. The Secretariat's contributions to the strategic outcomes will be assessed at the end of that period, largely through evaluation studies guided by the indicators, verifiable externally available data and feedback from stakeholders and member states.
27. **Intermediate outcomes** are medium-term results which the Secretariat will focus upon over the four years of the Plan. The Secretariat has aligned its resources with these results and is tracking progress through indicators during the Plan period. These intermediate outcomes, expected to be realised over two to four years, will result from an organisational effort and by contributions from the Secretariat's staff, which will be adjusted in terms of structure and core competencies accordingly.
28. A key result of the MTR has been the revising of the SRF with a focus on improving indicators and adding baselines and targets. The revised SRF is found at Annex III.
29. The intermediate outcomes and indicators have been supported by the development of **short-term outcomes and indicators** for a two-year period in the development of projects. The outcomes and their indicators in the SRF will guide the development of all Secretariat projects, and allocation of financial and human resources. Outcomes will be subjected to rigorous quality assurance mechanisms to ensure compliance and relevance with the SRF. This will be supported by the ongoing efforts in the Secretariat to strengthen the capacity of staff on results-based management (RBM). Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted against the defined quantitative and qualitative indicators.
30. In addition to the strategic and intermediate outcomes, the SRF also has four enabling outcomes and three internal result areas. The enabling outcomes are those results that underpin the intermediate outcomes. The internal outcomes, on the other hand, ensure an efficiently run organisation that promotes the delivery of the enabling and intermediate results.
31. The Strategic Plan's priorities have informed the Secretariat's structure and subsequent planning and budgeting. The Secretary-General has made requisite adjustments in the Secretariat structure to best deliver all Strategic Plan outcomes. It is envisaged, for example, that requisite delivery capacity will be created in those areas where new CHOGM mandates have emerged (strengthened role of Good Offices and CMAG; building resilience in small states and vulnerable states), where EPG recommendations have been adopted including partnerships and collaboration with Commonwealth organisations;

and where the Secretariat is proposing new initiatives (such as the knowledge management and exchange function, country-to-country collaboration, enhanced advisory capacity and strategic partnerships).

32. The Plan was developed based on the envelope of funds existing in 2012/13 adjusted annually on a zero real growth basis. However, the subsequent reduction in funding has impacted the scope of projects and the pace at which change can be expected. The reduced funds are allocated for result areas outlined in the intermediate, enabling and internal outcomes.

3.1 Strategic and intermediate outcomes

3.1.1 Democracy

Strategic outcome: Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles

Intermediate outcomes:

- CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles
 - Member states engage with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General
 - Member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
 - Values of 'respect and understanding' advanced
33. The focus of this strategic outcome is supporting members in adhering to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values in line with the recently agreed Charter of the Commonwealth. The Secretariat will continue to provide support to member states in deepening these values.
34. The Secretariat is strengthening its analytical capacity and proactive engagement on Good Offices. Assistance and support will continue to be provided, where discussed and agreed with member states, to help prevent, manage and overcome internal differences. The Secretariat is working with member states to enhance the impact of Commonwealth engagement and interventions geared to mitigate disputes, as well as help members to develop sustainable national institutions and arrangements that strengthen democratic culture and good governance.
35. The Perth CHOGM approved an enhanced role of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). In this regard, the Secretariat is providing analytical and administrative support to enable CMAG to deal with the full range of serious or persistent violations of Commonwealth fundamental political values. This includes political analysis and greater background context for the information of CMAG, particularly in advancing the scope to engage proactively and positively. By increasing this support, it is envisioned that member states will respond positively to CMAG's recommendations and implement them. There will be closer co-ordination between the distinct but complementary roles of the Secretary-General's Good Offices and CMAG.
36. The Secretariat is strengthening its attention to the pre-electoral environment and implementation of Commonwealth Observer Group recommendations. The Secretariat also continue to develop and strengthen the capacity of Commonwealth Election Management Bodies to conduct fair, credible and

inclusive elections through targeted technical assistance, innovative projects such as the Junior Elections Professional initiative as well as its continued support of the Commonwealth Electoral Network (CEN) created in 2010.

37. The Secretariat will strengthen its work in the area of addressing the root causes of violent extremism through diversity promotion under its Civil Paths to Peace mandate. This mandate was the outcome of the report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding, endorsed by Heads of Government at the Kampala CHOGM (2007). The prioritisation of this area of work was reiterated in the Perth CHOGM Communiqué. The Secretariat has already initiated actions through advocacy and institution building at the local level. This work will be deepened during the new Plan period.

3.1.2 Public institutions

Strategic outcome: More effective, efficient and equitable public governance

Intermediate outcomes:

- Effective institutions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights
 - Improved and constructive engagement of member states in the UN's Universal Periodic Review process through technical assistance
 - Effective mechanisms, procedures and legal frameworks that ensure the autonomous and harmonious operation of the three branches of government and strengthen the independence of the judiciary.
 - National institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of rule of law and justice
 - Improved public administration
38. Well-performing public institutions are critical for establishing and sustaining democracy, good governance and development. The Secretariat has a track record of strengthening the core public institutions of rule of law, human rights and public administration through context-sensitive technical support and peer-to-peer support. In this result area, the Secretariat will be working to create and strengthen effective, efficient and equitable public institutions.
39. In the area of human rights, focus will be on supporting the establishment/ strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions (EPG Recommendation 10) or other acceptable mechanisms. The Secretariat will be helping to develop effective human rights institutions and mechanisms in line with the Paris Principles to advance development of national human rights policies, action plans and legislation.
40. In addition, the Secretariat will build members' capacity and provide the technical assistance necessary to engage constructively with international and regional human rights mechanisms such as the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and help members implement UPR outcomes.
41. The Secretariat aims to strengthen member states' democratic institutions, by way of assisting reform to national constitutions, judiciaries and judicial processes, law enforcement and justice sector institutions in order to promote the rule of law. This will be achieved through (a) developing long-term capacity;

(b) assisting members to ensure national laws comply with international standards; (c) supporting members to implement and monitor rule of law commitments under Sustainable Development Goal 16; (d) producing and making available for use model laws, rules, procedures, guidelines and toolkits; and (e) strengthening judicial institutions, justice systems and court administration. In addition, the Secretariat will help to uphold the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles.

42. In the area of public administration, the Secretariat will provide technical and advisory assistance to member states to create and sustain effective, accountable and transparent institutions at the centre of government. This will be achieved through working in the following four key and inter-linked areas at the centre of government: public policy, public financial management, public procurement and anti-corruption. Using a holistic approach to drive excellence in these key areas, emphasis will be placed on institutional strengthening, enhancing human capital development, development of new and improved systems, technology and processes and building professional networks.

3.1.3 Social Development

Strategic outcome: Enhanced positive impact of social development

Intermediate outcomes:

- Strengthened national frameworks and policies improve health outcomes
 - Strengthened national policies and frameworks improve education outcomes
 - Gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively mainstreamed into member state policies, frameworks and programmes and Secretariat's projects
 - Improved capacity building for social development
43. Good health and education are key to ensuring delivery across the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Commonwealth countries that have invested strategically in these areas have seen significant benefits to social and economic development. Strengthening health and education policy has been identified as a key focus area to support broader development outcomes. Global education and health goals are particularly significant to Commonwealth nations, which collectively carry high burdens of poverty-related health diseases and education challenges. Good returns on investment include primary health care with a strong emphasis on health promotion, disease prevention and health protection, while providing pre-school education which has been shown to be a key factor in achieving education outcomes. Recognising that health and education are key sectors with significant national and international budgets and major players, the Secretariat will focus its efforts on providing policy advice and technical support to strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks. Expertise will be provided to member states in policy analysis and strategies for bridging gaps between policy formulation and policy implementation, in order to effectively realise national health and education outcomes.
44. This process will be anchored by policy analysis, development and implementation, documentation of Commonwealth practices and the identification of trends, gaps and opportunities for global policy advocacy,

which will also inform ministerial meetings and related global advocacy forums. A special focus in this Plan will be the post-2015 development agenda and the implications for member states.

45. The different stages of development of member states will be harnessed for exchange and learning opportunities drawing the membership into a dialogue – a development that will be strengthened through knowledge and exchange platforms (i.e. 'hubs'). These will be professionally managed, specialised on-line environments: a secure place for policy-makers and planners to discuss, share and learn (inform); a convergence point for forging and nurturing pan-Commonwealth partnerships and linkages (connect); and, a central access point for governments, civil society and stakeholders to collaborate (transact). The Secretariat will facilitate connections between such potentially dynamic networks. A range of facilitated networks will be established to scale up capacity for health and education policy strengthening. There can, for instance, be spaces for professionals, accredited Commonwealth civil society organisations, and associations, to follow and share emerging trends and good practices, form partnerships, provide peer-support and mentoring, and impart specialised training. This could forge stronger links, partnerships and collaboration between Commonwealth universities and higher institutions of learning, including more collaboration with partners such as the Commonwealth of Learning and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.
46. The importance of gender mainstreaming has been consistently emphasised in CHOGM communiqués. Gender mainstreaming is a process. Organisations benefit from being strategic, in working consistently on high priority development issues. This requires identifying and acting on strategic opportunities that are likely to yield tangible results on key issues of concern to people on the ground in member countries. Efforts have been made in the past in this regard, but there is recognition that the Secretariat should do more to renew and deepen the practice. The Secretariat is aiming at making significant progress in the new Plan period to achieve gender equality in diverse areas of its work as well as help member states mainstream gender into their policies, frameworks and programmes.
47. The Secretariat's gender policy was launched on International Women's Day in March 2012 and provides a framework for a concerted and systematic approach to gender mainstreaming within the Secretariat. The Strategic Plan 2013-17, identifies gender equality to be a cross-cutting issue within a RBM framework, and stipulates that gender mainstreaming should be fully reflected in the organisation's structure, systems, policies and programmes of assistance. This will translate at the organisation level, and policy and planning processes will reflect gender equality principles and measures. At programme and project levels, special consideration will be paid to the gender dimension, and measures to address gender gaps will be incorporated throughout the programme and project cycle. This commitment towards gender mainstreaming will be translated into allocation of financial resources, as well as capacity-building initiatives. The Secretariat will also provide technical assistance to member states to help empower women and develop effective frameworks for gender equality.
48. During the development of the Strategic Plan, members highlighted the importance of social development to their countries and the need to see that reflected in the Plan itself. They asked the Secretariat to focus on facilitating capacity building where the Commonwealth can add value. To this end, the

relevance of educational policy will be enhanced to support the delivery of the SDGs, including the development of a Commonwealth Curriculum to enhance skills and knowledge across the 17 goals. The economic, social and environmental benefits of protecting and promoting health will be emphasised in policy frameworks in order to advance sustainable well-being.

49. The mainstreaming of the gender perspective is not an end in itself, but is a strategy towards development goals, one of which is improved gender equality. Sustainable development aims at enlarging the choices for women and men without compromising the choices available to the next generations. In line with the concept of social development, promoting the inclusion of the poor, vulnerable and excluded groups (especially youth and women) and strengthening social cohesion and the capacity for collective action towards development provides entry points for gender equality and empowerment inclusive interventions. Gender mainstreaming is an essential element in transformative societal policies that goal-consciously strive toward social development towards "a society for all" that is inclusive of all women and men, girls and boys.

3.1.4 Youth

Strategic outcome: Youth more integrated and valued in political and development processes

Intermediate outcomes:

- National and pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people
 - Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully, and to take forward youth-led initiatives
50. With 40 years' experience in youth development, the Secretariat has a unique advantage in terms of its contemporary approaches, broad networks, trusted relationships and convening power. The Secretariat will be working towards the goal that national and pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance the social, political and economic empowerment of young people. This will be achieved by providing technical assistance for national and regional youth-relevant policies and enabling environments; advocacy for investing in youth ministries and programmes; development and sharing of frameworks, guidelines and tools; and the creation of a Youth Development Index (YDI) that augments respective member countries' national youth development indicators.
51. In addition, the Secretariat will support members to continue promoting the professionalisation of youth work. This will be pursued through setting competency standards for youth development work; exploration and facilitation of courses in youth development work; advocacy and support for the recognition of youth work as a profession; and the establishment of national and pan-Commonwealth youth worker associations.
52. A special focus will be placed on supporting young people to design and drive youth-led initiatives, especially by providing technical assistance and support for national, regional and pan-Commonwealth youth networks. This is in line with EPG Recommendation 50, which recommended the development of an

autonomous and youth-driven Commonwealth Youth Council. In addition, the Secretariat will continue to support young leaders to have a voice via Youth Forums at CHOGM, key ministerial meetings, and at yourcommonwealth.org.

53. The Secretariat will also build the capacity of national, regional and international institutions and individuals, to showcase and increase impact in youth development and youth-led programming. This will empower young people to confidently and skilfully participate in democracy and development processes, in accordance with national laws and regulations of member states.
54. The Secretariat's youth work will be underpinned by the core elements of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (2007–15), harmonised with other regional and global policy frameworks. The Secretariat's youth development work will place particular emphasis on the most critical challenges and opportunities relevant to young people in the Commonwealth. Most prevalent at the current time is the area of youth employment, where the Secretariat's work will focus on environments and mechanisms that enhance entrepreneurship and youth enterprise, thus enabling young people to contribute to national economies.
55. Additionally, the EPG Report recommended that the Secretariat play a role in helping member states strengthen the linkage between sport, development and peace, as well as in helping member states develop 'Sport for Development and Peace initiatives' (Recommendations 105, 106). This work will also be taken forward in collaboration with the Commonwealth Civil Paths to Peace initiative.

3.1.5 Development: pan-Commonwealth

Strategic outcome: More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development

Intermediate outcomes:

- Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system
 - Commonwealth principles and values advanced in global development and financing decisions (e.g. G20 and post-2015 MDG framework)
 - National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
 - Effective, equitable, transparent and sustainable management of marine and other natural resources
56. The Secretariat's efforts will be anchored in strengthening frameworks for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The Secretariat has carved out a niche of expertise over the last 25 years supporting members with economic policy development, trade negotiations, debt management, natural resource management, delimitation of maritime boundaries and ocean governance.
 57. The Secretariat will be engaged with emerging issues on trade integration and economic co-operation that affect Commonwealth developing countries. Trade policy-makers, negotiators, regulators and other stakeholders will benefit from timely, relevant and high-quality research, analysis and technical assistance upon which to frame economic goals and strategies. The focus

will be on developing institutional capacity at the national and regional level. The work will be undertaken, wherever possible, in collaboration with other relevant organisations.

58. The Secretariat will advance its work in the area of global development and financing decisions through its policy work, expert placement, research and by convening efforts in specific emerging issues. It will work towards the following: scanning major global developments; policy contributions to the G20 Working Group on Development; and facilitating discussions and developing collective Commonwealth positions on the post-2015 global development agenda.
59. In line with EPG recommendations (Recommendations 33 and 34) on debt management, the Secretariat will assist members to design and implement sound and prudent policies. This role includes capacity building in public debt management, by advising member states on the appropriate legal and institutional structures; developing government domestic bond markets; formulating and implementing debt strategies within a risk management framework; providing a suite of software solutions for recording, analysing, monitoring and reporting public debt and assisting in setting up accurate and timely databases covering various debt categories.
60. Support will be provided to member states to develop and benefit from marine resources by: securing access to marine resources through the delimitation of maritime boundaries in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; realising the value of the ocean economy through coastal policy-making, investment and decision-making; and integrating ocean governance into national governance frameworks.
61. Members will also be supported in the development of other natural resources through model laws and practice. The Secretariat will help in the development of legal, commercial and environmental frameworks, as well as fiscal regimes, and assistance in the preparation of transparent and fair bidding rounds to attract foreign investment.

3.1.6 Development: small states and vulnerable states

Strategic outcome: Strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states

Intermediate outcomes:

- International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs
 - Small states enabled to effectively participate in the international decision-making processes
 - Improved climate financing frameworks
62. The majority of the Commonwealth's membership – 32 of 53 – comprises small states, and in the last 35 years the Commonwealth has consistently been at the forefront in identifying and proposing responses to the challenges that small states face, while at the same time advocating for their causes. In fact, the Secretariat has developed expertise in small states' work across several thematic areas. In line with 11 EPG recommendations on small states (Recommendations 28, 29, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43), a dedicated work

area on small states and vulnerable states has been introduced to strengthen advocacy for their concerns on global platforms, as well as to address their particular development needs.

63. The Secretariat will carry out global advocacy towards the end that international policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs. This will also include implementation of decisions of high-level Commonwealth forums and events to raise awareness and build consensus.
64. The Secretariat will help strengthen the policy development and implementation capacities of small states. Technical assistance and support will be provided in the areas of growth, resilience, trade and regional integration, and sustainable development. This work will be supported by policy research and analysis on the particular challenges facing small states.
65. The Secretariat will facilitate the representation and effective participation of small states in international decision-making processes through the Commonwealth offices in New York and Geneva. The New York office will continue to provide a diplomatic base for envoys from small states to represent their respective states at the UN and promote pan-Commonwealth collaboration in the UN. The Geneva Office, in addition to providing a subsidised office space for diplomatic missions and a business centre for tenants and visiting small states delegations, will also continue to offer technical assistance from resident technical experts in the areas of work that take place in Geneva, including trade and human rights.
66. Emphasis will be placed on supporting the work being done to improve the climate financing frameworks for vulnerable states and sharing knowledge between regions. While the focus is principally on small and vulnerable states, the solutions may be applicable to other developing member countries. Global advocacy will be carried out to facilitate an improved flow of climate finance to small, vulnerable and island states. The EPG recommendation to convene an Expert Group on Climate Change will be implemented.

3.2 Enabling outcomes

3.2.1 Global advocacy

Outcome: International declarations, resolutions and other commitments on democracy, development and diversity include Commonwealth perspective

67. The Commonwealth Secretariat has a distinguished history of engaging and influencing global discussions and decision-making processes. It continues its efforts in this area. The advocacy work will be carried out at three levels, as follows:
 - a. Office of the Secretary-General, involving senior political-level engagement with organisations such as the UN, the World Bank, IMF, EU and the G20. This is in line with the Perth CHOGM mandate. This effort will be supplemented by support for the CHOGM Chair-in-Office to advocate for Commonwealth positions in global forums, such as the UN General Assembly.

- b. Convening of ministerial meetings (such as education, environment, finance, foreign affairs, health, sports, women's affairs and youth) has generally focussed on discussing contemporary global issues and providing mandates to the Secretariat. The focus on ministerial meetings will gradually shift and these meetings will be used as an opportunity to build consensus on global issues and otherwise utilise the Commonwealth power of convocation represented by these meetings. The agreed outcomes of these meetings will provide common policy positions for advocacy at relevant international fora. Ministerial meetings will be encouraged to network online through the 'Commonwealth Connects' platform.
- c. The Commonwealth Secretariat, with its policy analysis, has had proven impact in technical areas of global significance. These areas include trade, environment, debt management and G20 development work. The Secretariat will strengthen its efforts and will contribute to the development of the post-2015 global development framework, climate financing for small and vulnerable states, and promotion of international rules-based trade.

3.2.2 Technical assistance, referrals and partnerships

Outcome: Technical assistance, referral and partnership mechanisms respond flexibly to member states' needs and capacity building priorities

- 68. Provision of tailored technical assistance (TA) to members and regional bodies has been a hallmark of the Secretariat's work. It focuses on strengthening sustainable national capabilities through institutional capacity development and is provided in many forms e.g., research and feasibility studies, despatch of long- and short-term experts, etc. The Commonwealth approach is flexible, as well as culturally and contextually sensitive, and emphasises country ownership. It is guided by the principle of 'best fit' rather than 'best practice'. The Secretariat will continue to provide TA to its members in response to requests, especially least developed members, small states and vulnerable states, in line with the new Strategic Plan, while showing sensitivity to the unique challenges of its members.
- 69. In addition to providing direct technical assistance, the Secretariat will provide a referral service for its developing members. The referrals function will address requests for assistance from the members that fall outside the remit of the Strategic Plan. It will act in an advisory capacity to identify work that the Secretariat may not be well-placed to undertake, but which could be referred to:
 - a. Commonwealth family of organisations;
 - b. Other Commonwealth member states; and/or
 - c. Relevant international organisations and other entities.
- 70. Strengthening partnerships will be used as a key methodology to support members. The value of partnerships was emphasised in a number of EPG recommendations (Recommendations 17, 27, 42, 43, 58, 59 and 92). Currently, the Commonwealth Secretariat is working with a various organisations including the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). Current technical assistance projects engage with a wide range of national, regional, international and multinational partners to deepen participation and strengthen implementation. In addition, through the use of

innovation partnership and winning arrangements, the Secretariat will strive to strengthen relationships between member countries and relevant partnerships at the multilateral, regional and national levels.

3.2.3 Commonwealth profile

Outcome: Profile of the Commonwealth is strengthened at all levels

71. The Secretariat has focused on strengthening the Commonwealth's profile in diverse ways, building public awareness and understanding of the organisation's values and accomplishments through increased visibility.
72. Greater engagement and a higher level of participation from Commonwealth leaders and ministers at CHOGM and on Commonwealth Day will boost the profile of the Commonwealth and the Secretariat. EPG reports recommend that leaders and ministers should make reference to the Commonwealth in public speeches at high-level forums and events. Member governments are also encouraged to celebrate Commonwealth Day and its associated themes through various public activities. Greater participation from leaders will generate more publicity for CHOGM and Commonwealth Day. This will contribute to increasing public awareness and understanding of the organisation's work and values.
73. Generating publicity through various communications channels will ensure more balanced and diverse media coverage. Detailed media strategies and media outreach activities provided for ministerial meetings, Commonwealth Election Observer missions, workshops and events have helped raise the profile of the organisation. The website and intranet promote and publicise the work of the Secretariat among external and internal stakeholders.
74. Commonwealth Connects an online platform for enhancing professional communication and collaboration among the Commonwealth Secretariat, accredited organisations, partner organisations and member governments, has strengthened and promoted the work of the Commonwealth.

3.2.4 Knowledge Management

Outcome: Knowledge management and exchange leads to sharing of good practices and strengthened Commonwealth networks

75. The work of the Secretariat and member countries has created a body of knowledge that is ideal for knowledge transfer among members. For example, in the last Plan period the Secretariat produced research papers, CHOGM and ministerial meeting reports, consultants' technical analyses, feasibility studies and evaluations, as well as project design documents and project completion reports. The Secretariat also delivered training programmes and developed the presentations and databases to deliver these programmes. Other knowledge products included the Small States Digest and the Commonwealth Law Bulletin. In the absence of an institutional approach to knowledge management and sharing, this reservoir of knowledge was not collated, organised or made available to stakeholders in a systematic way.
76. Currently, under the New Strategic Plan knowledge is being recognised as a 'strategic asset' and source of value creation. Increasingly, knowledge is seen as a source of organisational learning which will help strengthen the Secretariat's

organisational capacity and improve its effectiveness. Externally, the sharing of knowledge with member countries and stakeholders informs, empowers and helps decision-making.

77. Member states and the EPG both recommended that the Secretariat strengthen the Commonwealth network. The network has been strengthened during the first two years of the Strategic Plan with a strong growth in networks on Commonwealth Connects, a cloud-based electronic platform. A strategy to collaborate with Commonwealth organisations will also be developed and implemented in due course.

3.3 Internal outcomes

3.3.1 Human resources

Outcome: The recruitment and retention of a diverse, engaged and high-performing workforce to facilitate the effective delivery of the Strategic Plan

78. The Strategic Plan is supported by an organisational change programme that has delivered a new staffing structure, new roles and a commitment to maximise the skills and potential of its people to promote a high performing work culture.
79. To do this, the Secretariat is developing, supporting, facilitating and championing policies, approaches and initiatives to create an employer value proposition that seeks to attract, develop and retains talented people. A People Strategy will provide an overarching structure for subsequent strategies to ensure that the organisation has fit-for-purpose policies and provisions on resourcing and attracting talent, learning and development, effective performance management, competitive reward, recognition schemes, staff well-being and engagement. The Secretariat will prioritise and resource these policies and provisions appropriately.
80. The Secretariat has introduced greater flexibility in project and staffing arrangements, so staff can be recruited for specific purposes for time-bound projects. Gender balance and reflection of Commonwealth national diversity in the workforce continues to be a priority. In addition, the Secretariat has also focused on bringing more young people into the organisation from across the Commonwealth with the launch of its Young Professional Programme in 2014.
81. The Secretariat will update, design, develop and implement systems and tools to create an enabling environment for staff and managers, with the focus on the Human Resources Information Management System, Applicant Tracking System and a Learning Portal. Key human resources (HR) metrics have been identified and are currently informing the Secretariat's HR decisions and priorities. Access to key HR data will be spread across the management layers of the organisation and used for greater key indicators of organisational performance and effectiveness. The Secretariat will seek to benchmark against world class organisations where possible.

3.3.2 Financial and non-financial corporate services

Outcome: Efficient and effective delivery of corporate services

82. Financial and non-financial corporate services are an essential underpinning to ensure that the Secretariat is able to deliver its programmatic mandates. These include financial systems, conference services, facilities management and information technology (IT)⁴. The Secretariat will discharge its key responsibility in this area to a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external.
83. Within the Strategic Plan horizon, the Secretariat will continue to improve on these services. Success will be substantiated through approved financial statements of the Secretariat's funds; the facilitation of good stewardship of governmental funds (unqualified financial statements); provision of a safe, suitable and functional working environment for all staff; reduction in carbon emissions; and provision of high quality conferences and events which support and enhance the programmatic work.
84. IT strategy supports the Secretariat's needs and direction and its delivery of programme mandates. The focus is on ensuring that the service is readily available and underpinned by a resilient infrastructure that supports transformational business change and organisational requirements. Staff will be empowered to make best use of IT facilities, supported and made easier by appropriate technologies and innovation. The IT service will support specific developments and improvements and enable more effective collaboration and communications, both internally and with stakeholders.
85. Necessary enhancements will be made to IT security in keeping with industry best practice. Progress will be measured in compliance with Service Level Agreement targets, the level of staff satisfaction with the service, as well as meeting targets for service availability and system uptime.

3.3.3 Quality and results

Outcome: Effective planning, quality assurance and ME&R system to facilitate the delivery and reporting of the Strategic Plan

86. Since the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the quality assurance function has been further strengthened at the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation stages. It is tightly focused on achieving results. The Secretariat's annual planning and budgeting process has been refined. Implementation of projects and the Secretariat's programme are monitored regularly, and regular reporting has been recast on Results Based Management (RBM) principles. Evaluations and impact studies are conducted according to the priorities of the SRF, and in line with the new Evaluation Strategy. Special attention is given to all aspects of quality and results at the project level.

4 As a result of the MTR, the Internal Outcome for IT has been merged into the Financial and Non-financial Corporate Services outcome.

4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework

87. While the SRF outlines the strategic priorities, it is supported by a robust ME&R framework (Table 1) that guides the Secretariat to monitor and evaluate results, as well as report on progress against the agreed outcomes. The framework helps to ensure that the Secretariat is 'doing the right things' and 'doing them right'. Indicators in the revised Strategic Plan have been fine-tuned. All new projects have baselines and targets, which inform the project design, assessment and review of progress against planned outcomes.
88. The monitoring part of the framework has three levels. Project managers and divisional directors will be able to monitor projects with the help of new monitoring tools. The new Programme Management and Information System (PMIS) will help track and document findings. The Secretariat will be conducting project reviews and field missions. The review and mission reports will then be used to create a portfolio of projects, performance rating and improvement mechanisms to ensure that the Secretariat's delivery is on target and results-based.
89. The new Evaluation Strategy outlines the principles and framework that will guide the Secretariat's programme of evaluations. Guided by the Evaluation Strategy, independent evaluations of the Secretariat's work will be undertaken to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Secretariat's work. The evaluation programme is forward looking and the evaluative evidence will help the Secretariat learn lessons and improve on its work.
90. Reporting of the results continues in the form of an annual report to the Board of Governors on the performance of the Secretariat in achieving the priorities of the Strategic Plan. From time to time and in line with the Evaluation Strategy, findings and recommendations from the evaluations and impact studies are presented and shared with the Board of Governors. In addition to the mid-term review, an end-term review of the Strategic Plan will be conducted and presented to the Board of Governors.

Table 1: Monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework

	Monitoring and evaluation process	Methodology	Frequency	Report	Utilisation of Findings
Strategic outcomes (8–10 years)	Strategic Plan review	The Strategic Plan review will be based on a comprehensive strategic monitoring and evaluation plan with indicators, means of verification and, where possible, baseline information and targets. The contribution of intermediate outcomes to the plan's strategic outcomes will be assessed. Towards the end of the four years, this independent strategic review will evaluate the strategic and intermediate outcomes, including lessons learned. The review will also draw upon the findings, recommendations and lessons from the independent evaluations of the Secretariat's assistance.	Quadrennial	Independent evaluation report	Internal – Development of corporate knowledge base and organisational learning for informed decision-making. External – Accountability mechanism to BoG/ExCo on progress on achieving strategic plan results.
Intermediate Outcomes (2–4 years)	Mid-term review	A mid-term review of the Strategic Plan will assess performance against the short-term and intermediate outcomes. It will also provide an opportunity to assess the appropriateness of indicators. This review will consider how the Secretariat can be more effective and be informed by recommendations from evaluation studies on selected outcomes and programme areas. It will be informed by audits conducted by external auditors as part of the Secretariat's internal audit plan.	Biennial	MTR report and Revised Strategic Plan	Internal – Inform review of project design, adjustment in short-term outcomes and indicators, and allocation of resources. External – BoG and ExCo assessment of progress / decisions.
	Annual performance review	Standardised monitoring and evaluation tools will be used to assess progress. Information collected will be analysed to reflect progress against the outcomes. Bi-annual progress reports and project completion reports will inform the annual performance review.	Annually	Annual results report	Internal – Show trends and inform decision-making on project implementation, review of design and budget reallocation. External – Inform ExCo and BoG on progress and decisions.
Internal processes to improve performance					
Short-term outcomes (0–2 years)	Field visits and project reviews	Standardised monitoring tools have been developed, which can be tailored to meet specific project requirements. These tools will be used by project managers and divisions to monitor progress. Project reviews and monitoring missions by SPED on selected outcomes will help verify performance and identify issues.	Ongoing	Bi-annual progress reports	Internal Data and information from the reports should show trends in outputs and outcomes by intermediate outcomes/country region/sector/ mode of delivery etc. Project and Programme performance will be used within a performance rating system to establish the overall performance of the Secretariat's portfolio.

5. Collaboration with Commonwealth Organisations

91. The Secretariat has continued in recent years to consolidate a closer working relationship with the accredited Commonwealth organisations, in order to give greater relevance and substance to accreditation itself, as well as to promote more effective partnerships in delivering the Secretariat's work programme. This approach was given a further impetus by the EPG recommendations that the Secretariat should strengthen its relationship with the Commonwealth Foundation (Recommendation 81); co-ordinate its work with associated Commonwealth institutions in order to draw on their expertise (Recommendation 87); and strengthen its linkages and functional co-operation with Commonwealth agencies in the field (Recommendation 89).
92. The Secretariat will establish institutionalised mechanisms of liaison and collaboration with other intergovernmental and accredited Commonwealth organisations. The Secretariat will propose, for the approval of the Board of Governors, a framework of consultations with accredited Commonwealth organisations.
93. The Secretary-General will meet at least once every year with the heads of intergovernmental organisations and attend consultative meetings with accredited organisations. The Secretary-General, as well as other members of the senior management, will continue to promote Commonwealth organisations in member states. The ongoing consultations with accredited organisations will be made strategic and meaningful, with an emphasis on promoting more qualitative, knowledge-sharing and results-oriented dialogue. The Accreditation Guidelines have been revised, and the Secretariat will develop a framework for the accreditation review process to ensure that these organisations uphold Commonwealth values and principles.

6. Risk Management Strategy

94. Since the introduction of the New Strategic Plan, the Secretariat has developed a risk management strategy. It has adopted the international standard, ISO 31000⁵ 'Risk management – Principles and guidelines' which provides a structured approach to risk management.
95. The main objectives of this strategy are to:
- Embed risk management into the culture of the Secretariat
 - Integrate risk management into all existing management processes
 - Establish a common understanding of the Secretariat's expectations on risk management throughout all divisions and among all partners and third parties
96. This is a Secretariat-wide policy and all divisions have a role to play in ensuring risk is adequately managed and that the Secretariat's overall objectives are achieved as a result through the adoption of the risk management procedure-cycle.
97. To successfully achieve this the Secretariat developed a four-phased risk management action plan detailing specific actions needed for success. Phase 1, which largely focused on increasing awareness of risk management; delivering risk management training to all staff and; creating divisional risk registers, was successfully implemented. Phase 2 of the Plan is underway where focus will be on determining and agreeing the Secretariat's appetite for risk.

5 ISO 31000 was published in 2009 as an internationally agreed standard for the implementation of risk management principles.

Annexes

Annex I: Strategic Plan Development Consultative Process

- Written submissions were sought from member governments over a two-year period, including a questionnaire in which member governments were requested to prioritise those areas of the Secretariat's current work that could be increased, decreased or brought to a conclusion, as well as to propose new areas of work if desired or required;
- The Secretary-General conducted informal consultations with groups of Governors of the Board throughout late 2011 and early 2012;
- The CHOGM-directed process to further consider the EPG recommendations informed the Strategic Plan development through a senior officials meeting in April 2012 and a meeting of the Ministerial Task Force in June 2012;
- A 'First Discussion Paper' was circulated to the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth Secretariat in June 2012;
- The Secretary-General conducted consultations in 2012 with Commonwealth Secretariat staff;
- The Secretariat met with the Consortium on Education and other leading figures working in the education sector, and also with leading figures working in the Commonwealth in the health and education sectors during 2012;
- A 'Scoping Paper' on emerging themes for the Plan was discussed in an informal briefing of the Board in September 2012;
- The 'Scoping Paper' was discussed and endorsed by Commonwealth Foreign Ministers at their annual meeting in September 2012;
- A draft Strategic Plan was presented to an informal meeting of Governors on 15 November 2012;
- A draft Strategic Plan was presented to an Extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors on 27 November 2012;
- A revised draft was circulated on 25 January 2013 and discussed at an Extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors on 08 March 2013 where it was agreed to form a Sub-Group to finalise the Plan;
- The Sub-Group met on 19 March and 8 April and a revised draft was circulated to Board members on 15 April and discussed at an Extraordinary Board meeting on 2 May 2013; and
- An expanded Sub-Group met on 17 May and reached a consensus on the draft Strategic Plan, which would go to the 23 May 2013 Board meeting for approval.

Annex II: List of Evaluations (2013–2015)

1. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Assistance to Member Countries on Criminal Law	February 2013
2. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat support to Sri Lanka	July 2013
3. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat support to Belize	July 2013
4. Impact Assessment of Malta-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme	July 2013
5. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat support to Kenya	December 2013
6. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat support to Solomon Islands	March 2014
7. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Assistance to Member Countries in Legislative Drafting	January 2015
8. Impact Assessment- Institutional Strengthening of Credit Union Sector in the Bahamas	April 2015
9. Impact Assessment- Strengthening Debt Management in Jamaica	April 2015
10. Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Assistance to Small States in Geneva on Multilateral Trade Issues	June 2015
11. Evaluation of the Commonwealth Media Development Fund	July 2015
12. Evaluation of Singapore-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme	August 2015
13. Evaluation of the Commonwealth Connects Programme	August 2015

Annex III: Revised Strategic Results Framework

The SRF has been revised as part of the Mid-Term Review to provide specific, measurable indicators with baselines and targets.

Key		Notes						
n/a	Not Applicable	The Secretariat's work in this area is in response to members' unforeseen needs, therefore target values cannot be anticipated.						
TBD	To be determined	Indicator values to be established based on findings from currently ongoing baseline research.						
-	Indicator not measured at this point	Where the baseline indicator value was not available at the start (2013/14) the MTR indicator value becomes the baseline.						
No./Title	Strategic outcomes	No.	Intermediate outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Mid Term (2015)	Target (2017)	
1. Democracy	Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles	1.1	CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles	# of member states engaged with CMAG under the enhanced mandate that respond positively to and implement CMAG's recommendations	3	0	n/a	
		1.2	Member states engage with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General	# of identified member states engaged in Good Offices capacity that implement policy changes that reflect the advice from the Secretary-General and his/her Envoys and Advisors	2	1	n/a	
		1.3	Member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections	# of member states whose electoral framework has been strengthened to meet national, regional and Commonwealth standards, as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal and constitutional frameworks in place Institutional capacity and independence Procedures in place 	# of member states where at least 10% of Commonwealth Observer Group recommendations are in the process of being implemented within 12 months of an election taking place	0	0	10
		1.4	Values of respect and understanding advanced	# of national electoral management bodies that embed best practices and principles emerging from the Commonwealth Electoral Network in enhancing their national electoral processes	# of member states adopting best practises and principles emerging from the Commonwealth Electoral Network in enhancing their national electoral processes	0	-	12
				% of student participants in Commonwealth Class Programme who report that learning about the Commonwealth has improved their understanding of global issues	63%	-	75%	

No./Title	Strategic outcomes	No.	Intermediate outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Mid Term (2015)	Target (2017)
2. Public Institutions	More effective, efficient and equitable public governance	2.1	Effective institutions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights	# of targeted member states with new or more effective national human rights institutions as indicated by:	0	-	10
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling legislation adopted and compliant with Paris Principles Fully operational Movement towards 'A' status 			
				# of targeted member states that engage constructively with the UNUPR as indicated by:	0	-	20
		2.2	Improved and constructive engagement of member countries in the UN's UPR process through technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality reporting to UNHRC Undergoing examination in a constructive manner Implementing accepted recommendations 			
				# of key regional human rights issues progressively addressed by Commonwealth Parliamentary Human Rights Groups	0	5	5
				# of member states that reform their constitutional and statutory provisions in order to uphold the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles	-	5	8
2.3	Effective mechanisms, procedures and legal frameworks that ensure the autonomous and harmonious operation of the three branches of Government and strengthen the independence of the judiciary	# of member states that establish procedures which provide for the appointment, discipline and removal of judges in accordance with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles	-	5	5		
		# of member states that institute reforms to strengthen the cognitive and institutional aspects of the independence of the judiciary	-	5	5		
		# of member states using Secretariat guidelines, tools and model laws/regulations to strengthen the administration and delivery of justice	1	3	4		
2.4	National institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of rule of law and justice	% of member states that make substantial progress in creating legal frameworks for the (i) effective delivery of justice and (ii) promotion of reforms conducive to sustainable development	-	8%	10%		
		# of member states that effect administrative reforms to strengthen those institutions	-	3	4		
		(Merged with 2.3)					
2.6	Improved public administration		# member states with effective, accountable and transparent targeted public institutions in the efficient delivery of services as indicated by the existence and functioning of at least 5 of 9 institutions in line with Commonwealth agreed standards outlined below:	0	7	11	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Policy Coordination and Implementation Unit Public Service Commission Ministry of Establishment Public Procurement Regulatory Agency Internal Audit Department Supreme Audit Institution Public Accounts Committee Finance Committee of Parliament Anti-Corruption Agencies 				

No./Title	Strategic outcomes	No.	Intermediate outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Mid Term (2015)	Target (2017)
3. Social Development	Enhanced positive impact of social development	3.1	Strengthened national frameworks and policies improve health outcomes	# of member states with up-to-date national Universal Health Coverage policies to meet Sustainable Development Goals	-	24	29
				# of member states with up-to-date Non Communicable Diseases policies to meet international health care delivery standards	-	0	5
		3.2	Strengthened national policies and frameworks improve education outcomes	# of member states with up-to-date national educational policies to support the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals	-	38	43
		3.3	Gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively mainstreamed into member state policies, frameworks and programmes and Secretariat's projects	# of targeted member states whose national policy formulation and planning processes reflect and demonstrate gender equality and empowerment # of member states whose instituted laws / regulations / rules / guidelines / voluntary codes support equality in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending violence against women and girls Increased number of women in leadership and senior positions Establishing frameworks for enhancing women's access to finance 	-	0	4
3.4	Improved capacity building for social development	# of member states that have adopted and applied frameworks to address gender gaps in selected thematic areas as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reforms on instituting VAWG Established advocacy agendas on women's leadership Increase in the number of women in leadership and senior positions in targeted countries Increase in the number of women accessing finance in targeted countries 	-	0	2		
		# of Health and Education knowledge hubs fully functioning as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established website Policy resources and tools collated Web links to policy tools and evidence based resources Communities of Practices facilitated and engaged Partners collaborate and engaged 	0	-	2		

No./Title	Strategic outcomes	No.	Intermediate outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Mid Term (2015)	Target (2017)
4. Youth	Youth are more integrated and valued in political and development processes	4.1	National and pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people	# of member states implementing reform actions to establish or strengthen the policy environment for youth empowerment	-	TBD	8
				# of member states taking action to further the professionalisation of youth work	-	TBD	5
4. Youth		4.2	Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully, and to take forward youth-led initiatives	# of member states adopting sport as an intentional approach to advancing development and peace as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific policy instruments • National coordination and cross sectoral mechanisms 	-	TBD	8
				# of national, regional and pan-Commonwealth youth-led networks and platforms established or strengthened	-	TBD	5
5. Development: Pan-Commonwealth	More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development	5.1	Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system	# of targeted national, regional and international institutions and individuals demonstrating increased impact in youth development and youth-led programming	-	TBD	15
				# of member states with enhanced ability to formulate trade policy, negotiate and implement international trade agreements as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade policy review mechanisms and legislations • New/ emerging issues addressed by member states • Agreements/ outcome documents reflecting member states' concerns/ interests • Trade Advisors/ Experts' engagements/ involvement in trade policy, negotiations and implementations of trade agreement 	0	-	53
5. Development: Pan-Commonwealth				# of targeted international and regional forums that acknowledge trade related emerging issues and global trade support architecture of the Commonwealth as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of times outcome documents reflect Commonwealth trade issues • Importance given to the issue (agenda) • Commitment to respond • Citation of Commonwealth input in the Outcome documents 	0	0	5
				# of trade competitiveness strategies and action plans developed and implemented by member states	0	2	8
5. Development: Pan-Commonwealth				# of new elements introduced into member states' trade strategies in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional integration • Export diversification • Gender sensitivity in Trade Policies 	0	0	4

Enabling outcomes

No	Area	Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	MTR	Target
I.	Global advocacy	International declarations, resolutions and other commitments on democracy, development and diversity include Commonwealth perspective	<p># of outcome documents at CHOGM and Ministerial meetings that reflect Commonwealth consensus perspectives</p> <p># of targeted international forums that recognise the Commonwealth shared policy positions and include Commonwealth proposals in global outcome documents</p>	0	6	9
II.	Technical assistance, referrals and partnerships	Technical assistance, referral and partnership mechanisms respond flexibly to member states' needs and capacity development priorities	<p># of approved short and long term technical assistance engagements in response to requests of member states as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional distribution Thematic distribution South-south cooperation Gender diversity <p># of member states made aware of alternative sources of support to address their needs and capacity development priorities as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals to other member states and partners <p>% of Commonwealth accredited organisations with a satisfactory level of engagement with the Commonwealth Secretariat and member states as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation at meetings (attendance, submissions, # of meetings open to all accredited organisations) Feedback from accredited organisations Commonwealth Connects utilization <p># of effective partnerships formed with the accredited organisations as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the organisations advance Commonwealth principles and values How informed they are of the Secretariat's work 	59	44	40-50
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals to other member states and partners <p>% of Commonwealth accredited organisations with a satisfactory level of engagement with the Commonwealth Secretariat and member states as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation at meetings (attendance, submissions, # of meetings open to all accredited organisations) Feedback from accredited organisations Commonwealth Connects utilization <p># of effective partnerships formed with the accredited organisations as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the organisations advance Commonwealth principles and values How informed they are of the Secretariat's work 	0	7	n/a
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals to other member states and partners <p>% of Commonwealth accredited organisations with a satisfactory level of engagement with the Commonwealth Secretariat and member states as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation at meetings (attendance, submissions, # of meetings open to all accredited organisations) Feedback from accredited organisations Commonwealth Connects utilization <p># of effective partnerships formed with the accredited organisations as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the organisations advance Commonwealth principles and values How informed they are of the Secretariat's work 	0	0	80%
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals to other member states and partners <p>% of Commonwealth accredited organisations with a satisfactory level of engagement with the Commonwealth Secretariat and member states as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation at meetings (attendance, submissions, # of meetings open to all accredited organisations) Feedback from accredited organisations Commonwealth Connects utilization <p># of effective partnerships formed with the accredited organisations as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the organisations advance Commonwealth principles and values How informed they are of the Secretariat's work 	0	0	6

No	Area	Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	MTR	Target
III.	Commonwealth profile	Profile of the Commonwealth is strengthened at all levels	<p>Level of commitment from member states to high-level advocacy efforts in support of Commonwealth Day and CHOGM, and analysis of media coverage generated around these events</p> <p>Level of action by Commonwealth leaders and ministers to reference CHOGM, Commonwealth Day, the Commonwealth in speeches and international forums</p> <p>Level of media engagement and analysis of media stories and references made about the Commonwealth</p> <p>Level of access and utilisation of Commonwealth knowledge resources, services and networks by the Commonwealth Citizens</p> <p>Level of perception and understanding of the Commonwealth, its brand and visual identity as indicated by the Commonwealth citizen survey</p>	Low	-	High
				Low	-	High
				Low	-	High
				Low	-	High
IV.	Knowledge Management (Moved from 5.5)	Knowledge management and exchange leads to sharing of good practices and strengthened Commonwealth networks	<p># of quality publications, reports, periodicals, research and knowledge-based materials disseminated and utilised as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ilibrary usage • Visits and inquiries to the Knowledge Centre • Website hits on the knowledge products • Access to priced publications <p>Total usage on Commonwealth Connects networks in facilitating the exchange of information as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents viewed/printed/downloaded • Discussions initiated 	27,673	52,555	62,500
				80,710	95,878	100,000

Internal outcomes

No.	Area	Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	MTR	Target
A.	Human resources	The recruitment and retention of a diverse, engaged and high-performing workforce to facilitate the effective delivery of the Strategic Plan	<p>% improvement in the proportion of staff and experts that consider the Commonwealth Secretariat as an employer of choice as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed well (management and leadership) Invested in learning and development Satisfactorily rewarded and recognised Positive and professional working culture <p>% of staff who have their performance rated as 'Performing' or 'Outstanding Performance'</p> <p>Level of effectiveness in resource planning and delivery contributing to organisational performance and meeting member states requirements as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession planning process Vacancy to fill rate Innovative resource solutions Optimal use of system Fit for purpose recruitment process <p>Levels (Unit of measurement) of diversity in the different workforce categories is representative of the Commonwealth as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender balance Geographic representation Age (Youth under 29 years of age) 	-	30%	50%
			% of staff who have their performance rated as 'Performing' or 'Outstanding Performance'	-	0	85%
			Level of effectiveness in resource planning and delivery contributing to organisational performance and meeting member states requirements as indicated by:	Low	Medium	High
			Levels (Unit of measurement) of diversity in the different workforce categories is representative of the Commonwealth as indicated by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F52%/M48% 65% of 53 members total (established) staffing population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F58%/M42% 71% of 53 members (established) staffing population 8% of total (established) staffing population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> F55%/M45% 75% of 53 member states 15% of total (established) staffing population

No.	Area	Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	MTR	Target
B.	Financial and non-financial services	Efficient and effective delivery of corporate services:	% of financial statements approved before 31 December following the end of the financial year	-	66% (Two of the three statements were completed in this time)	100%
			Level of stewardship of Secretariat funds (unqualified financial statements)	-	66% (Two of the three statements were completed in this time)	100%
			Level of safety, suitability and functionality of staff working environment	-	85%	95%
			% reduction in the Secretariat's carbon emissions	-	60%	90%
			Level of delivery of events and event services across the organisation that support the business requirement	-	85%	95%
			Room booking system is functional, efficient and effective	-	50% System is new and will need to be in	80%
			Level of compliance with IT Service Level Agreement targets	-	80%	95%
			Level of staff satisfaction with IT services	-	75% (Frequent measures of staff satisfaction to be put in place)	90%
			Level of service availability and system uptime meet agreed targets	-	80%	95%
			% of projects assessed as performing in line with the Secretariat's RBM Standards	-	40%	70%
D.	Quality and results	Effective planning, quality assurance and ME&R system to facilitate the delivery and reporting of the Strategic Plan	% of Projects' progress reports that meet internal quality standards	-	15%	50%
			% of Secretariat's planning and reporting products to governing bodies that meet internal standards and are accepted by the Executive Committee and Board of Governors on first submission	-	60%	80%
			% of evaluation recommendations (since 2010) that have informed management decisions in reforming the Secretariat's systems, processes and programme	-	30%	50%



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