

ISI Strategic Planning Project

Project Terms of Reference

Background and Context

ISI has enjoyed a 40-year history of providing material collaborative value to the Atlantic Canadian post-secondary education sector. The principles of ISI include, member funded, member governed, and individual member autonomy. The mission, vision and core values were reviewed and updated in 2018. ISI has not undertaken a comprehensive strategic planning project in over 10 years.

Over the last ten years, ISI has experienced growth in; member access to various alternate collaborative initiative, locally, regionally, and nationally; the growth of collaborative initiatives for information technology related to goods and services; initiatives focused at and funded by sub-groups of ISI members; and the provision of services to other Atlantic based post-secondary education collaborative initiatives.

Objective

The Strategic Plan shall acknowledge and leverage the history of collaboration within the ISI membership. The Strategic Plan shall include broad directives, objectives and strategies to enhance and sustain member value.

The Strategic Plan will serve as a key tool to guide the growth and development of ISI over the next five years. A strategic plan will need to be a living / breathing document, provide a roadmap for the future of ISI along with an accountability framework.

The strategic plan should be based on; internal and external stakeholder input; factors affecting collaboration within ISI, its membership and the post-secondary education sector; and be grounded in data.

Outcome

The desired outcome will include:

- a) A review and revision of the Vision, Mission and Core Values.
- b) A review and revision of the Strategic Goals for the organization and its various operating committees.
- c) A statement of the strategic direction of the next 5+ years, including a desired future state.
- d) An accountability framework including a monitoring plan and the identification of key performance indicators (KPIs) focused on statistical measures showing (direct/indirect) effectiveness of accomplishing the strategic goals.

Role and Responsibilities

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities will include:

- a) The Strategic Plan Terms of Reference will be developed by the CEO, under the direction of the Governance Committee for recommendation to the Board of Directors.

- b) The Board of Directors Executive Committee will be the executive sponsor of the Strategic Planning Project.
- c) The project is accountable to the Board of Directors, the CEO and Chair will provide regular updates.
- d) The CEO will provide project leadership and project management support.
- e) The CEO, with input and support of the Executive Committee will engage external consulting resources as required.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is key to the success of the development and execution of the ISI Strategic Plan:

- a) ISI will develop and implement a stakeholder communication plan.
- b) Director, committee representatives and staff will form the base of the stakeholder engagement process.
- c) Stakeholders will be asked to contribute to the identification of the desired future state.
- d) Stakeholders will be asked to provide input and feedback focused at the:
 - a. Redefined Mission, Vision, Core Values and Strategic Goals.
 - b. The overall ISI Strategic Plan.
 - c. Proposed KPI's and accountability plan.

Project Timeline

The project timeline is defined as follows.

2021

- March – May Define the Strategic Plan Terms of Reference
- May Board Approval of Plan Terms of Reference, Project Launch
- June – July Engage consultant
- July – Sept. Environmental scan, member engagement (on-line, virtual)
- Oct. Board of Directors planning session (in-person)
- Oct. Draft plan
- Oct. Socialize and revise draft.
- Nov. Revise draft.
- Dec. Plan Approval
- Jan. 2022 Launch

Three (3) Phase Project

The ISI Strategic Planning Project will evolve in three phases:

The Diagnostic Phase

The diagnostic phase will focus on the identification of major issues at stake. This phase informed by an environmental scan is intended to define “where we are”. Major issues at stake refers to significant challenges or opportunities for ISI, which must be addressed to ensure ISI’s continued success and relevance. An effective outcome will include the identification of a finite number (between 4 and 6) main challenges or opportunities faced by ISI. The identification of major issues will be high level but precise enough to point to potential strategies.

External consulting resources will be engaged to support the CEO in the Diagnostic Phase.

Strategic Orientation

The orientation phase is focused on synthesizing the outcome of the Diagnostic Phase, developing a strategic orientation, “where are we going”. Strategic Orientations will address what we want to be and what we do NOT want to be and thus includes a review of ISI’s Mission and Vision. The outcome will include the prioritization of the principal areas where we wish to pursue actions – highlighting priority areas for ISI, which stand to have a maximum impact on ISI’s future and member value. Strategic Orientations are guided by the Vision and lead to tangible, decisive actions.

External consulting resources will be engaged to support the CEO in the Strategic Orientation Phase.

Action Plan

The Action Plan Phase will focus on the development of initiatives and objectives designed to position ISI to reach its destination. Initiatives will be developed to align with each of the strategies identified. To facilitate an accountability framework, initiatives identified are required to be tangible, planned, and assigned. Each initiative will be supported by several objectives that define the targets or goals for each strategic initiative. Effective objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic.

External consulting support may not be required for this phase. It will be an ongoing responsibility of the CEO, the Board of Directors, and the operating committees to define, amend, and report periodically on the action planning phase.

External Consultant Engagement

ISI will develop and issue a Request for Proposal to identify an external consultant to support the CEO in the Strategic Planning Project. The CEO will request the approval of the Executive Committee before proceeding with the engagement.

The External Consultant will be engaged to support the Diagnostic and Strategic Orientation phases. The role of the External consultant in the Action Phase will be defined as the project unfolds.

Diagnostic Phase

The first phase of the engagement will include a validation of the proposed work plan, an environmental scan including a review of the current Mission, Vision, Core Values, Strategic Goals. The CEO will prepare and review a high-level review of alternate collaborative models to inform the consultant of the current post-secondary education collaborative procurement landscape.

The consultant will develop and administer stakeholder engagement sessions (virtual) with a minimum of five groups: Board of Directors, SMC, EBC, IT Leaders, Staff. One-on-one interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders, Chair, Past-Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee Chairs, CEO.

The Diagnostic Phase will conclude with a report of the stakeholder engagement process and the identification of the major issues facing ISI.

Strategic Orientation

The second phase of the engagement will include the identification of the proposed future direction of ISI. This will include the required aligning of the organization’s Mission and Vision. Following stakeholder consultation, the resulting strategic orientation will include the identification of strategic priorities and areas of focus. The strategic areas of focus defined must lead to tangible, decisive action plans.