



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA

Strategic Directions

April 2017 – March 2022

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Introduction

This document sets out the Medical Sciences Council's (the Council) strategic directions for the five-year period from April 2017 to March 2022. It builds on previous strategic directions documents published by the Council.

The Council's Strategic Directions 2017 -2022 document provides the foundational framework of our work over the next five years. It identifies areas of particular focus, and provides a benchmark against which we can measure our progress in achieving our strategic priorities.

A Change of Format

Previous strategic planning documents adopted by the Council were developed for a three-year period, included an annual business plan section, with the entire document then being reviewed annually.

From 2017 the Council has modified our approach to strategic planning through the development of a five-year plan that sets out our core strategic outcomes over this period. A separate annual plan will then be developed for each 12-month period across the five-year term of the strategic plan. The annual plan sets out the activities to be undertaken by the Council within the relevant 12-month period to advance our strategic priorities and objectives as set out in this document.

The Medical Sciences Council

THE MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND IS A RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY UNDER THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COMPETENCE ASSURANCE ACT 2003 (THE ACT). WE ARE ONE OF SIXTEEN INDEPENDENT HEALTH REGULATORS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC BY ENSURING HEALTH PRACTITIONERS ARE COMPETENT AND FIT TO PRACTISE. WE REGULATE MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PRACTITIONERS AND ANAESTHETIC TECHNOLOGY PRACTITIONERS

The Council's functions¹ are set out in section 118 of the Act. In summary this includes a number of core responsibilities:

Prescribing qualifications and accrediting education programmes to ensure graduates have the competencies and attributes required of registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners.

Setting the standards for clinical and cultural competence and ethical conduct that must be met by all medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners.

Registration and recertification of medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners ensuring that only those with the relevant skills, competencies and fitness to practise are able to practise in New Zealand.

Ensuring registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners continue to be competent and fit to practise by investigating their performance, conduct or health in response to concerns raised, and taking appropriate action to protect the safety of the public.

The Focus of Our Work

The overriding focus of the Council's work is the health and safety of the public. The Council is not responsible for protecting the interests of medical laboratory science or anaesthetic technology practitioners. That said, the Council does have a responsibility to ensure we undertake our legislative functions consistently, fairly and proportionately. Our intention is to achieve the best outcomes for the public through appropriate and sustainable regulation.

The Council works with a range of stakeholders including practitioners, employers, educators, professional bodies, other regulators, and the public to achieve our overarching objective of ensuring medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners practise competently and safely.

¹ An unabridged extract of section 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 is provided in Appendix 1

A Partnership Arrangement

Secretariat services are provided through a New Zealand registered company, Medical Sciences Secretariat (MSS) that is jointly owned by the Medical Sciences Council and the Medical Radiation Technologists Board (the Board). This shared arrangement enables both responsible authorities to achieve efficiencies both in terms of costs and consistency of regulatory standards.

While each Council and Board is a separate responsible authority with legal responsibility for the statutory regulation of different groups of health professionals, our strategic priorities and objectives are similar. Sharing our secretariat resources allows both the Council and the Board to manage a number of strategic objectives and subsequent annual business goals as joint initiatives. Consequently our individual strategic planning documents are similar in content and presentation.

The Council's Strategic Directions 2017 – 2022

Since its introduction in 2003 there has been little change to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act. However the social, political, economic and cultural environments within which medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners work, continues to evolve.

The Council's five-year strategic directions document for the period 2017-2022 has been formulated with a view to ensuring our work both now and in the foreseeable future continues to be responsive to the world within which medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology are practised.

Utilising a strategic framework provides the Council with a focused approach for steering our regulatory work in a world typified by rapidly changing technology. It allows us to continue to protect public safety in the years ahead through ensuring medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology scopes of practice, standards, competencies, education, and remedial measures are sufficiently robust and responsive.

Our strategic framework provides a foundation upon which we focus our work to achieve the best positive impact for the public within financially and practically sustainable ways.

The World Within Which We Work

Health regulation is not immune to wider national and international trends such as changes in population demographics, the impact of rapidly changing technology both within the health sector and wider communities, and changing lifestyle trends and related health issues. The Council needs to ensure we continue to be adaptable and flexible in the face of these trends.

In setting our strategic directions for the next five years the Council has taken into consideration a number of factors that will influence health regulation in the next decade and beyond.

Digital Innovation²

- ❖ The current wave of disruptive technologies are mostly digital in nature, enabled by technologies such as the internet, cloud computing and sensors. These technologies affect firms, households and the economy by:
 - reducing transaction costs for information exchange
 - generating and maintaining data as a valuable resource
 - increasing the automation of tasks
- ❖ The automation of many tasks in the workplace, with large labour-saving technological advances, has not led to unemployment rates trending upwards over long periods of time. Over the long-term, it is conceivable that job losses may overtake job creation, but there remains considerable uncertainty about the impact of automation on employment and dire employment scenarios remain speculative
- ❖ The broader reach of automation means that more types of tasks may be replaced by machines or software than previously thought
- ❖ Households and consumers are generally fast adopters of new technologies but businesses and governments lag behind

² Reference: Australian Productivity Commission June 2016 *Digital Disruption What do Governments Need to Do?*

Population Growth³

- ❖ Between 2014 and 2068 New Zealand's total population will have increased by 37% (from 4.5 to 6.2 million)
- ❖ A large percentage of the population live in the Auckland region – 34% in 2013, increasing to 40% in 2043

An Aging Population

- ❖ Significant changes in the age structure of the New Zealand population will continue:
 - By 2068 50% of the NZ population is likely to be older than 45 years. This is due to a combined impact of fewer births, and increased life expectancy
 - Those aged 65+ years will account for 24 – 32% of the total population by 2068

An Ethnically Diverse Population

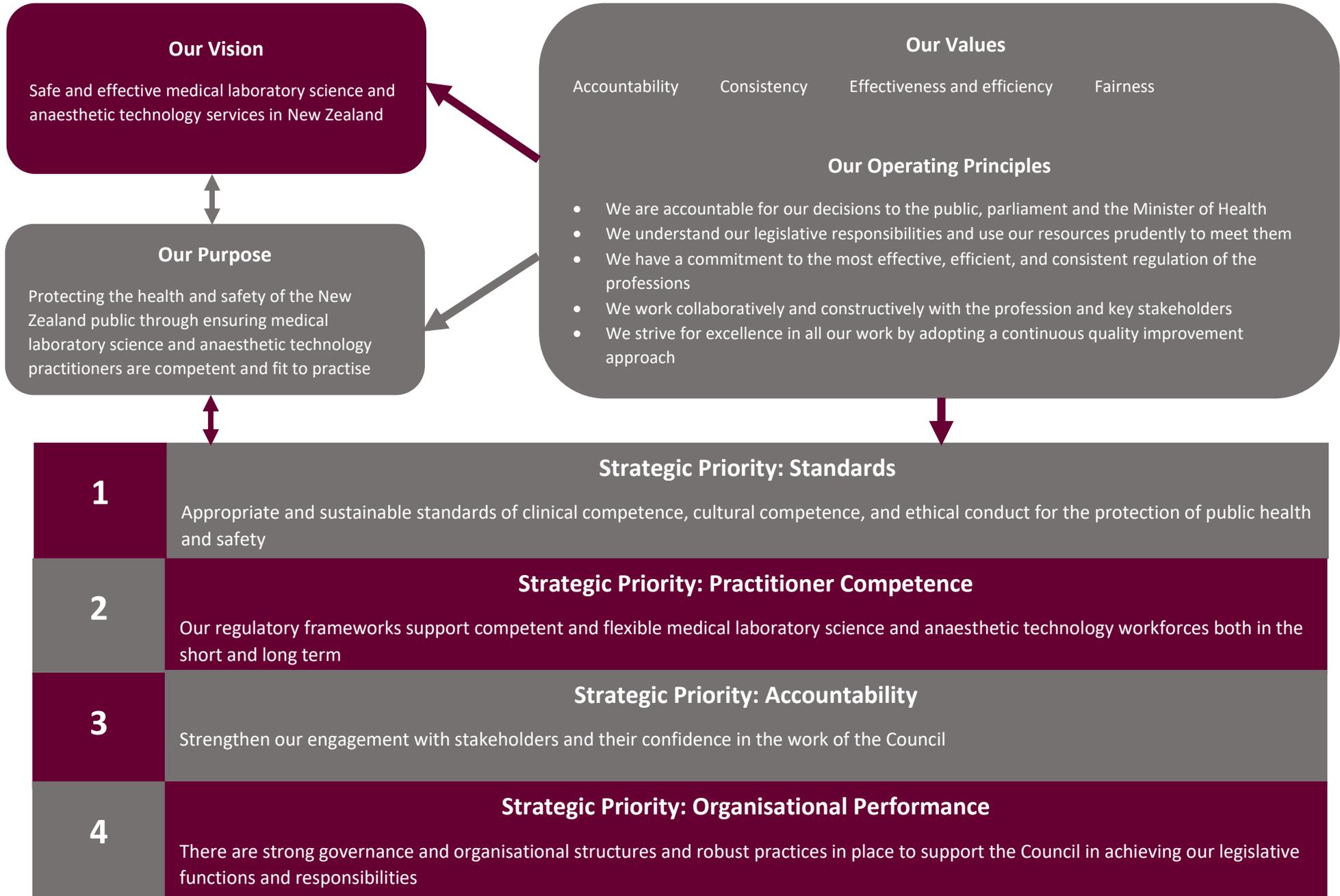
- ❖ Maori, Asian, and Pacific populations will continue to grow faster than NZ's population overall so will increase their share of the total population:
 - The number of people identifying with Asian ethnicities is likely to exceed the number identifying with the Maori ethnicity from the mid 2020's
 - All four ethnic populations will age with increasing numbers and proportions of their populations at the older ages

Labour Force Changes

- ❖ By the late 2050's 50% of the NZ labour force will aged over 45 years
 - In 2038 9-13% of the NZ labour force will be aged over 65 years and in 2068 the proportion of the labour force aged over 65 years will be 9-16% (in 1991 it was 6%)

³ Reference: All population-related data was sourced from Statistics New Zealand at www.statistics.govt.nz

The Council's Strategic Framework



The Council's Strategic Priorities 2017 -2022

The Council has identified four core strategic priorities for the next five-year period (2017-2022). They articulate the areas of activity that will help us to move from where we are now to what we need to achieve in meeting our regulatory responsibilities. Explicitly stating our strategic priorities helps us to balance resourcing our business-as-usual daily activities as well as direct resources into areas that will improve our effectiveness and efficiency.

Four Strategic Priorities

The Council has identified four priorities that will focus our work over the next five years.

Standards:

Appropriate and sustainable standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct for the protection of public health and safety

Practitioner Competence:

Our regulatory frameworks support competent and flexible medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology workforces both in the short and the long term

Accountability:

Strengthen our engagement with stakeholders and their confidence in the work of the Council

Organisational Performance

There are strong governance and organisational structures and robust practices in place to support the Council in achieving our legislative functions and responsibilities

Objectives

One or more objectives have been identified within each strategic priority. The objectives describe the big-picture steps in meeting the specific strategic priority. Some strategic priorities and objectives will stretch across the lifetime of this five-year strategic plan while others may be achieved more quickly.

Strategic Priority 1: Standards

APPROPRIATE AND SUSTAINABLE STANDARDS OF CLINICAL COMPETENCE, CULTURAL COMPETENCE, AND ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under the Act the Council is responsible for setting the standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct. It is the sole organisation with the legal authority to do this for medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners in New Zealand.

The standards of practice set by the Council provide the minimum threshold for competence and acceptable behaviour that registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners must meet to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

Having clearly articulated competencies and standards of ethical conduct are critical tools in helping to inform patients and the public of what they can expect from registered medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners. They also provide clarity to practitioners themselves about the standards they must meet.

In 2016 the Council completed a review of the scopes of practice for the medical laboratory science profession. This resulted in the introduction of two registration pathways – provisional registration and full registration – and the addition of another scope of practice titled Medical Laboratory Pre-Analytical Technician. Preliminary work was also undertaken in preparation for a review of the Anaesthetic Technician scope of practice.

In addition to the work completed to date, the Council needs to undertake further work to ensure associated competence standards are aligned to the scopes of practice for each of the professions – medical laboratory science, and anaesthetic technology. This includes a review of the competence and ethical conduct standards for all scopes of practice. Over the period of this strategic plan the Council will need to ensure revisions of our competence and ethical conduct standards for both professions are fully understood by all stakeholders including practitioners, educators, professional bodies, employers, and the public. This will include providing appropriate and sufficient guidance for practitioners to comply with the standards. Ongoing monitoring and review of the Council's competence and ethical conduct standards will be required to ensure practice standards continue to be current and relevant into the future.

The Council also employs mechanisms to ensure practitioners continue to meet the standards for ongoing fitness to practice. The Act includes specific provisions for the Council to respond to concerns that may be raised about an individual practitioner in terms of their competence, health, or conduct.

Objectives

- 1.1 Competence and ethical conduct standards remain current and relevant
- 1.2 Medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners are cognisant of the purpose and content of the Council's competence and ethical conduct standards and comply with these

- 1.3 Relevant stakeholders (such as employers, educators, professional bodies) are cognisant of the purpose and content of the Council's competence and ethical conduct standards

Strategic Priority 2: Practitioner Competence

OUR REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS SUPPORT COMPETENT AND FLEXIBLE MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE AND ANAESTHETIC TECHNOLOGY WORKFORCES BOTH IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERM

Under the Act registered practitioners must be recertified on an annual basis. Through the mechanism of recertification the Council can assure the public that individual practitioners continue to be competent to practise. Recertification includes a number of complementary strategies including annual renewal of practising certificates, and evidence of engagement in ongoing learning and professional development.

In 2016 the Council commenced a review of our frameworks for the management of practitioners' continuing professional development (CPD). Ongoing work is required to ensure the CPD framework continues to be fit for purpose. The Council will need to ensure appropriate and sufficient quality management systems and processes are in place to support the ongoing sustainability of our recertification strategies.

Objectives

- 2.1 The Council's recertification standards are appropriate, relevant and proportionate to support practitioners with achieving lifelong competence
- 2.2 There are appropriate and sustainable processes in place to support the Council's recertification strategies

Strategic Priority 3: Accountability

STRENGTHEN OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL

Health regulation does not occur in a vacuum. For many of our activities the Council is reliant on the participation of our stakeholders including practitioners, patients and the public, educators, employers, professional bodies and other regulators. This helps us to ensure our activities remain appropriate, relevant, and consistent in regulating medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practices.

We operate in a world where there is increasing and continually changing societal expectations in respect of health care and health practitioners. The Council needs to understand the views of our stakeholders, and offer ongoing opportunities for people to tell us what they think about our work.

Anecdotal information indicates there is a gap in understanding amongst many of our stakeholders in terms of the Council's role and purpose. We need to do more to explain the range and limits of our responsibilities. This will require an increased level of visibility with many of our stakeholders.

Narrowing this gap in understanding is integral for the Council's success in achieving our other strategic priorities.

Objectives

- 3.1 The public understands the role and responsibilities of the Medical Sciences Council
- 3.2 Medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology practitioners understand the role of the Council in regulating their professions
- 3.3 Other stakeholders understand the role of the Council

Strategic Priority 4: Organisational Performance

THERE ARE STRONG GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES AND ROBUST PRACTICES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL IN ACHIEVING OUR LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective governance is critical for good decision-making and ensuring quality of our regulatory actions. This leads to better outcomes for the public and reasonable impacts for practitioners. Governance is concerned with roles and responsibilities, accountability measures, oversight of business processes, financial reporting, and risk and performance management.

Having the right capabilities in place is critical for ensuring the Council operates effectively and efficiently. Having the systems, policies and processes necessary for delivering our functions within an environment that minimises costs, compliance and complexity for practitioners underpins the Council's work.

Having reliable and integrated IT systems is critical to the success of our work to ensure we have the necessary functionality for operating effectively in the contemporary regulatory environment. This includes taking advantage of new technology and our partnership arrangement with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board to not only improve the way we operate, but also to improve the ways we interact with our stakeholders.

Over the lifetime of this plan the Council will continue to develop the establishment of a formal quality management system. This work will be undertaken as a joint initiative with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board through our jointly-owned secretariat (MSS). This will include revising and improving our IT systems for core regulatory functions, financial management, information management, and document management.

Measuring our performance is integral to the Council being able to evaluate our progress with meeting our strategic priorities and objectives and annual business goals. Performance measures help to ensure our actions remain focused on the appropriate areas to deliver better outcomes for the public through competent and safe medical laboratory science and anaesthetic technology workforces.

While the Council reports on our activities each year through an Annual Report, over the span of this strategic plan we will also look at other ways for measuring our performance. This will help us to better understand whether we are achieving what we say we will. Development of a performance measures framework will be undertaken as another joint initiative with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board.

Objectives

- 4.1 The Council's governance model is enabling, effective, and efficient
- 4.2 Policies and processes are current, relevant, and effective
- 4.3 Organisational systems support the efficient and effective delivery of our legislative functions

4.4 The Council has the necessary capabilities to deliver our strategic priorities

4.5 There is a robust framework for measuring the Council's performance

Appendix 1: The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 – Section 118 Functions of Authorities

The functions of each authority appointed in respect of a health profession are as follows:

- (a) To prescribe the qualifications required for scopes of practice within the profession, and, for that purpose, to accredit and monitor educational institutions and degrees, courses of studies, or programmes:
- (b) To authorise the registration of health practitioners under this Act, and to maintain registers:
- (c) To consider applications for annual practising certificates:
- (d) To review and promote the competence of health practitioners:
- (e) To recognise, accredit, and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of health practitioners:
- (f) To receive and act on information from health practitioners, employers, and the Health and Disability Commissioner about the competence of health practitioners:
- (g) To notify employers, the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Director-General of Health, and the Health and Disability Commissioner that the practice of a health practitioner may pose a risk of harm to the public:
- (h) To consider the cases of health practitioners who may be unable to perform the functions required for the practice of the profession:
- (i) To set standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct to be observed by health practitioners of the profession:
- (j) To liaise with other authorities appointed under this Act about matters of common interest:
- (k) To promote education and training in the profession:
- (l) To promote public awareness of the responsibilities of the authority:
- (m) To exercise and perform any other functions, powers, and duties that are conferred or imposed on it by or under this Act or any other enactment.

References

The Council would like to acknowledge it has perused a number of strategic plans from other New Zealand responsible authorities when developing this revised strategic plan. In particular, we were enlightened by the following publications:

Dental Council Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

Physiotherapy Board Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020

Pharmacy Council Organisational Strategy 2016 – 2020