

# Developing your SAMP

The IAM has published a new guidance document, *Developing and maintaining a Strategic Asset Management Plan*, which takes you step-by-step through creating and using a SAMP in your own organisation. Here is a taster of the main messages.

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**T**he evolution of specialist departments and roles is an inevitable feature of managing increasingly large and complex systems. As a result, however, it can be hard for individuals to understand how they fit into the bigger picture and for departments to coordinate their priorities and contributions.

At the same time, corporate vision and mission statements are often expressed in such generic language of good intentions that they can be difficult for the workforce to interpret for their day-to-day activities. A translation is needed – and that’s why a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is useful. It gives a better understanding of what we should do (strategies), what we want to achieve (objectives), in what timescales.

A good SAMP can bring disparate parts of the business together, set a clear way forward, resolve priorities and make sure people work together with the same goals. But creating a worthwhile and successful SAMP is an art in itself.

So, what is an effective SAMP? And how do you make sure it contains the right stuff and actually helps deliver better business performance in the business?

## What it is and why it is needed

A SAMP (or what BSI PAS55 called an Asset Management Strategy) is a documented strategy for asset management that clarifies intended activities, desired outcomes and certain practices that will be used in their delivery. It takes a long-term view, and aligns the needs and expectations of the organisation and stakeholders with the realities of existing assets and asset management capabilities.

It also ensures everyone is on the same page about priorities, objectives and

things that need to be done in a joined-up way. It translates top-down organisational expectations into practical implications (who should do what, why, when). And it helps to challenge and shape those expectations by recognising practical realities (assets, capabilities, constraints, risks and opportunities) and translating them, from the bottom up, into business significance.

The SAMP therefore plays a key role in establishing coherence between senior management’s desires (where we want to go and why) and the day-to-day responsibilities of the workforce (what do we need to do and when).

Many organisations already have business plans and performance goals, of course, but

these are often split out into departmental responsibilities and budgets at a very high level in the organisation. So departmental performance goals often compete, and it can be difficult to resolve conflicting priorities day-to-day.

Furthermore, the assets’ true condition, capability, future risks and performance are often not adequately considered when determining what needs to be done, why and when. By forcing organisations to consider these issues in a joined-up way, the SAMP makes the adopted objectives and strategies clearer and more credible. It is an explanation of how asset management will help the organisation deliver its objectives, making it a key part of the management system (Figure 1).

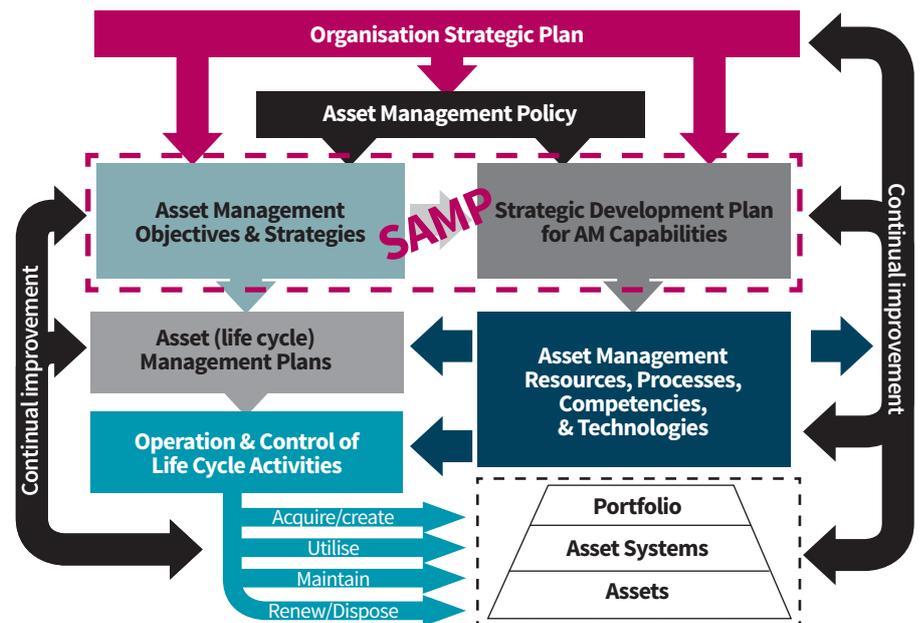


Figure 1: How the SAMP fits into an Asset Management System

**“The experience can be a catalyst for breaking down departmental walls, re-energising the workforce and enabling much better performance”**

## Developing an effective SAMP

In many ways, the process of developing a SAMP is as important as the resulting content. It can be an eye-opening experience for those involved, revealing different perspectives on what can and should be done. If the right people take part in the right way, the result can be more than just a document; the experience can be a catalyst for breaking down departmental walls, re-energising the workforce and enabling much better performance.

Some other lessons learned over the past 15 to 20 years include:

### Make it your own

You can't successfully outsource or delegate the development of your SAMP. It takes a multi-disciplined in-house team with sufficient seniority to command the respect of key departments or functional groups, such as capital projects, operations, maintenance, resourcing and finance. You need to consult widely and make adjustments to set realistic asset management objectives and action programmes.

Local context, personalities, maturity, previous initiatives, organisation structure, geographies and a host of other factors mean that a model used by one organisation won't work for another. It might be tempting to look for a shortcut using the examples or templates of another organisation, but you'll miss out on the collective ownership and

commitment that come from working together from scratch.

Much better is to develop your own SAMP and then, perhaps, compare it to others for secondary ideas and refinements.

### Get planners involved early

The first people to benefit from your SAMP will be the organisation's work planners – to turn the strategic intent into more concrete action plans. So, it makes sense to consult those planners early in the development of the SAMP. It will improve their understanding of the what and the why, and inject some pragmatism into the strategic goals and strategies adopted.

### Give yourself time

Your first SAMP can be particularly challenging, and every credible SAMP takes leadership involvement, cross-disciplinary collaboration and the letting-go of pre-conceptions and localised or short-term interests. It's a process of consultation and compromise. It's not a quick exercise and early drafts usually reveal conflicting assumptions, inconsistencies and knowledge gaps.

This may take two to six months of meetings to achieve enough coverage, depth and internal logic to get all parties to agree the shared commitments. Subsequent updates are somewhat easier, but it's still important for top management to take direct responsibility and to invest direct contact time as a multi-disciplined team.

### Further guidance

The SAMP can be profound in facilitating organisational transformation and alignment – or it can be just another compliance document to show to auditors of an asset management system. The difference depends largely on how it is developed, and how it is used to facilitate planning, decision-making, collaborative behaviours and performance recognition.

So, if you wish to find out more, you may find the new IAM guide useful. It explains the development process in more detail and includes a variety of examples from different organisations, industries and environments.



*Developing and maintaining a Strategic Asset Management Plan* is available from the IAM Shop: [theIAM.org/Shop](http://theIAM.org/Shop)

### About the author



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