



Innovative Strategies for the Road Ahead

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A FLEET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



Transportation is a cornerstone of program delivery and is the second largest cost to most aid and development organizations. Vehicle fleets are used to monitor, coordinate and execute last mile distribution of humanitarian assistance. Without vehicles, aid and development organizations cannot deliver assistance and support the people in need. Since the fleet is such a critical enabler to achieve the organisations objectives having a fleet management strategy in place makes sense. In this document we provide you with some of the essential steps that every organization should take when putting in place a fleet management strategy.

Determine where you want to be.  
"The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do."  
(Michael Porter)

Close your eyes and think where your organisation wants to be in five years from now. Maybe your organisation wants to double the number of beneficiaries served? Or your organisation wishes to be operational within a certain number of hours after an on-set emergency? Or your organisation aspires to provide the best value for donor money. Whatever organisational goals the organisation has, it is important that the service your fleet provides is aligned with that. And that, as the above quote states, that you realise that every strategic decision comes with consequences. Let's say your organisation wants to be operational in emergencies 72 hours after a natural disaster. In order to make this happen your fleet management strategy should support flexible procurement and purchasing approaches instead of stringent, lengthy processes.

### **Assessing where you are**

Once you know where you want to be in the future, you have to understand where you currently are. How well is your fleet performing and where do you have possible gaps. One way of assessing your current fleet management state is to assess your organisation using the Humanitarian Fleet Management Standards. These standards give insight in the maturity level of your current fleet management at Basic, Professional and Advanced level and can be used to determine if your management practices exist on paper (in the form of policies, guidelines and processes) as well as how well they are applied by staff in the field. The outcome of the assessment is that you have a good overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

### **Identifying your strategic options**

In this phase you will identify – through participatory workshops, what the strategic fleet management options are that will support the organisations goal. Are the transport needs extremely special, then it makes sense to build internal fleet management capacity? Or are the needs more generic and would outsourcing be an option? Does the organisation want to have central control over the performance of the fleet or do all the country operations have full authority over their fleet? These – and other questions – will lead to answers that help develop the strategic options. In this phase it is also important to have an idea on the costs, advantages and disadvantages of each option so that a corporate decision can be made.

### **Support the development of the 5-year strategy and strategic plan**

Based on the preferred strategic direction and the project values, a strategy and a strategic plan needs to be written. The strategy will describe at high level which elements of the fleet management framework will be put in place to fulfill the demand for transport and in what way the organisation will organize its fleet, considering the project values. The strategic plan will describe in more details how the strategy will be implemented including timelines.

For more information on strategy development or how we could help you developing a strategy please contact us at [info@fleetforum.org](mailto:info@fleetforum.org)

Interested in the implementation of a fleet management improvement programme?  
Check out our two-pager [here](#).