

# The SAMP Identity Problem

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A central part of any robust asset management system is the strategic asset management plan, also referred to as a SAMP. This is the document that ISO 55000 states should be used to guide the setting of its asset management objectives and to describe the role of the asset management system in meeting these objectives. This is the “why” that is characteristic of strategies. The SAMP is also the document that ISO 55000 states should describe the structures, roles and responsibilities necessary to establish the asset management system, operate it effectively, and use to guide development of its asset management plans. This is the “how” that is characteristic of plans. So, what is the SAMP? A strategy or a plan?

Creating a strategy forces organizations to address the future and to make hard decisions about where to focus. Some would say a SAMP is clearly a strategy because it outlines the objectives, which guide the creation of asset management plans. Some would say it is clearly a plan because per ISO 55000 it includes the structures, roles and responsibilities which do not belong in a corporate strategy. And let’s not forget – “plan” is part of its name.

Others would say the answer to the question is “it depends.” It depends on who the intended audience is for the document. Executives develop and use strategies. People responsible for implementing asset management practices develop and use plans.

Others still would say it doesn’t matter, as long as the document (or set of documents) is (are) meaningful to your organization. Because one thing we all agree on is that a SAMP is not something that sits on a shelf and collects dust. That is because a SAMP represents how strategy gets translated into implementation plans by providing an integrated document that gives an organization the ability to explain, justify, and demonstrate to both internal and external stakeholders what they are doing.

Disconnects between strategy and operations exist in most organizations. Keeping these aligned by converting the objectives of the organizational strategy into a high-level, long-term action plan for the asset portfolio by cascading the policy down into more detailed asset management plans and activities is what the SAMP does. By taking account of bottom-up realities and constraints it provides staff delivering asset management activities direct visibility of the purpose of the work they undertake, not just when and how to do it.

The debate about whether a SAMP is strategy or a plan will not be easily resolved because it is both, yet strictly it is neither. What it is though, for organizations that are serious about asset management, is indispensable.