

Strategic Planning for Establishing an Arab Health Organization

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ABSTRACT

This era is characterized by complexities of its structures and institutions and the large number and complexity of factors affecting its various activities, as well as the multiplicity of regional leagues and alliances. All those factors clarify inevitably the urgent need for Arab joint cooperation in all fields, including the health. They also force to consider the strategic planning as a means to deal with these complexities, and as a scientific way to reach the goals to achieve the advancement of health services provided to citizens across the Arab world. There is no doubt that planning is needed in all organizations, but its need is reflected clearly in big organizations and institutions of various kinds which seeks through the planning for a development process leading to benefits and interest to the state and individuals, and even more evident in the planning at the State level or at a group of States.

The importance of this research topic arises from difficult challenges in the health area witnessed in the Arab world that need a comprehensive vision and an integrated strategic plan according to scientific and systematic way to reach specific and clear targets. The joint work will contribute in the intensification of efforts, maximization of the benefits, integration of resources, market expansion, convergence and integration, ensuring needed funds, and the emphasis on the identity.

This research is concerned with the aspects of Arab joint cooperation in the medical field. It aims to expose the scientific, human and institutional resources enjoyed by the Arab world, and to clarify the obstacles that prevent achievement of that joint cooperation. It cares to take advantage of the ingredients and the positives that already exist and meet the challenges and disadvantages facing the joint Arab actions. It focuses on strategic planning for the establishment of a proposed Arab Health Organization to support, lead and supervise Arab medical joint projects, and to work for the progress of medical practical and research works in all the Arab countries, and to adopt strategic planning as an access for such venerable targets.

KEYWORDS

Strategic Planning, SWOT analysis, Arab joint projects, Arab Health Organization.

Introduction

Establishing an Arab organization for health was discussed during the first conference of Arab Health Ministers, where the Conference adopted some of the principles in this regard, the matter was presented to the League of Arab States Council which issued the resolution No. 2616 on its fifty-third session held on 11/03/1970 which provided the approval of the draft Convention.

Although some Arab countries agreed to the establishment of an Organization for Arab Health but the Arab Health Ministers, in order not to create organizations that entail obligations for financial burdens agreed to form a healthy Arab Institution with a technical secretariat, working under the umbrella of the Arab League. The second conference of Arab Health Ministers discussed the need for a strong healthy Arab Institution to ensure the coordination of health cooperation between Arab countries and is working on the development of health issues in the Arab world. The Arab League Council supported in its resolution No. 3088 in its sixtieth session held on 09.15.1973 the Conference Resolution II of the Arab

Health Ministers, and thus the Council of Arab Ministers of Health was established, and froze the decision to establish an Organization for Arab Health.

This research identifies the basic requirements for joint medical Arab action and discusses the establishment of an Arab organization for health. The research presents the strategic planning as a way to mobilize and to focus efforts to address the contemporary health challenges in the Arab world. The first stage determines the basic concepts of the planning process, a vision, mission, values and goals. The second phase is the analysis of the current situation; it includes the analysis of internal and external environment, and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as identifying strategic themes, and executive programs. The third and final phase is the stage of the ongoing review and adjustments of the strategic framework according to the reality of practical application. Finally, the research provides a wide range of conclusions and recommendations that give the best results and expectations for joint medical Arab projects.

2. Importance of the Research

The importance of the research appears evident from the sever challenges facing the Arab world in the medical field resulting from the following factors:

1. Increasing the transparency and awareness of the Arab peoples, and the high ceiling of their expectations.
2. The high cost of health treatment and its continued escalation.
3. Increasing reliance on expensive machines and technological health equipment, both in the diagnosis or treatment.
4. The acute shortage of funding to meet basic operating costs of health services.
5. Weakness of the support and development of health services, and lack of adequate assistance to poor people who cannot afford to get suitable medical services.
6. The inadequate provision of the main elements of health services: qualified human resources, equipment and treatments.
7. Lack of projects to improve health services in partnership with other local, regional and global bodies, organizations and medical institutions.
8. Poor and insufficient work on the design and implementation of health education campaigns.
9. Lack of effective and comprehensive health insurance programs in many Arab countries.

All these factors are considered in addition to a lot of medical problems with high specialized technological applications that make every day a great complexity both in the diagnosis or treatment, and also the unavoidable high cost of scientific research. The acceleration of research to find out the map of the human biology "genome" and development in genetic engineering and cloning applications, as well as the bacterial and biological weapons.

All these health and medical responsibilities, tasks and trends, which cannot be afforded by only one country, require regional collaboration and joint actions as means to improve the health of Arab citizens. They also increase the importance and necessity of establishing common medical projects across the Arab region, and stress the inevitability of the introduction of strategic planning for the restructuring of joint Arab medical projects.

The importance of joint Arab actions in the field of health appear clearly in the following:

1. The waves of diseases sweeping the world, so that any territory is no longer in isolation from the impact of SARS in the past, or the bird and swine flu, and is no longer able to respond to such incursions sick alone.
2. The ongoing increasing cost of medical services.
3. Progress in medical science and research in such a way that any single country cannot address solo.
4. Smooth and continuing transition of individuals between different Arab countries, which necessitates the need for a unified Arab health policy.

5. The need of some Arab countries for medical expertise in other Arab countries.
6. The need to develop medical and pharmaceutical researches in all fields.
7. The need to progress the pharmaceutical industry with all its elements.
8. National and regional security through facing of bacterial and biological weapons.

Khoja (2008) explains that the importance of joint Arab action is reflected in the unification of efforts to upgrade medical services represented in the treatment and prevention of diseases within a unified vision conducive to boost forward the health sector development.

3. Arab Joint Medical Work Through the Arab League

3.1 Historical Overview

The Arabs Aspire to work together early in several areas including health work, but this work has been slow, stumbling, and mostly on paper through decisions without an impact on the ground. The Charter of the Arab League has been ratified in Cairo on 22 March 1945, where Article II of the Charter according to the website of the League (December 2011) states that: "The purpose of the League is to enforce closer relations between the participating countries, to coordinate the political plans in order to achieve cooperation, and maintaining its independence and sovereignty, and to take care of the affairs of Arab countries and their interests in general including the systems and conditions of the health affairs".

3.2 Health Department of the General Secretariat of the Arab League

The Health Department of the General Secretariat of the Arab League was established on 19/9/1961, it is specialized in studying the health and medical affairs in the Arab world, conferences of Arabs Federal for Doctors and Pharmacists, as well as international seminars and meetings of the health affairs. The Department as Jumaa (2006) said coordinates efforts, and provides means of cooperation between Arab countries. It is also working to unify the constitutions of medicines and medical school programs in the Arab countries and the preparation and participation in the conferences of Arab Health Ministers.

3.3 Conferences of the Arab Health Ministers

The topics of the decisions of these conferences can be summarized in accordance with the web site of the Council of Arab Health Ministers (2011) in the following:

- 1- Medical support for the Palestinian revolution and health conditions in the occupied Arab territories.
- 2- The Arab medicine problems.
- 3- Medical education and its requirements in training centers in Arab countries, and the preparation of

- profession medical assistants in the Arab countries.
- 4- Preventive actions to be taken in the Arab countries to ward off the threat of Cholera and other serious diseases.
 - 5- Nominations for the positions of the Executive Board of World Health Organization, and the use of Arabic as a working language in that organization.
 - 6- Establishment of the Arab Center for Injuries Research.
 - 7- Drafting the consolidated legislations for practicing the profession of human medicine, dental surgery, veterinary medicine and pharmacy in the Arab countries.
 - 8- Establishment of the Arab Health Ministers Council.
 - 9- Scientific cooperation in the health affairs, and the exchange of experiences and medical aids between the Arab and African countries.
 - 10- Health management and insurance systems.
 - 11- To allow doctors to practice the medical profession in any of the Arab countries.
 - 12- Comment on the programs and budgets of the World Health Organization.
 - 13- Establishment of a Union for Arab societies and organizations for care of people with special needs in the Arab world.

3.4 The Council of Arab Health Ministers

The Third Conference of Arab Health Ministers discussed the idea of establishing a Council for Arab Health Ministers; it prepared its statute, which was subsequently endorsed by the Fourth Conference. Then the idea was forwarded to the Arab States which have deposited their consent and the Arab governments endorsed the creation of this Council and transferred its statute to the Council of the Arab League, which was approved by Resolution No. 3306 in the sixty-fourth session on 4/9/1975.

3.5 Arab Board for Medical Specialties

All the Arab countries started to review the accreditation policy for obtaining a higher foreign certificate for giving the title of a physician specialist. The Council of Arab Health Ministers issued at its third session held in Kuwait in February 1978 the Resolution No. 20, including an approval of a project to establish the Arab Council for Medical Specialties. The functions of the Council as stated in its website (December 2011) are:

- 1- The formation of scientific boards for each medical specialty to describe the training required with all its aspects and the adoption of the foundations of its evaluation.
- 2- Organization of seminars and training courses for doctors who are preparing themselves of the specialization in cooperation with medical and educational institutions.
- 3- To assist medical specialists for continuous education to develop and update their knowledge and experience.

- 4- Issuing newsletters and publications to implement the Council's objectives and functions.
- 5- To lay the foundations of certificates of competence for doctors who meet the conditions established by the Council.

4. Arab Joint Medical Work Outside the Arab League

The joint Arab medical work took a variety of forms; examples are represented in the following:

4.1 Movement of Patients Between the Arab Countries

It is noted that there is a continuous movement of patients between different Arab countries. The patients are searching for medical institutions and centers that have earned the trust through their achievements of excellent medical care. Examples are: Center for Kidney and Urology Center in Mansoura city, Egypt, King Abdulaziz Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and others.

4.2 Medical Education, Training and Transfer of Expertise

There are a lot of efforts in the field of medical education across the Arab world. This effort almost covers the needs of all the Arab countries for doctors, pharmacists, technicians. It covers also the training and transfer of expertise carried out by health colleges, institutes and schools. We find that many of the Arab doctors and medical work crews in various Arab countries have received their scientific grades and practical experiences from the Egyptian universities and institutes. There is also an exchange of educational programs and visits albeit limited. However, all these efforts are not done in a systematic and integrated manner.

4.3 Specialized Medical Centers

There are some major and specialized Arab medical institutions which reached a high technically global level. These are able to reach accuracy for their works to become a magnet for Arab citizens in need of their services. As examples, we have: Kidney and Urology Center in Mansoura city in Egypt, King Abdulaziz Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the pilot project of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to establish a mobile hospital as "the first mobile hospital in the world", and centers of chains of hope of Dr. Magdi Yacoub in Upper Egypt.

1.4 Human Expertise

The Arab arena had a large scale movement in the human expertise and medical treatment, this can be summarized in the following: the use of the of the Egyptian medical

expertise in the form of “itineraries” for hospitals in the Gulf, Maghreb and African countries, transfer of medical, nursing and technical experts from Egypt, Syria and Sudan to the Gulf and Maghreb countries, transfer of patients between various Arab countries searching for reliable medical expertise or for higher and more complete diagnostic, and the use of Arab immigrants medical expertise outside the Arab Region.

1.5 Investments in the Medical Institutions in the Arab World

There are also investments in the medical field that exceeded the limits of one country to several Arab countries as: Saudi German Hospital, El-Maghraby hospital for eyes, El-Borg Lab, and “Elag” or treatment” Center. These private institutions have been able to exceed the limits of their own country and extend its work within the Arab world to establish branches in more than a single Arab country.

4.6 Regional Cooperation Against Health and human Disasters

The States and Arab governments are committed to helping in the face of disasters that occur to any Arab country. This was happened for Egypt in the face of the earthquake in 1991, for Algeria in the face of the earthquake in 2003, for the case with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and with the citizens of Gaza Strip during the last Zionist invasion of the sector.

5. Strategic Planning for the Joint Arab Medical Work

There are various definitions for strategic planning in different scientific Arab and foreign literature like Heinz (2001), Macmillan and Tampoe (2000), Wheelen and Hunger (2006), Wittmann and Matthias (2008). We can define planning in general as drawing the future of the society through the identification of the work to be followed to achieve certain goals in a specific time period.

We can also outline the importance of planning in determining courses of action in various fields, and shortening the time and effort in the implementation and in the development process. This is a list of some of the benefits that can be gained through implementing a strategic planning process:

- Vision and Mission: Clearly define the vision and mission of an organization.
- Focus: Focus is placed on the important things: resources (time, talent, money) are properly allocated to those activities that provide the most benefits.
- Awareness: Prove an awareness of the changing environment as a foundation for needed change.

- Internal Analysis: Identify and analyze the internal environment in light of its strengths and weaknesses and evaluate its impact on the performance. Poor performing areas can be identified and enforced.
- External Analysis: Identify and analyze external environment opportunities and potential threats.
- Set Objectives: Able to set more realistic objectives that are demanded, yet attainable and realistic.
- Decisions Making: A need for information for better decision making process.
- Operational Control: Gain control of operational problems.
- Communication Tool: Develop better communication with those both inside and outside the organization.
- A Road Map: Provide a road map to show where the organization want going and how to get there.
- Coordination: Develop better internal coordination of activities.
- Budgets: Develop a frame of reference for budgets.
- Operating Plans: Develop a frame of short-range operating plans.
- A sense of security: Gain a sense of security among managers, and employees, which comes from better understanding of the changing environment and the organization’s ability to adapt.
- The strategic planning incorporates a group of stages that are summarized in Figure 1.

5.1 - Identify the Basic Concepts of Strategic Planning (Strategic Framework)

The first phase in the strategic planning process as defined by El-Quliti (2007) is to identify the basic concepts of planning; it is also called a general strategy, strategic framework, or the foundations of the effectiveness and success. It compromises a vision, mission, values and goals.

Vision

The concept of the vision is applies to two types of human activities, they are the awareness and forecasting for the formation of a certain image about the future conditions, (Ward and Peppard, 2002). However, the way that is usually used for the concept of vision reflects a certain understanding of what could be the situation in a future point in time (Barksdale and Lumd, 2006). It gives a description of the organization and its culture and future activities, (Yank and Grace, 2009). The vision is a real new and desirable future that can be delivered to all parts of the organization, (Allison

and Kaye, 2005). It is in the same time an imagine for the future which we should force the pace towards it, or in a brief phrase “The vision is the real dream,” (Tawfiq, 2003).

The effective vision is not a compromise, but a new vision that combines the visions of all strategists in an organization, (Olsen, 2007). Maher (2007) also confirms the importance of the vision for organizations, Mintzberg (2007) defined the components of the vision and its dimensions, and many researchers referred to the characteristics of effective and good vision, which inspires enthusiasm, (Kaufman *et al.*, 2003).

Characteristics of an Effective Vision:

Many researchers point out that the effective and good vision, which inspires enthusiasm can be characterized by the following [19.20]:

- A vision must be brief, simple, clear, and carries within it a great concrete and realistic dream.
- Challenging the image of inclusiveness, where everyone can see that hard work will make a distinct case to meet their ambitions.
- To satisfy all the aspirations of bodies dealing with the organization directly or indirectly.
- To be consistent with the mission and values of the organization.
- To give indicators for testing and to check out the veracity of the work achieved.
- Should not be dreams far from reality, and this requires a deep understanding of business, markets and competitors.
- To be inspiring to the challenge and excitement for all levels of management and all employees and to sharpen forces of everyone to adhere it.
- Can be translated to interrelated goals giving the desired picture of the future of the organization.
- Have the power of wide communication in order to form an integral part of the organization culture, so that the perspective is shared by everyone and understood uniformly.
- Should not be mere slogans far from reality, but a process of integration between the present and the future.

Example of a vision in the scope of our research:

“Arab community with distinct joint medical work”.

Mission

Many researchers defined the mission, and it could be argued that it is the major role that human lives in order to achieve in his life. The mission is the purpose and the domain that will feature in it, El-Quliti and Abed (2007) showed the benefits and the key components of the mission in an organization. Bahadur (2009) stated the main specifications of the mission statement that lead to the function and the desired end. Bryson (2003) showed the privacy of a substantive vision and mission, and that they represent a “compass” for all the

efforts, activities and trends. The objectives should reflect the mission, the strategic goals come responding to the mission and the activities will be applied to bring effects and changes in the society and find resonance in the mission. Anything we do must necessarily lead to the mission and thus the vision. The common mistake illustrated by El-Quliti (2009), is to consider that the vision and mission are fixed and cannot be changed or modified. On the contrary, it is necessary to review the vision and mission periodically and whenever it is needed. It should be noted her that the vision, by its nature, is more stable than the mission.

As an example of a mission on the subject of our research, we can say the following:

“Achieving a leading competitor Arab community in the medical services, science and research, contribute to world medical achievements, and develop scientific, training and service resources, through a comprehensive vision and integrated planning, coordination and cooperation.”

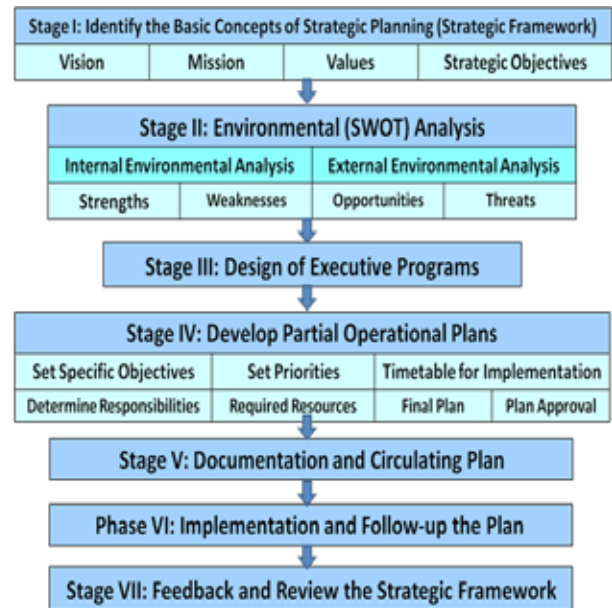


Figure (1) Different stages of the strategic planning process

Specifications of the Mission Statement

The mission statement must be subject to certain specifications and standards:

1. The purpose of existence: understanding the purpose and identification is very important for the decisions that are taken, without a mission, a region or state institution will face some obstacles and difficulties in disseminating activities and publicity.
2. Identify target groups: It must specify the target groups according to the desired goals.

3. Describes the mechanism of action: the mission statement should clarify how a state or institution will achieve its goals, for example, design of programs, services or activities is one of the mechanisms of action that is followed to achieve the goals.
4. Describes the values: that the community cares about the values followed by the organization to provide services to groups who are targeted, these values may be religious, humanitarian or intellectual ... etc.
5. Concentrated, concise and clear: The concentration of the mission statement and its limitation to clear aspects helps to form a neat picture to the community, and the shortcut in the content of the message helps the community to easily remember. The mission statement must be formulated also in a clear and simple language.

Figure 2 shows how the specifications and standards have been taken into account in the preparation of the contents of the mission statement. The purpose of the strategic planning was identified as working for joint Arab medical projects, mechanisms of action to reach the highly desired goal has been described, the target group was also identified, the values are described, and finally, all the contents of the mission statement are concentrated, concise and clear.

Values

Seddeqi (2007) defines values as ethics governing the actions of an organization or a country and its style for working. Values represent the spirit, essence and behaviors of individuals. The Arab community derives its values from the lofty principles of heavenly religions that advocate good manners. It derives values also from the Arabian traditions that force the Arab society and its institutions for cooperation, progress, and continuous improvement of medical services and upgrade them all the way to contribute to the global progress. The following ethics summarize what we can consider to be our core values for the joint Arab medical work:

“Cooperation, Coordination, Integration, Positivity, Progress, Leadership, and Totalitarian (Inclusiveness)”.

5- Concentrate, concise and clear	The purpose of existence		2- Identify target groups	
	Achieving a leading competitor Arab community in the medical services, science and research, contribute to world medical achievements, and develop scientific, training and service resources, through a comprehensive vision and planning, coordination, cooperation and integration."			
	Describes the mechanisms of action		4- Describes the values	

Figure (2) The specifications of the contents of the mission statement

Strategic Objectives

They are the objectives that can be described as methods of access and achievement of the message, Elias (2009) explains the general characteristics of the strategic objectives, and in

general these must be specific and clear for the Arab joint medical work. The main strategic objectives can be stated as:

1. Strengthen the values and principles that promote the spirit of belonging to Arabism that includes all Arab countries.
2. Achieving a capable, proper and healthy Arab society.
3. Foster a spirit of trust between medical institutions, and establish the concept of cooperation and partnership between individuals and institutions across the Arab world.
4. Instilling the desire to excel and contribute to scientific progress in the medical field.
5. Development of Arab capabilities in the provision of safe and highly distinctive medical services.
6. Establishing a sense of responsibility towards the health of the Arab citizens.

3.5 SWOT Analysis

SWOT word is a shortcut of four items: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths are the characteristics of the organization that give it an advantage. Weaknesses (or Limitations) are characteristics that place the organization in relative disadvantage. Opportunities are the external chances to improve performance. Threats are the external elements in the environment that could cause troubles. Identification of SWOTs is essential because subsequent steps in the process of planning and actions required for achievement of the previous selected objectives may be derived from the SWOTs.

The application of this analysis starts by using the method of brainstorming for a selected group of interested and relevant persons to the planning problem. The process is to analyze the internal and external environments, where the results of the internal environment analysis are the strengths and weaknesses, while those of the external environment are the opportunities and threats, as indicated in the Grant (2002).

5.3.1 Analysis of the Internal Environment

The system of Arab medical works is based on multiple pillars representing the internal environment domains, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Education and training institutions such as universities, and research and scientific medical centers.
2. Various specialized crews working in the medical field (medical staff).
3. Medical institutions like health centers, and district and specialized hospitals.
4. Accreditation, registration, classification and quality assurance institutions for medical staff and various medical institutions.
5. Pillars of the pharmaceutical industry (research centers, capital and market).
6. Institutions for drug registration.

7. Management and Planning Centers and their outputs: regulations, laws, legislation of the Government and guidance systems.
8. Health education media,.
9. Medical communications network across the Arab world.
10. Funding.

Table 1 (a) and (b) shows the strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment.

3.2 Analysis of the External Environment

Table 2 a) and b) represents the key opportunities and threats (challenges) face the Arab society as a result of the analysis of the external environment and the circumstances surrounding the World.

5.4 Design of the Executive Programs

The required executive programs can be developed by taking appropriate measures to avoid weaknesses and take advantage of strengths in the internal environment, as well as to face the threats and seize the opportunities in the external environment. Table 3 shows the proposed executive programs and their relationship to the Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and the Threats (T). The author suggests the establishment of the Arab Health Organization (AHO) whose functions are the development, implementation and monitoring of the proposed programs. The numbers within the first four columns represent the serial numbers of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats respectively that were listed in Tables 1 and 2.

5.5 Interim Operational Plans

Draft (2001) illustrates the importance of this stage that it enables development of the details of activities within a harmonious and logical sequence. The details of the operational plans include the following: strategic and auxiliary domains, implementation priority, the agency responsible for implementation, the relevant authorities, the detailed operational steps, required resources, the time for implementation of each step, the time proposed to start the program, Gantt Chart, the total duration to implement the program, the total cost, performance and achievement indicators, determinants of quality assurance. The Gantt chart as shown in Mintzberg and Koehler (2009) is a common type of bar charts showing the schedule for implementation of the project, it shows the planned and effective start and end dates of various project activities, and it shows also the relative relations between different activities.

5.6 Documentation and Circulation of the Plan

This is the phase in which we are documenting the whole work of the planning process through writing in a document called "Strategic Plan to Activate Arab Cooperation in the Health Field". The plan should be written in a systematic,

clear, and specific way. A special care should be given to the level of organization, printing and appearance. El-Gammal *et al.* (2005) illustrate the main contents of the strategic plan document as: an executive summary, planning phases, strategic framework, expectations and results, team work, the estimated budget and the expected time duration. After writing, auditing and approval of the plan, it must be announced and made available to related organizations. This will make a collective understanding of the plan and be committed to it. So, all the Arab countries and existing regional organizations must strive to deliver the plan to each who can contribute to it, and to use several ways to define its contents.

5-7 Plan Implementation and Follow Up

It is one of the most critical stages. It is observed that the strategic plan contains "basic activities" that have not been developed and translated into detailed action plans which are needed so that to implement the basic general plan effectively and accurately. Each party concerned with the strategic plan should study the relevant part of the general plan and design his detailed action plans that translate the work into sub-activities and to identify the actions needed to implement each sub-activity, the team responsible for the implementation, the time required for its implementation, and the resources needed for implementation.

5.8 Feedback and Review the Strategic Framework

This is the final stage of the strategic planning; it is a continuous and frequent process. It uses the obtained results to determine its conformity with the strategic framework in order to identify the extent of their harmony, and then identify the issues that need extra efforts, attention and concentration in order to reach a full realization of the strategy frameworks. This stage also helps to identify the necessary adjustments needed for the strategic frameworks. For example, implementation of some programs or activities may require specific modifications on the vision, mission and/or the strategic plan. A "gap analysis" is then used to identify the deviation between the current reality and the perception of the future in order to work on its bridging, as defined by Hilal (2009).

Table 1. (a) Analysis of the internal environment (Strengths).

I. Medical institutions for education, training and research.
1- Existence of scientific Competencies.
2- Establishment of the Arab Board for Medical Specialties.
3- Availability of medical schools, colleges, universities and associations concerned with education, training and research in the medical field.
II - Medical crews and staff.
4 - Some Arab doctors got their degrees and practical experience from universities and institutes in other Arab countries.
5- A lot of Syrian, Egyptian and Sudanese medical personnel moved to the Gulf States.
6 - Availability of medical staff in different disciplines.
III- Medical institutions.
7 - Some medical institutions extended their fame and efficiency to the majority of Arab countries.
8 - Existence of branches of some medical institutions in more than one Arab country.
9 - There is some medical expertise sought by the Arab patients.
IV – Accreditation, registration, classification, and quality assurance institutions.
10 - The trend towards establishing an Arab Council for Accreditation.
11 - Existence of some scientific and administrative specialists.
12 -Existence of bodies for licensing and accreditation for staff and medical institutions at the national level of each country.
V - Pharmaceutical Industry Elements.
13 – Existence of a foundation for a pharmaceutical industry in some Arab countries.
14 – There are a number of qualified specialists in the field of pharmaceutical sciences and industry.
15 - Wide distribution market.
VI - Institutions for drug registration.
16 - Existence of institutions for drug registration in all the Arab countries.
VII - Media and health education means.
17 - the unity of language, values, customs and traditions.
VIII -Communications between Arab countries.
18 - Improved communication means including the World Wide Web.
IX - Management, Planning and Legislation.
19 - The Arab summit conferences that promote joint Arab action.
20 - The establishment of health management in the Secretariat of the Arab League.
21 - The establishment of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health.
X - Financing
22 – Availability of the capital necessary for the integration of Arab medical works.

Table 1. (b): Analysis of the internal environment (Weaknesses).

I. Medical institutions for education, training and research.
1– Lack of a plan for integrating education, training and research in the medical field.
2- Lack of scientific research in the field of linking education and medical problems.
3- Limited seminars and lectures dealing with the Arab medical cooperation.
4- Scientific technological and training gap in the medical field.
5- The differences in the education and training systems among Arab countries.
6- Limited programs for exchange of visits between educational institutions across the Arab world.
7- Some training programs for medical workers are limited to the people of the country's importing such employment.
II - Medical crews and staff.
3- Inadequate training and continuing education programs for medical staff.
4- The scarcity of some medical disciplines.
5- The migration of some talent specialists to foreign countries.
6- Lack of use of the Arab immigrant experience outside the Arab world.
.III- Medical institutions
12– Lack of means for identification of expertise and excellent medical institutions.
13- The movement of patients between the Arab countries is not systematic or institutionalized.
14- Lack of integration of work and expertise of medical institutions across the Arab Region.
IV – Accreditation, registration, classification, and quality assurance institutions.
15- Lack of an Arab Medical Council for coordination and integration of different donor agencies for licensing and accreditation at the global Arab level.
16- Lack of applied expertise for global systems and programs for licensing and accreditation.
17– Non-application of the Unified Arab draft laws for the practice of human, veterinary and the profession of pharmacy.
V - Pharmaceutical Industry Elements.
18- Lack of coordination and integration in the pharmaceutical industry among the Arab countries.
19- The scarcity of the pharmaceutical industry in the advanced and specialized areas.
20- Arab pharmaceutical industry is based on essential imported raw materials.
VI - Institutions for drug registration.
21- Lack of an Arab Council for drug registration working to unify the laws and constitutions of drug between all the Arab countries.
VII - Media and health education means.
22- The media does not focus on the issues of joint Arab actions.
23- Attempts to clear identity, belonging to the Arab nation and its unity, and its common issues.

VIII -Communications between Arab countries.
24 - Lack of a unified Arab communication network that allows the exchange of expertise and provide services to all Arab countries.
25 - The complexity and high costs of a medical remote contact technology its need to a very specialized training.
26 - Lack of a medical database for Arabic countries.
IX - Management, Planning and Legislation.
27 – The division of the Arabs and their various trends.
28 - The ineffectiveness of some decisions of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health.
29 - Freezing the decision to establish an Arab Health Organization.
30 – Lack of a strategic plan for a joint Arab medical work.
X - Financing
31 - The budget of some Arab countries for health services is less than required.

Table 2. (a): Analysis of the external environment (Opportunities).

Opportunities
1 - The whole world is moving towards agglomeration and joint regional actions.
2 - International agreements allow the regional clustering.
3 - To benefit from the experience of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Table 2. (b) Analysis of the external environment (Challenges).

Threats
1 - Strong world competition in the medical field.
2 - Threat of the Zionist project
3- External interventions against joint Arab actions.
4 - Influence of the tendentious media.
5 - The technology gap and its impact on the orientation towards the foreigner in the field of health services, the pharmaceutical industry, and moving away from the national identity.
6 - Glamour and lure of migration abroad for the qualified medical experts.

Table 3. Executive programs and their relationship to the SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Proposed Executive Programs
1, 2, 3, 17	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8		3	1 - Education and Training Program It aims to integrate education, training and research at the level of the Arab countries, and holding seminars, lectures, workshops, conferences, dialogues and meetings that deal with the Arab medical perspectives, and linking education and training with the common problems in the Arab countries.
1, 2, 3	2, 4, 9, 11	3	1, 2, 4, 5	2 - Scientific Research Program It aims to facilitate the establishment of scientific projects to narrow the technological gap in the medical and pharmaceutical areas with the help of migratory scientific expertise, and linking that scientific research with the common problems in the Arab countries.
10, 11, 12, 17	15, 16, 17	1		3 – Licensing and Accreditation Program It aims to unify the licensing and accreditation of Arabic medical institutions, doctors, and technicians working in the medical field, as well as paramedical bodies, with the help of international experts.
1, 2, 17, 22	9, 10, 31	1, 2	1, 5	4 - Investment Program It aims to encourage investment in health sector, to facilitate and coordinate the transfer of capital between Arab countries, and to establish medical projects on a global level to attract migratory crews and medical staff as well as patients who seek medical care in foreign countries.
13, 14, 15, 16	18, 19, 20, 21	1, 2	1, 2	5- Arab Medicine Program It aims to create a unified Council for the drugs to record and control the drugs at the level of the Arab countries, and to create major entities in the pharmaceutical industry, and to perform scientific research for integration and self-sufficiency.
1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27		1, 3	6- Communication and Information Program It aims to establish a Communication and Information Board to facilitate the communication in the medical field, to provide data and statistics pertaining to the medical field in the Arab world, to intensify information campaigns concerned with issues of joint Arab actions in general and in the health field in particular, to coordinate the movement of patients seeking for health care and treatment, and to promote, coordinate and integrate the transfer of medical expertise across the countries of the world Arab.

Arab Health Organization (AHO) “Proposed”

The proposed Arab Health Organization (AHO) is the directing and coordinating authority within the system of joint Arab actions concerning the health field. It is responsible for: providing leadership in planning and in addressing health issues, designing of educational, training and research programs, developing of norms and standards for accreditation, registration, classification and quality assurance in the medical field, clarifying the evidence-based chosen policies, providing technical support for the Arab countries, monitoring and assessing health trends, developing of policies for medicine and pharmaceutical infrastructure, and spreading awareness and health education.

6-1 Main Tasks of the Proposed Arab Health Organization

1. Education and Training:
Integration of health education and training at the level of Arab countries, and encouraging holding of seminars, lectures, workshops, conferences, dialogues and meetings concerning the Arab Medical activities.
2. Scientific Research:
Encouraging and integrating the scientific research in the medical and pharmaceutical areas, linking education and scientific research by applied problems in the Arab countries, and the promotion of scientific projects to narrow the technology gap.
3. Licensing and Accreditation
Unification of the medical licensing and accreditation for the institutions, doctors and technicians in the medical field, as well as the paramedical bodies.
4. Health systems
Unification of health systems applied in the entire Arab region.
5. Capital Investments:
Facilitate the movement of capital investments in the health field in all the Arab countries.
6. Transferring
Facilitate the transfer of medical expertise and patients across different Arab countries.
7. Medicine:
Establishment of a unified Arab council for registration and control of medicine, and promotion of pharmaceutical companies to create largest entities in the pharmaceutical industry.
8. Health status:
Improving the health status of all Arab citizens and the benefit, coordination and cooperation with existing health projects.

9. Medical Projects:
Encourage the establishment of world-class medical projects to attract patients as well as immigrant medical crews and staff.
10. Communication:
Establishment of a communications network for health services and provide the necessary data and statistics related to the medical field.
11. Information:
Intensify information campaigns concerned with issues of joint Arab actions in general and in the health field in particular.

6-2 Proposed Structure of the AHO

Figure 3 illustrates the proposed structure of the Arab Health Organization (AHO). The following is a brief explanation of the tasks that can be carried out by the General Secretariat and other agencies centers and Departments of the Organization:

- **The General Secretariat of AHO:** It includes the Secretary-General, General Secretariat, Planning and Follow-up Department, Financial Affairs Department, Human Resources Coordination Department, and Legal Affairs Department.
- **Classification, Accreditation, and Quality Assurance Authority:** It takes care of classification, accreditation, and registration of medical staff and medical institutions operating across the Arab world, the development of policies, procedures and quality for health services, and health systems.
- **Medicine Recording and Monitoring Authority:** It is concerned with the development of policies and the constitutions of drugs and pharmaceuticals, and monitoring of medicines and its side effects.
- **Crisis Management Center:** It takes care of emergency operations and special missions, capacity building, alert and response to epidemic and incursions of disease, as well as the security in the Arab countries against potential bacterial and biological wars.
- **Family and Community Health Center:** It is interested in child and adolescent health and development, immunization, vaccines and biological preparations, reproductive health and research, and the elderly health care.
- **Health and Environment Security Center:** It takes care of environmental protection and prevention against violence, physical abuse, injury and disability. It takes care also of mental health, addiction treatment, and work to quit smoking.

- **Food Safety and Veterinary Diseases Center:** It is concerned with the research for the sources of diseases transmitted by foods and animals, and nutrition for health and development.
- **Endemic and Communicable Disease Control Center:** It takes care and controls the endemic diseases like malaria, polio, AIDS, tuberculosis. It takes care also for treatment of chronic diseases, health promotion, and combating the spread of infection.

Training & Continuous Education Center: It takes care of training and continuous education of all medical staff and personnel.

Medical Research and Pharmaceutical Center: It takes care of researches and innovations in all aspects of the medical and pharmaceutical fields.

Communication and Information Technology Center: It takes care of communication and information technology between all the health institutions in the Arab countries.

7. Results

1. Review the steps of strategic planning and its various stages.
2. Defining the strategic framework to achieve joint Arab medical projects: vision, mission, values and strategic goals.
3. Analysis of internal and external environment: 22 strengths and 31 weaknesses in the internal environment, as well as 3 opportunities and 6 challenges in the external environment are counted.
4. The proposal to establish the Arab Health Organization (AHO) with its organizational structure, functions of the organization have been clarified to cover all the major perspectives related to the subject.
5. Six executive programs have been proposed, with the clarification of their relationship to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. To adopt a strategic plan to achieve a joint medical Arab cooperation, and combine all the efforts that work in the medical field.
2. Development of human resources that have a direct or indirect relationship to the subject of the joint medical work, as the human capital has become the necessary and critical basis and means to reach what we aspire to achieve at all levels.
3. To strengthen and develop national capacities for research and development in the medical field and it's linking to the needs of the Arab societies. This is done with the benefit of already existing relevant institutions such as: the Health Committee of the Secretariat of the Arab League; the Council of Arab Ministers of Health; Arab Board of Medical Specialties; institutions of medical education; medical, accreditation, and licensing

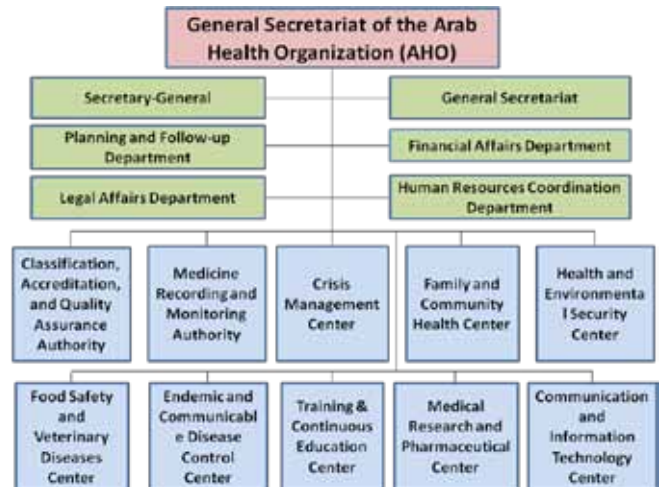


Figure 3: The proposed structure for the Arab Health Organization.

institutions; medical registration boards in each country; and pharmaceutical companies and laboratories.

4. To pay attention to settlement and development of advanced technology in the medical field. We can rely upon a lot of talented scientists in the field of medical services to form the nucleus for the development of such technical advanced medical technology.
5. Establishment of an Arab Health Organization (AHO) "its decisions have the force of law" to plan, coordinate and carry out joint work in all health perspectives.
6. The proposed AHO should work on the adoption of the proposed executive programs with the help of concerted efforts of all governmental and non-governmental organizations for their implementation.

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