

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE AT AMREF  
INTERNATIONAL: A CASE STUDY OF AMREF- KENYA**

**ENZAMA BENARD**

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## DECLARATION

I the undersigned declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university or institution of higher learning.

**Signature:**



**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

Name: Enzama Benard

**Reg No: D61/89249/2016**

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

**Sign**



**Date: 01/12/2020**

DR. KITIABI REGINAH KITI.

Department of Business Administration

School of Business, University of Nairobi

## **DEDICATION**

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this to all my brothers for the love and support they have rendered to me from day one and always, thank you for trusting me and motivating me to date.

I also dedicate this to my beloved mother, thank you for bringing me into this world and for all my achievements in life I dedicate them to you Mum, **I LOVE YOU SO MUCH**, Long live all mothers.

Last but not least I dedicate this to Professor Tom Ottarvanger who is my family in the Netherlands, thank you very much for believing and trusting me and your generosity and dedication to change my life, God bless you and the family.

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS:</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background Information .....	1
1.1.1 Strategic Management .....	2
1.1.2. Non-governmental organizations in Kenya .....	3
1.1.4 AMREF Kenya .....	3
1.2. Problem Statement .....	4
1.3. Research Question.....	8
1.4. Research Objective.....	8
1.5. The Value of the study .....	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Theoretical Foundation .....	9
2.2.1 Resource Based View Theory .....	9
2.2.2 Goal Setting Theory.....	10
2.3 Strategic Management Practices .....	12
2.4 Challenges of Strategic Management Practices Implementation .....	14
2.5 Strategic Management Practices and Performance .....	15
2.6. Table 1: Knowledge Gap.....	16
2.7 Summary of Knowledge Gaps .....	17
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	21

3.2 Research Design .....	21
3.3 Research tools .....	21
3.4 Size of the study .....	22
3.5 Data Analysis .....	22
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1. Introduction .....	23
4.2. Demographic Profile .....	23
4.3. Strategic Management Practices and Performance of AMREF Kenya.....	24
4.3.1. Strategic management practices .....	24
4.3.2. Performance.....	28
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..</b>	<b>29</b>
5.1. Introduction .....	29
5.2. Summary of Findings .....	29
5.3. Conclusion.....	29
5.4. Recommendations .....	30
5.5. Limitation of the Study .....	30
5.6. Suggestions for Further Study.....	31
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Appendix 1: Interview Guide.....	36

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS:**

<b>AMREF</b>	- African Medical and Research Foundation
<b>CEFM</b>	- Child Early and Forced Marriages
<b>FGM</b>	- Female Genital Mutilation
<b>HRH</b>	-Human Resources for Health
<b>MOH</b>	- Ministry of Health
<b>NGO</b>	- Non-governmental organization
<b>PESTEL</b>	-Political Economic Social Technological Environmental Legal
<b>RBV</b>	- Research Based View
<b>SWOT</b>	- Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
<b>UK</b>	- United Kingdom
<b>UNHCR</b>	-United Nations High Council for Refuges

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Knowledge Gap.....	20
Table 2: Summary of the strategic management practices.....	32



## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to establish the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of AMREF. The researcher took on a case study research design this study has five chapters and it looked at establishing the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of AMREF. All organizations, whether profit making or non-profit are open systems and they must therefore interact with their environment. This therefore means that Non-governmental organizations require to have strategic management practices in place that would be most appropriate especially due to the limitations of funds as well as the constant scrutiny from the host governments and donors. In order to have good performance and therefore achieve their aims and goals, the organizations have to continuously scan their environment to identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats posed by factors in the environment. This helps the organization to only participate in the activities and practices that would contribute towards the achievement of the organization's overall goal. The study sought to investigate the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of AMREF Kenya. To do so, the research took on a case study research design due to its ability to collect in-depth data. An interview guide was used as the data collection tool which was administered to AMREF directors and program specialist and implementing partner. Content analysis was used as the tool to analyze data to get findings then make conclusions and recommendations. The findings showed that AMREF engages in environmental scanning in order to ensure the formulation of strategies that suite the needs of target beneficiaries, implementation of the strategies in form of different projects like the Afya timiza project that aimed at making access of health services easier through medical camps, Partnership with MasterCard Foundation to make effects of COVID-19 less painful to people and also the sema project among others. Review of strategies is done yearly to ensure the organization was headed in the right direction. The study showed that strategic management practices had a positive influence on the performance of AMREF. A 23.5% in better delivery of babies was seen between 205 and 2018. There was reduced numbers of people engaging in FGM and more than 200,000 women accessed prenatal and postnatal health facilities in 2018. The researcher recommended that the organization increase one on one communication through meetings and use of peers to pass across the messages as well as involve more men in their fight against violence.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background Information**

Generally, all the organizations that practice strategic management do better than those that do not practice it. The realization of a suitable match of fit between organization its strategy, structure and process have constructive upshot effect on the performance of the organization. No organization cannot afford to follow instinctual strategies once it becomes exorbitant, has layers of management or its environment changes significantly (Pearce and Robinson. 2007). There are numerous obstacles that organizations encounter during formulation or in the implementation of their strategies and so they must be prepared to subsist with these challenges in order to certain their efforts in the whole process.

In the past years, much absorption has been on the wider process of strategic management and its practices in both public and private sectors, past strategic planning, as asserted by Vinzant and Vinzant, 1996 and Zanetti and Cunningham 2000. Poister and Streib (1999) add that strategic management needs the continuation of monitoring and evaluation of the whole process in order to identify how it all fits between the organization and the surrounding environment as well as understanding the external trends and the factors that could easily affect them be it the government or just customer need shifts. Therefore, strong management competence is very important in ensuring success of the organization this is because it allows for both short term and also long term-term sense of direction of the organization. The changes that may occur in the needs of the society, politics trends, fiscal conditions, inter-government relations, as well as expectations of the citizens are likely that the kind of program responsibilities and resources needed in facing government. Forecasting changes and embracing them requires the organization to poses very strong strategic management.

Organizations should practice strategic management so as to make sure that there is successful implementation and control and review of their strategic plans. (Poister and Streib, 1999).

### **1.1.1 Strategic Management**

Strategic management is a comprehensive concept that holds a whole set or arrangement of managerial actions and decisions which in turn help to determine the organization's long-term performance as asserted by Koteen, 1999. Strategic management is a continuous process of ensuring that all strategic plans are in the right place and can be able to produce better performance, if not, they must be changed and adapted so as to reach the target goals.

There are four main stages that involve strategic management, these include the scanning of the environment, strategy formulation, then implementation of the said strategies and finally, the evaluation, review and control of the set strategies. During the planning stage, organization mission, vision, goals and objectives are set, this is something done by the organization's top management. Scanning of both internal and external environment follows. Mintzberg (1991) argued that, in a turbulent and dynamic environment, an organization has to continuously adapt to the rapid changes in order to remain relevant. A good strategic plan is considered to be one that is well aligned to its internal and external environments, if not, it will surely fail. Organizations thus necessitate continually monitoring changes in the external environment so as to ensure their strategies are in line with the factors there, any changes must be met with proper alignment and adaptation to fit the strategies. (Stopford, 2001).

Strategy implementation is the next stage which involves putting the strategy to work with the aim of achieving the goals of the organization's as well as the overall objectives. This stage is the most challenging of all since a lot has to be considered and a lot could go wrong if not done well. Here, the organizational cultures, the policies and procedures, the organizational structure, systems, ethics and practices have to support the strategies, if not, the implementation process would fail. After the implementation stage, management has to continuously monitored and review the progress to ensure that expected results are achieved (Poister & Streib 1999), if not, then there must be changes done to ensure the organization id=s on track. The success of this stage highly depends on how well information flows and how well feedback is shared among the different departments. All employees whether junior or senior must be involved to ensure success. The evaluation and control stage looks at the disparity observed by comparing the current performance

and the expected performance. This would be identifying and pointing out the gap that necessary changes can be put in place.

### **1.1.2. Non-governmental organizations in Kenya**

Non-governmental organizations are defined as private voluntary groupings which are made up of individuals or associations that are operated for other purposes rather than commercial or profit. The various international non-governmental organizations in Kenya are grouped broadly into: international NGO's which operate within Kenya based on certificate of registration they possess but have been incorporated in other countries rather than Kenya and the national NGO's which operate in their local countries. The international NGO's were first started in the years 1839. Most of NGO's are donor driven, these donors since they all have different expectations in the usage of their funds, in the kind of activities they find acceptable to be engaged in as well as how they provide the funds for career development activities, (Oster,2004). According to the records held at the NGO Registration Board as of 2009, the total number of NGO's are 64. Source of funding for the NGO's, operating sectors like the Health, education sectors are the major differentiating factor for the NGO's operating in Kenya (Council of NGO 2015).

### **1.1.4 AMREF Kenya**

AMREF is the biggest non-governmental health organization situated in Africa, focused on enhancing wellbeing and medical services. AMREF Health Africa is located in several countries in Africa, which includes Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. For the western and Southern Africa. It is located in Senegal and South Africa respectively. To ensure that AMREF is functional, as expected, it is expected to be supported by countries overseas which include USA, UK, Australia and Sweden. AMREF Health Africa actualizes 41 projects which extends in 47 counties across the nations through five automatic methodologies maternal and child health, TB, HIV /AIDS, sanitation and water and clinics.

AMREF Health Africa was officially founded in the year 1957 with an intention to provide mobile health services to people as well as mission hospitals which have surgical capabilities. They also engage in Training of volunteers and health workers and education

of rural people on health matters. They also partook in the development of earning materials related to health. AMREF Health Africa has continued to provide mobile clinics as well as focusing on maternal and children health later, the organization started to focus on community-based health care (CBHC) and then went ahead to engage in training of community health workers who can easily provide primary health-care to the community in partnership with the ministries of health (MOH) in their home areas as well as collaboration with other international aid agencies like Red-Cross. The organization highly allows for participatory decision making where they allow the communities to identify their own health needs that they want addressed. Later in the 1990s, AMREF expanded its operation and went ahead to cover other health issues like HIV/AIDS and TB. This decision was brought about to address the pandemic that had engulfed most developing nations leading to a lot of challenges and major suffering economically and socially. (AMREF 2015).

Despite of the fact that donors have invested hugely in the health products and in the delivery of health services, a huge percentage of people in Africa still experience very limited access to adequate and standard health care (AMREF 2015). AMREF implements health projects country wide within different service delivery areas-effective project implementation is therefore a key goal of the organization for every project initiated. This study will therefore be focusing on this organization to determine the strategic management practices used and how they influence performance of NGOs in Kenya.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Various studies have been conducted both locally and globally on strategic management. Locally Mwaura, (2016), conducted a study on factors influencing involvement of women in strategic planning in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi. It aimed at ascertaining the different factors influencing involvement of women in strategic planning in Non-governmental organizations. The study adopted use of questionnaires in the data collection. The study ascertained that there is a strong remarkable relationship between experience, organization policies and involvement of women in strategic planning for non-governmental organization in Nairobi. However, the study did not highlight the general

overview of strategic management practices and performance in Non-governmental organizations.

Osano, (2013) carried out a study to find out the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic management process of health-based NGOs in Nairobi county in Kenya. The study's aim was to establish the effect that stakeholder involvement has in strategic management in NGO's in Nairobi County. The findings indicated the involvement of stakeholders in strategic management has a positive impact on strategic management process in NGO's. The findings reveal that the health-based NGOs in Nairobi Kenya normally involve stakeholders in all decisions made or any policies made though the stakeholders are not involved in the assessment of the said strategies. The study had a research gap in that it was solely based on the health-based NGO's in Nairobi. Besides the study was focused on effect of stakeholder involvement in strategic management and failed to look at the general overview of strategic management in NGO's in Kenya.

Akinyi, (2013), conducted a study on strategic change management practices and performance of NGOs in Nairobi, Kenya. It aimed at ascertaining the impact of strategic change management practices on the performance of NGO's in Nairobi Kenya. It adopted the use of questionnaires in collection of data. The findings indicated an improvement in performance of NGOs in Nairobi due to adoption of strategic management change practices. This study however was concentrated on strategic change management practices and not strategic management. The study neglected an overview of strategic management practices and how it affects NGO's performance in Kenya.

Aosa, 2011 studied on strategic management within Kenyan firms. His study aimed at establishing the strategic management practices adopted by firms in Kenya. He adopted use of questionnaires in data collection where he collected data from a sample size of 73 both local and international firms. The findings indicated that foreign firms were more involved in strategic management as compared to local firms. The study however was focused on all Kenyan firms but failed to look specifically at strategic management in the NGO's in Kenya.

Wanjiku, (2013) carried out a study on strategic management practices use by the directorate of veterinary services, the ministry of agriculture, fisheries and livestock in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to find out the strategic management practices that the directorate of veterinary services, the ministry of agriculture, fisheries and livestock use in Kenya. The study established that to a great extent the various strategic management practices had been implemented and its adoption led to improved performance. However, the study failed to look at strategic management in NGO's in Kenya.

Globally, Ogbechie, (2018) studied the strategic management practices in Africa. The purpose of the study was to establish various strategic management practices adopted by African countries. The study also investigated the various strategic management challenges experienced in African countries. The carried out a survey of the various strategic management practices used in African countries as its research design. The study established that for firms in Africa to succeed, there is need to understand the strategic leadership dynamics, the cultural context, the dynamics involved in the management of all stakeholders and also include the social dimensions of the businesses in the strategy. The study was hover focused on strategic management in Africa and not NGO's in Kenya.

Kuhn, (1998) studied on creative strategic management. The purpose of the study was to determine and review all alternative options that can be used to achieve short- term objectives and long- term goals. The study findings indicated that there is need to adopt various strategies by firms in order to attain competitive advantage over their competitors. The study however focused on creative strategic management and failed to have an overview of strategic management practices in NGO's in Kenya.

Blumentrin, (2006) studied on Integrating strategic management and budgeting where the study found out that in order for managers to gain effectiveness in their budgeting processes they need to include the creation of a cascading planning process, where all strategic decisions and financial decisions slowly follow the hierarchy of the organization, to establish committees that engage in strategic review through budgeting, and ensuring proper usage of the technological resources. The study however was based on the

integration of strategic management and budgeting and it failed to look at strategic management practices in NGO's in Kenya.

Hans, (2015) studied on International strategic management hybrids in China with an aim to establish a comparative conceptual framework that can analyze the hybrids of western and Chinese strategic management kinds. The foundation was institutional strategic management theory. The results demonstrated that the framework developed works in studying the management types mixtures. The study was however based on the international strategic management in China and hence the results cannot be applied in the African context and specifically Kenyan context.

Shresta, (2013) comments on strategic management practices observed in Nepal. The study purpose was to establish how manager of business organizations in Nepal and non- profit non- government organizations undertake and implement strategic management practices and to understand how the practices in Nepal differ from those used in western countries. Findings indicated that in Nepal, managers seemed to have developed some linked understand of strategic management practice however, a lot still needs to be done in order for them to compete and excel beyond other global players hence create sustainable competitive edge. The study was however based on Nepal and hence the findings could not be generalized to apply in the Kenyan context.

Based on the above local studies and global studies, there is evidence that there exists a research gap in knowledge based on the fact that no study was carried out on the influence of strategic management practices and performances of NGOs in Kenya. The study therefore sought to fill the research gap by answering research questions like: What are the strategic management practices adopted by non-governmental organizations in Kenya? What is the impact of implementation of strategic management practices on performance of non-governmental organizations in Kenya? What are the various challenges faced by non-governmental organizations in the adoption of strategic management in their firms?



### **1.3. Research Question**

What is the impact of strategic management practices on performance at AMREF Kenya?

### **1.4. Research Objective**

The Objective of the study was to establish the influence of strategic management practices on performance of AMREF Kenya.

### **1.5. The Value of the study**

The staff at AMREF will benefit from the study based on the fact that the staff will be in a position to understand the impact that strategic management practices has on their performance. They will understand the kind of challenges that they face and the impact that it has on their performance. Other Non-governmental organizations will also find this study beneficial based on the fact that they will be in a position to understand the strategic management practices implemented in NGO's.

The study will be of significance to the current theories by either supporting or challenging them through research findings. This study will provide an insight in understanding strategic management process and the challenges that face strategic planning. The study will also guide future researchers on challenges facing implementation of strategic plans in NGO's.

The outcome of the study will be advantageous to policy makers. They include the government and the national senate, in policy setting and overseeing implementation of strategic plans in the NGO's. This will expedite the process of strategic management hence boost efficiency, accountability and transparency.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter covers theoretical and empirical review of literature on strategic management practices. The chapter begins by discussing the theories that guide this study by looking at concepts of strategic management practices in public organizations, challenges facing strategic management practices and finally, empirical literature is reviewed on the concepts to show any similarities or any contradictions and the research gaps.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

Literature review is a part of a study that identifies and examines other similar studies done by other researchers and scholars. In this study, the researcher focused on studies about strategic planning and the challenges of strategy implementation. This review provided detailed understanding of what has been worked on by others in the past and acted as a basis for study findings to be interpreted. The study also was used to overcome the previous studies' limitations. The following section will outline and discuss different theories such as resource-based view theory and goal setting theory.

#### **2.2.1 Resource Based View Theory**

The theory of Resource Based View became pivotal in the early 90's. This was after Jay Barney's study on successful firm management evaluation which examined the mechanisms that firms could hold on its resources in order to build on competitive boundary. Barney (2001) stated that the Resource based approach was a critical factor in developing organizational capacity that magnify the ability of organization to survive in an immensely competitive market. The Resource Based View (RBV) reproduced Resource Based Theory which has become principle in the evaluation of the capacity of firm and in the management of resources into building competitiveness of organizations. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

The RBV theory focuses on the organizational resources which can be used to create precious factors which allow an organization acquire and retain new investments which

lead to success. According to Terziovski (2010), well formulated strategies highly guide the organization to fairly utilize and properly distribute organizational resources in order to allow for proper operations in the organization. The RBV theory outlines tangible and intangible resources of firm. Ray, Barney and Muhanna (2004) presents that all resources of the organization contribute fundamentally to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of organization. Per West (2012) advance that businesses are likely to acquire operational success through maximizing on effective usage and application of resources of organization.

All Corporate entities aspire to achieve growth through tapping into the resources so as to implement the comprehensive strategies that in turn enable them to achieve the company's primary targets. (Rosemann & Vom Brocke, 2015). RBV theory asserts that organizational resources consist of a competitive factor, therefore they are all considered very vital in ensuring that the strategies are executed properly to ensure the achievement of operational objectives and goals as intended. According to Ray et al., (2004), efficient utilization of organizational resources is what leads to gaining a competitiveness edge and maintaining corporate success and growth.

The RBV theory is in line with discussion on strategic management practices which is the focus of this paper. Implementation of strategic plans requires the coming together of comprehensive physical systems which must be supported by competent, well trained and skilled support team in the organization. (McKinney, 2015). The NGO's capacity to execute her operations is largely subjected to its resource base in terms of physical and human resource. The RBV theory, effectively address one of the challenges in strategic management at the county assembly.

### **2.2.2 Goal Setting Theory**

Back in 1968, an American Psychologist named Edwin Locke tossed out the theory of goal setting as explained by Chemjor, 2015. This theory is based on various guiding factors such as challenge, clarity, feedback, commitment and complexity of tasks. It originated from aspiration levels advanced by Kurt Lewin and it was then advanced by Dr. Edwin Locke, who initiated research on goal setting in the 1960's. The research demonstrated an inductive

association between setting of goals and attainment of higher organizational performance. According to Locke and Latham (2006), a goal is the result that an individual desires to attain. Goal setting entails the continuous process of benchmarking on the desired performance levels which lead to attainment of desirable outcomes. The goal setting theory basically argues that motivation is initiated by the intention and desire to attain a goal (Chemjor, 2015). When individuals realize that they cannot achieve the desired goals under their current performance, then they will be motivated to change their strategy or increase effort (Locke & Latham, 2006).

A submission by Chemjor (2015) supports theory of goals setting which looks at encouraging individual goals by organizational employees which all work together in playing a role in motivation of higher performances. Stakeholders are in constant look as to whether the goals are being attained and if this is not the case, they modify the goals to make them attainable or exert more effort. Performance improvement results in attainment of the goals. (Salaman et al., 2005). This theory is pertinent in corporate environments. It also emphasizes that the least unit of a company lays down a list of objectives and goals to be achieved. The operational objectives set usually form up the primary goals to be achieved and therefore operational strategies to be adopted by an organization are defined. Goal setting theory is said to push organizations to direct all effort and resource towards realization of the set targets.

The approach is adequately well grounded to explain the ability of county assemblies setting both short term and long-term goals followed by determination of effective and efficient mechanisms and means that can lead to the realization of these goals. SMART goals contribute towards success, that is to say the goals need to be Specific, Measurable, easy to attain, Reliable, clear and timely. This together with strict deadlines put in place prevent procrastination and allow proper understanding of what needs to be done. (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007). AMREF operates under clear and proper strategic guidelines which follow certain operational plans that are in line with expected outcomes and goals. Short term or long-term strategic plans are depending on the intended outcomes and factors involved. Any county assembly is well positioned to allow it easily leverage the goal setting theory principles to form both short-term and long-term strategies which in turn help to

attain and sustain operational edge and competitiveness with an effort achieve the mandate outlined in what requirements are needed to be a county assembly.

### **2.3 Strategic Management Practices**

NGO's are of essence in our economy based on the role they play in our society. They need to be externally oriented in order to deliver value to their stakeholders, who are the disadvantaged groups in the society as per their mandates in the society. NGO's have to come up with strategies that will facilitate their ability to meet the set targets and mandates as per the donor regulations. Strategic management practices applied in the NGO's include; environment scanning; where strategies are formulation, then they are implemented and finally valuation to ensure they are appropriate then a strategic choice is made. (Johnson & Scholes, 1999).

Environmental Scanning entails collection, scrutinizing and provision of information for strategic purposes (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). This information is used in analyzing various factors affecting the firms from the external and internal environment. There is need for an in depth understanding of what the strategic position the firm holds within its industry. During strategic analysis, a public organization endeavors to understand its strategic position within its sector with a view to matching its capacities to the demands of the external environment. Through environmental scanning, a firm evaluates what the weaknesses and strengths the firm has in relation to its environment are bay looking at various factors that affect its position (Isoherranen, 2012). In strategic analysis, firms need to understand its strategic position within its sector with a view to matching its capacities to the demands of the external environment. There are several tools that have been developed that can be applied by NGO's to carry out strategic analysis. These tools include SWOT Analysis, PEST Analysis among others.

Strategy Formulation entails the process involved in ascertaining the perfect course of action for meeting objectives of a firm and hence achieving organizational purpose. This comes after environmental scanning where the firm management have an understanding of the various factors that affect them in the internal and external environment, (Johnson & Scholes, 1999). In strategic formulation, firms have to choose tools that will be best fit for

the firm as per the industry that it operates in. Nevertheless, stakeholder analysis and participation are critical element of all these tools since stakeholders provide skills, resources, commitment, demand and alternatives. There is need for proper relationship management of stakeholders for a firm to come up with the best strategies that will be able to meet their objectives and goals. The strategies formulated need to be in-line with the firm's mission statement and its vision based on their environmental scanning and the set objectives that they deem to achieve (Harrison & Wicks, 2013).

Strategic choice entails the listing of all possible strategic actions which can be pursued by an organization, considering environmental constraints, with a view to achieving its goals. Each possible strategic action is evaluated against the organization's goals, mission, capacities, experiences, objectives and values (Muogbo, 2013). The mix of strategic actions that would best deliver the mission and vision of the organization are selected from the available alternatives and adopted. The adopted mix of strategies then becomes the organizational strategy. Tools that can be used to aid strategic choice making include SPACE Matrix, Grand Strategy Matrix, The BCG Matrix, GE Matrix, Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix, IE Matrix, among others. It is important to note that these tools do not take into account the unique cultural aspects of any organization that have a strong influence on the making of strategic choices (Muogbo, 2013).

Strategy Implementation entails all actions implemented by a firm in ensuring that the set strategies are practical and meet the set objectives. Coming up with decision making process, and managing human resources is key in strategy implementation. Under this practice, the firm puts the strategies formulated into action and continuously manage the changes required to keep the organization aligned to the realization of its long-term goals (Johnson & Scholes, 1999). It starts with planning whereby the strategy is broken down into shorter term objectives, actions and outputs that jointly lead to the achievement of the long-term goal (Brinkshroder, 2014). The objectives, actions and plans are then cascaded to all levels of the organization using appropriate tools for every level. The plans and actions are resourced and assigned to responsibility centers for execution since strategy is as good as its implementation (Andersen & Lie, 2013).

Strategy Evaluation entails appraising of surrounding environmental factors which are the root of current strategies, measure performance, and take corrective actions. It ensures that the strategies adopted by a firm and ways in which they are implemented meets the objectives of the firm (Thompson et al., 2003). According to Ring and Perry (2000) for firms to achieve best out of their strategic plans, there is need to evaluate the strategies implemented if they are as per the set plans in the planning stage of strategic planning. An organization's performance highly depends the extent to which its strategic plans set to align with both the organization's internal and external environments. There is a much greater challenge posed by the external environment of the organization, to its performance. This is so because the external environment is always changing and hence is highly unpredictable. This therefore means that the organizations in question must always monitor all the changes happening in the external environment in order to ensure they choose the most appropriate strategies or adapt and change their strategies to fit the new situation. (Stopford, 2001).

#### **2.4 Challenges of Strategic Management Practices Implementation**

Challenges facing strategy planners can be classified as economical, socio-cultural, political, structural, technical and technological. While the benefits of strategic planning are many challenges and limitations tend to destroy the effectiveness of strategic management.

Inadequate infrastructure in terms of technical or technological constraints may occur when an organization is constrained on information about itself and its operating environment which is required in the situational analysis. Hence, the strategic planning activities of such organizations become ineffective (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). Most strategic management decision making process are affected by political factors in the external environment which possess a key challenge to strategic management implementation. Unsuccessful strategic planning upsets one's status quo especially if power relationships are unsettled (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1999).

Strategic management practices are costly to implement and time consuming (Pearce & Robinson, 200). For effective strategic management implementation, there is need for firms

to establish a balance between formal and opportunistic planning to be able to provide a broader strategic framework without binding every action and therefore allow for creative responses to be made within the organized framework (Burnes, 2007). Strategic management implementation requires adequate training for the staff on implementation and on ways that they can balance between strategic and operational activities.

## **2.5 Strategic Management Practices and Performance**

Strategic management practices implementation facilitates the firm's ability to meet customer requirements. Strategic planning process links together the organizational stakeholders. Strategic planning pushes all the participants to envision what is expected to be the strategic impact of the strategies in place. This process therefore helps all members to get a much clearer picture of all the main issues and also permits the team to easily address those issues which are critical to the achievement of the mission statement and vision of the organization. (Ryals & Rogers, 2007). Strategic management practices implementation provides an appropriate arena for decision making process, and it contributes to a higher level, to the attainment of aims, goals and objectives (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1999).

In the kind of competitive environment that businesses operate, there are very technical business cycles, high competition, upgrading technologies that lead to easier availability of information, which have all made the operation of businesses more complex and challenging. Leaders must therefore be quick to act on all the factors of external influences so as to remain relevant. Current business environment is turbulent and chaotic hence only use of appropriate strategies and proper planning would lead to success of the organization. If this is done well, the organization will benefit from an understanding and grasp of strategic planning and focus of the organization to the right direction, and hence better performance will be experience and in turn a competitive edge will be achieved. (Thompson et al., 2008).

Strategic management practices implementation helps motivate a firm into better performance by enabling them to only focus their energy and resources towards the attainment of the same goals. Strategic planning presents a framework that allows for



decisions making, it creates lasting relationships among the employees, the clients, shareholders, customer and other stakeholders which also allows easier communication, and therefore makes the organization accountable to all its stakeholders as well the community it operates in. (Hamel, 1996).

## 2.6. Table 2.1: Knowledge Gap

The table below illustrates the summary of the knowledge gap identified in the literature review of the study

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Research Gaps</b>
Glaister, Dincer, Tatoglu, and Demirbag (2009)	Comparison of strategic planning practices among companies from the UK and Turkey, firms and UK firms	To compare strategic planning practices among companies from the UK and Turkey, firms and UK firms	Turkey had a higher proportion of firms had written missions in comparison to firms in the UK, however there was no significant difference between Turkish	The study was based on the UK and Turkey and hence the findings would not be applicable in the Kenyan context
Aosa, Michuki (2011)	Participatory orientation to strategic planning process	To establish the impact of participatory strategic management and performance	participation and involvement in strategic planning influences the strength of the	The study failed to look at strategic management practices adopted by NGO's in Kenya

			said relationship	
Macharia (2015)	Strategic planning practices at UNHCR	To establish the strategic management practices adopted at UNHCR	There is need for more innovations on the best strategies to be adopted by the firm	The study was solely based on the UNHCR and not all the NGO's in Kenya
Blumentrin, (2006)	Integrating strategic management and budgeting	To ascertain the impact of integrating management	For managers to gain effectiveness in their budgeting processes they need to include a cascading planning process	
Kuhn (1998)	Creative strategic management	To evaluate alternative options for accomplishing short term goals	Important to adopt strategies by firms	The study solely focused on creative strategies

## **2.7 Summary of Knowledge Gaps**

There has been a number of studies done on the concept of strategic management adopted by organizations. Glaister, Dincer, Tatoglu, and Demirbag (2009) compared the strategic planning practices adopted by companies from the UK and those adopted in Turkey, they found out that in Turkey, there was a higher proportion of firms with a written down missions statement in comparison to firms in the UK, however no much difference was found between Turkish firms and those in the UK, on the question of whether the firms have a written mission statement. This is contrary to what was expected since it was expected that more firms in UK than Turkey would do it.

Aosa, 2011 studied on strategic management within Kenyan firms. His study was geared towards establishing the strategic management practices adopted by firms in Kenya. He adopted use of questionnaires in data collection where he collected data from a sample size of 73 both local and international firms. The findings indicated that foreign firms were more involved in strategic management as compared to local firms. The study however was focused on all Kenyan firms but failed to look specifically at strategic management in the NGO's in Kenya.

Wanjiku, (2013) carried out a study on strategic management practices that were utilized by the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, livestock, fisheries and the directorate of veterinary services with an aim to establish the strategic management practices used. The study established that to a great extent the various strategic management practices had been implemented and its adoption led to improved performance. However, the study failed to look at strategic management in NGO's in Kenya.

Ogbechie, (2018) carried out a study about the strategic management practices in Africa. The purpose of the study was to identify those strategic management practices used by African countries. The study also investigated the various challenges experienced during the implementation of the said strategic management practices in African countries. The carried out a survey of the various strategic management practices used in African countries as its research design. The study established that for firms in Africa to succeed, they need to understand the strategic leadership dynamics the cultural context, and also stakeholder

management in terms of the social dimension and factors affecting businesses and their strategy implementation. The study was however focused on strategic management in Africa and not NGO's in Kenya.

Blumentrin, (2006) studied on Integrating strategic management and budgeting where the study found out that in order for managers to gain effectiveness in their budgeting processes they need to have a more inclusive planning process that allows strategic decisions and financial decisions to be made by involving all members of the organization by following the hierarchy in place, then establishing committees to perform strategic and critical reviews that would properly apply the available technological tools to ensure the strategies do what was intended. The study however was based on the integration of strategic management and budgeting and it failed to look at strategic management practices in NGO's in Kenya.

A study was carried out by Arasa, Aosa and Machuki, (2011) to establish the benefit that Participatory orientation places on strategic planning process. The Study there was fair participation in the strategic planning process and that it was embraced well, employees participated and got involved in the process of strategic planning in order to influence the strength of the said relationship and it concluded that a relationship exists between employee participation and performance. The study also showed that employee participation and involvement have moderate relationship between the two variables. However, the study did not go ahead to analyze the impact of strategic management practices implementation on performance.

Study carried out by Macharia (2015) on strategic planning practices at UNHCR found out that, the need to involve all stakeholders, budgeting and procurement lead times that need to be accommodated within the programming cycle dictated by the UNHCR, donor priorities, composition of beneficiaries, government policies and the changing political environment are some of the challenges encountered by UNHCR during the strategic planning process. The study further recommended that given the reduced funding levels experienced globally, the funding situation dictated for more innovative ways of providing

assistance to persons of concern so that UNHCR and other stakeholders can achieve more with less. However, the study was solely based on UNHCR.

Kuhn, (1998) studied on creative strategic management. The purpose of the study was to generate and evaluate alternative options that can be used to accomplish short- term objectives and long- term goals. The study findings indicated that there is need to adopt various strategies by firms in order to attain competitive advantage over their competitors. The study however focused on creative strategic management and failed to have an overview of strategic management practices in NGO's in Kenya.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter entails the research design to adopt, tools adopted to be used for data collection and gathering as well as how the data analysis shall be conducted.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Cooper and Schindler (2003) described research design as a tool that is procedurally acquired by researchers to enables them to answers questions with accuracy, validity, objectivity, and economically. The research design shall be based on a case study. The case study is an in-depth analysis of an individual, group, institution or event (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The core reason for carrying out a case study is usually the determination of factors, links and relationship resulting from the behavior that will be under study. It is a framework applied at the point when the limits amongst setting and marvel are not plainly obvious and in which numerous wellsprings of confirmation are utilized.

### **3.3 Research Tools**

For the purpose of this research, the study used primary data which was collected by use of interview guide shown as the data collection tool.

The interview guide is preferred for this case study because of its capability to extract data and information from participants and respondents and at the same time give the researcher deeper insight and understanding of the results from the study. The interview guide shall in addition enable the researcher to acquire more relevant information and better information that might not have been captured with the other data collection techniques since it allows for clarification and follow ups.

The interview guides were structured into various sections. The first focused on the demographic information provided by respondents while the other sections focused on the study research objectives. To ensure that the research instrument captures information from respondents as intended, the researcher asked open ended questions that will give room for

further prodding if any response is not clear. The researcher will personally conduct the interviews. Care and control will be achieved by keeping a register of all the questions asked and their responses.

### **3.4 Size of the Study**

The targeted respondents in this study consisted of 4 Top managerial staff at AMREF. They were made up of the top manager in the organization.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The study used content analysis in data analysis. Content analysis consists of the analysis of information provided during the interview process to identify any similarities or any difference that form a certain theme that can help to develop categories. According to Khan (2008). The data gotten here was then analyzed qualitatively since we can be able to make general conclusions on how data categories are related. Qualitative analysis was adopted in this study which allowed the researcher to describe, interpret and also critic the subject matter since the data was highly qualitative. This was done using content analysis which used to analyze the responses, to draw relevant conclusions and come up with recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter entails the analysis of collected data, the interpretation of study findings and the discussion of the same while basing them on the objective stated in chapter one. The objective of the study was to establish the influence of strategic management practices on performance of AMREF Kenya. An interview guide was used as the data collection tool to collect primary data. This tool was designed according to the objective of the study. Interviews were successfully conducted to 4 top managers. Those who were unable to meet for interviews were interviewed through the phone. The research was done successfully and the results are as discussed below.

### **4.2. Demographic Profile**

The study was earmarked to interview a total of four respondents from the top management at AMREF Kenya. These included the Program director, Country Director, Research manager and a Program management Associate. The gender distribution of the respondents included 1 Female and 3 Males. All respondents had managed a project and successfully completed it and therefore they are all competent and well conversant with the subject matter basing on this and also their levels of education as well as working experience. Data collected show that all respondents have high levels of education as they have Bachelor's degrees and Masters. The data also shows that they had worked at the company for more than 3 years. This information offered assurance that the staff had been with the organization long enough to provide proper information and insight and were knowledgeable enough to understand the strategic management practices of the organization.

All targeted staff were successfully interviewed hence the response rate was 100% which meant that the researcher could make proper conclusions for the study. According to Bailey, (2000), a 50% response rate is considered adequate and a 70% response rate is considered to be very good. This leads to the deduction that a 100% response rate is very good and therefore information acquired is enough to make conclusions for this study.



### **4.3. Strategic Management Practices and Performance of AMREF Kenya**

This section presents the analysis of findings and information collected from the interviews conducted on the management of AMREF Kenya in regard to their strategic management practices and how they affect performance. The respondents were asked the extent to which they were involved in the strategic management process and they all confirmed that they are involved at different stages. The findings were based on strategy formulation, implementation, review, evaluation and control as well as the influence these practices have on the performance of the organization.

#### **4.3.1. Strategic management practices**

The findings show that AMREF conducts the three major strategic management practices of strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation. AMREF major objectives are to ensure lasting health change in Africa. Findings show that AMREF Kenya is involved in environmental scanning through research in order to identify the needs in the environment that require filling as well as the analysis of their own capabilities to fill these needs. They identified areas in Kenya that require help for instance areas with nomadic communities like Turkana and Samburu as well as slum areas in Kenya. These are identified as the areas that mostly require the help of AMREF in accessing health services. AMREF is also involved in research to identify critical emerging issues in the environment for example the COVID-19 pandemic, the locust's invasion and floods affected the COVID-19 response as roads became impassable. The COVID-19 curfews also made it very hard for people to access health facilities since in areas like Turkana and other nomadic areas, people have to trek for hours to get to the health centers hence curfews would sometimes find them on their way back. This therefore reduced access to immunization services, family planning, mental health services and others

Strategies are formulated in order to ensure successful achievement of goals. Partnership is one of the major strategies put in place to ensure achievement of goals. For example, AMREF partnered with The MasterCard Foundation in 2018 and MasterCard donated Ksh.180M for a project to be facilitated by AMREF by training 31,000 Community healthcare Volunteers on COVID-19 response and to help communities withstand the

impacts of the pandemic. This fund was also put in place to train 47 county medical laboratory coordinators, 58 sub county medical laboratory coordinators, 520 laboratory staff, out of these, 57 of them trained on the use of GeneXpert for COVID-19 testing and biosafety equipment's to assure safe testing.

The different strategies are implemented to achieve the core strategic objectives of providing lasting health change in Kenya and Africa at large, development of and sustenance of Human Resources for health (HRH) so that they can ensure coverage all over the country and investment in healthcare all over the country. Several projects have been placed to help deal with and divert the challenges discovered during environmental scanning including the “*Afya Timiza*” project which was geared towards provision of health services in camps in order to ensure that the communities that have to walk for hours to access medical services can easily walk into the different convenient camps and access health services like family planning, child care, pre and post- natal care, postnatal care, deworming, immunization, adolescent and youth sexual reproductive health services and treatment of minor illnesses. The organization has also introduced the “*Sema*” project to mobilise and empower youth during the COVID-19 pandemic by sensitizing them on Youth sexual and reproductive health and increasing youth advocacy through different social media campaigns with hashtags like #EndPeriodPoverty, #ZuiaZogo to address the rising cases of sexual and gender based violence, #LindaSiste, #SautiSasa aimed at ending teenage pregnancies, #Championskwaground to celebrate the youth that spent their time to fight COVID-19. In May 2020, a website was created in order to provide accurate and up to date information on employment opportunities, funding opportunities, campaigns and protection services specifically tailored to the needs of the youth in Kenya during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are many more projects done by AMREF including dealing with the plight of pregnant women during the COVID-19 period, unlocking women potential in Turkana, Anti FGM activism and more.

The yearly reviews done in order to enable the process of review and control of strategies so as to ensure that all the organization's resources are geared towards the right direction of achieving the overall goals as well as the objectives. The reviews are released and even published in the Organization's website hence every department of the organization is able

to identify any disparity from the goal so as to adjust their activities and re think their departmental strategies in order to ensure everyone is contributing towards the main objective. Researches are also conducted to ensure that the communities are benefiting as expected and also identify the shortcomings that can be corrected. A summary of the strategic management process is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Summary of the Strategic management practices**

<b>Strategic management practices</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Strategy formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental scanning through research to identify issues like limited access to health services in Turkana and Samburu and other nomadic and slum areas</li> <li>• Identification of critical emerging issues in society like COVID-19, floods, Locusts invasion and drought.</li> <li>• Strategies are set like partnerships with MasterCard Foundation,</li> <li>• Projects like Afya Timiza to bring health services closer to the people through camps and the Sema project to empower the youth during the period of COVID.</li> </ul>

Strategy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with MasterCard Foundation to training 31,000 Community healthcare Volunteers on dealing with COVID-19 effects.</li> <li>• Installed camps to offer health services like family planning, Antenatal care, postnatal care, deworming, immunization, adolescent and youth sexual reproductive health services and treatment of minor illnesses.</li> <li>• ‘Sema’ project to deal with effects of COVID-19 19 to end violence, empower youth to speak up through hashtags like #EndPeriodPoverty, #ZuiaZogo #LindaSiste, #SautiSasa #Championskwaground</li> <li>• Creation of a website to provide information on employment opportunities, funding opportunities, campaigns and protection services specifically tailored to the needs of the youth in Kenya during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Advocacy to end FGM in nomadic areas.</li> <li>• <i>Uzazi Salama Project</i>’ to ensure better maternal and neonatal health in Samburu County</li> </ul>
Review and Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly reviews are done and report made and posted online so all stakeholders can access and identify areas that need change or enhancement.</li> </ul>

Source:

As from Table 4.1 it is clear that.....

### 4.3.2. Performance

Ultimately, any organizational performance and success can easily be measured through analyzing the extent to which the company is able to meet their goals and objectives. The study's Objective was to establish how the strategic management practices of AMREF Kenya influence its own performance. The researcher probed the respondents on the extent to which strategic management practices influences organizational performance, of which the respondents agreed that strategic management practices influences organization performance to a great extent laying emphasis on the formulation of appropriate strategies depending on the type of people being addressed and proper communication of the strategy to the concerned stakeholders and correct implementation. For the findings, the respondents touched on three main areas of organization performance and this were the change management at the company, the customers and the employees. Under the change management at the company most the respondents felt that the management teams managed the change processes well.

AMREF's project on Advocacy to end FGM had identified 60 champions to mobilize the communities in nomadic areas to end FGM and they successfully reached 99 top level clan elders and 646 middle level clan elder and they facilitated monthly clan meetings and successfully offered 119 students with either one-or two-year scholarships to pay for their secondary school fees. Among the students were 110 girls and 9 boys. This project worked together with the Kenyan government to strengthen existing Structures for children rights and protection against FGM and CEFM (Child Early and Forced Marriages)

AMREF also successfully implemented the '*Uzazi Salama Project*' by 2018 which was aimed at ensuring better maternal and neonatal health in Samburu County. There was increased access of quality health services by over 200,000 people, and fully immunized children increased from 4,193 to 13,752 between 2015 and 2018. The number of pregnant women attending antenatal visits also increased from 3,210 to 8,282 in the same period of time while the skilled deliveries increased by 23.5% by the end of 2018.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, draws conclusions then offers recommendation for practice and policy basing on the findings. It also outlines the limitations that faced the study then finally it offers some suggestions for further studies by other scholars and researchers.

### **5.2. Summary of Findings**

The findings showed that AMREF engages in the three major strategic management practices in order to ensure that they meet all the objectives and goals of the organization. Environmental scanning is done in order to ensure the formulation of proper strategies that suite the needs of target beneficiaries. AMREF has a very elaborate research team that carries on different studies to ensure they understand the targeted communities and their needs. Strategies formulated are then implemented through different projects like the Afya Timiza project that aimed at making access of health services easier through medical camps, Partnership with MasterCard Foundation to make effects of COVID-19 less painful to people and also the Sema project among many others. Review of the said strategies is done yearly to ensure the organization is headed in the right direction. The study showed that strategic management practices had a positive influence on the performance of AMREF. A 23.5% in better delivery of babies seen between 205 and 2018. There was reduced numbers of people engaging in FGM and more than 200,000 women accessed prenatal and postnatal health facilities in 2018.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

The study concluded that AMREF is conscious of the environment, they have scanned the environment and understood the communities 'needs and challenges and therefore have implemented strategies that enable them meet the different needs of these communities for instance the youth, women and pregnant women's needs are all unique and therefore require different strategies to handle. Social media platforms have been utilized successfully in communication process to ensure that important information reaches more

people in the communities by use of different hashtags. Involvement of community leaders like clan elders and also the Government has also been vital towards easier achieving of the goals. The organization is also vastly involved in research of cultures and norms of their targeted communities to ensure that they understand how best to help them.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

AMREF has done very well and they continue to be a leading NGO in provision of health services as well as raising awareness to marginalized communities all over Kenya on how to deal with the different issues affecting them. Formulate strategies to deal with the increasing sexual and physical violence against women by husbands during the COVID - 19 period as well as the increasing suicides caused by depression and hopelessness faced by many youths in Kenya because of poverty and lack of opportunities which has increased even more due to the economic and social effects of the pandemic. Involvement of more men in the fight against sexual and physical violence against women would also be important by sensitizing men from young ages on the importance of respect and seeking consent. This way they would understand it and therefore not feel attacked or judged. The organization can also focus on spreading their message through word of mouth in meetings and use peers since there are a lot of people in Kenya who do not have access to the internet therefore social media messages do not easily reach them.

#### **5.5. Limitation of the Study**

The study findings directly apply to AMREF and therefore they cannot easily be generalized and applied to other NGOs operating in Kenya and therefore strategic management practices may vary according to different organizations. The study is also limited to effects of strategic management practices to performance therefore it does not address other factors that can affect performance in the organization. The researcher also encounters difficulties in accessing the directors, project coordinators and other relevant managers due to the seniority of their level they were difficult to access for interviews since they are always travelling.

## **5.6. Suggestions for Further Study**

The study focused on AMREF Kenya Ltd and the influence of their strategic management practices to performance. This gives room for further studies on other major NGOs in Kenya. Another area of study can be a comparative study on Strategic management practices and performance of NGOs in Kenya. Another scholar can also seek to establish strategies employed by NGOs in Kenya as well as establishing the different challenges faced by NGOs in Kenya.



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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Interview Guide**

#### **Part A: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ADOPTED BY AMREF**

##### **i. Situational Analysis Practices**

Does AMREF limited periodically gather and analyze data about the market and other external or internal factors which affect its operation and business?

How often do they gather and analyze this data?

Does the external or internal market analysis identify key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business?

How does it identify key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business?

##### **ii. Environmental scanning**

How does AMREF limited carry out internal and external environmental scanning?

Which tools are used and why?

How does the organization ensure that all critical emerging environmental issues are identified?

##### **iii. Formulation Practices**

Is Strategic Management Practice a top priority activity in AMREF limited?

Does AMREF limited provide resources earmarked specifically for strategic management planning?

Which resources are they?

#### **iv. Implementation Practices**

Does AMREF limited have strategic objectives? Yes or No

What strategic objectives are they?

Have the strategic objectives had any effect on strategy?

#### **v. Evaluation and control Practices**

Does AMREF limited set clearly defined and measurable performance targets for each strategic management plan element? Yes or No which ones are they?

Does AMREF limited conduct perception surveys to gauge staff and customer satisfaction? Yes or No

How often are the surveys conducted? What were the results of the most recent perception surveys carried out for staff and customers?

### **PART B: PERFORMANCE**

In which areas of AMREF are operations does it have to get good results for the organization to be considered to have performed?

How is performance measured?

What is the expected level of performance in each area?

Has there been any improvement in performance in each of these areas since AMREF adopted strategic management practices? Explain.