



Enabling Better Infrastructure

**Continuing to drive purpose,
certainty and pace in strategic
infrastructure planning**



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Eight guiding principles to strengthen strategic planning

The EBI programme has developed eight principles to strengthen strategic planning.

The principles include guiding information to support the refinement and review of existing processes and can be used at any stage of the planning process (Figure 7).

Follow this link to navigate to the EBI online knowledge hub to access examples of how countries have embodied the EBI principles in practice.

<https://www.ice.org.uk/news-views-insights/policy-and-advocacy/enabling-better-infrastructure#ebi-principles>

Principle 1

Create clear goals for the long term

When planning infrastructure, governments must begin with a clear understanding of the economic, social and environmental goals they want to achieve for their country.

Setting national goals around infrastructure service needs provides clarity on what is needed now and in the future, enables cross-cutting priorities to be identified (e.g. missions) and encourages buy-in from the whole of government to gear up coordinated action.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a complete framework of goals for people and the planet, making them a worthwhile starting point for establishing national goals. The SDGs cover a wide range of social and environmental outcomes, including inclusivity, gender and equity.

Core process: Step 1

GAT: 1,2,3

Principle 2

Understand the infrastructure system and its services

Infrastructure planning should be based on a clear picture of the condition of existing infrastructure assets, where they are located, what services they provide and how they may deteriorate as assets age.

Mapping the interlinkages between infrastructure types, assessing the ownership status of infrastructure (e.g. government or private) and how it is funded can further help to identify and deliver on cross-cutting priorities.

Knowing more about the infrastructure system from the outset supports a common understanding of what infrastructure is (e.g. social, economic, other) and facilitates joined-up planning across levels of government (e.g. national, regional, local).

Core process: Step 1

GAT: 3,4,5,6

Figure 7: Principles for continuing to achieve purpose, certainty and pace in strategic infrastructure planning



Principle 3

Consider a range of options to deliver on future service needs

Future service needs can be assessed by considering the gap between national goals and the current service provision, allowing the best infrastructure solution to be selected to deliver on them.

Rather than building new infrastructure every time, understanding service needs can encourage the selection of alternative solutions, ranging from low- and no-build interventions, infrastructure demand reforms (e.g. pricing and efficiency) and options to prolong the working life of infrastructure.

Selecting the best solution requires a good understanding of asset performance and maintenance needs, including a robust sensitivity analysis to ensure existing infrastructure can provide services at a high standard in a range of possible futures.

Core process: Step 2

GAT: 4,5,6

Principle 5

Assess value for money

Agreeing on what value for money looks like, how it is measured and how trade-offs will be addressed is essential for prioritising projects and supporting policies.

Part of this also involves thinking through how infrastructure is funded (e.g. government-funded public infrastructure, where budgets must be prioritised, or private/consumer-funded, where putting in place regulation is key).

Used alongside affordability considerations, projects can be rigorously prioritised and added to the pipeline to ensure they have the greatest benefit. Proper evaluation of the wider economic benefits of infrastructure may enable investments with high upfront costs to be shown to be affordable over time.

Core process: Step 3

GAT: 7

Principle 4

Plan for the long term

Infrastructure has a long life, and major infrastructure takes time to create, so it is essential to plan with the future in mind. Factoring in adaptability enables projects and policies to be strengthened and modified over time as needed.

Critical considerations include the sequencing of projects and how this might be impacted by funding and financing, supply chain concerns, technological advancement and changes in the market.

Skills also play an essential role in delivering successful planning (e.g. leadership, institutional and local-level capacity). As they take time to develop, they need to be considered as early as possible.

Core process: Step 2,3

GAT: 3,5,9

Principle 6

Build consensus among stakeholders

Consensus on national goals can be achieved by including all stakeholders – including public engagement - in the planning process, supporting agreement on the current state of infrastructure and on which evidence or models are used to make changes (e.g. economic, demographic, climate change).

Stakeholder mapping can be used to decide who to include in decision-making from the outset, where activities can be undertaken at different times to capture insights from a variety of stakeholders. Doing so helps to build trust, and support buy-in on government plans.

Building consensus can also enhance cross-stakeholder prioritisation, reduce conflicting demands and drive the longevity of decisions.

Core process: Step 1,2

GAT: 8



Principle 7

Strengthen information gathering and data use

Evidence-based decision-making relies on quality data that is regularly gathered and made available to inform the planning process.

Data agreements between sectors and stakeholders can incentivise the collecting of quality data and its use. This is particularly useful for monitoring and ex-post assessments (e.g. progress on achieving national goals, pipeline monitoring and stakeholder accountability) across the system to make necessary changes over time.

 **Core process: Step 1,3**

 **GAT: 3,4,10**

Principle 8

Connect the strategy to delivery

Aligning the strategy with delivery is critical for ensuring national goals are actually delivered through long-term planning.

The wider set of processes and policies that support the design and procurement of projects should be considered, ensuring priority projects are funded and delivered with the requisite technical skills and service outcomes.

Considerations include aligning procurement and regulatory mechanisms to enable the delivery of priority projects, steps to build and sustain capacity in the delivery industry, and whether procurement delivers on service needs and priority projects.

 **Core process: Step 3**

 **GAT: 3,5,9,10**

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Get in touch with ICE Policy for more information: policy@ice.org.uk

