



Innovative Strategies for the Road Ahead

FLEET MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME



For most aid and development organisations, vehicle fleets are a necessity to achieve their programme goals. Without a fleet (vehicles, trucks and motorbikes), it is impossible to provide aid to those in need. This operational imperative also creates challenges for organisations: improper fleet management leads to:



Over the years, Fleet Forum has built its expertise in supporting organisations in the development and implementation of strategic fleet management improvement programmes. The aim is to optimise fleet management; with a direct link to the performance of organisational programme activities, resulting in lower costs and enterprise risks.

Finding the trigger to improve

In theory, managing the fleet in a professional way is a no-brainer. Fleet absorbs a large proportion of the organisations' budget - so implementing cost efficiency measures makes sense. Or so one would think.

However, there are more triggers that make organisations start realizing that they should shift their mindset from just thinking about vehicles in individual programmes and individual countries - towards a more global strategic approach.

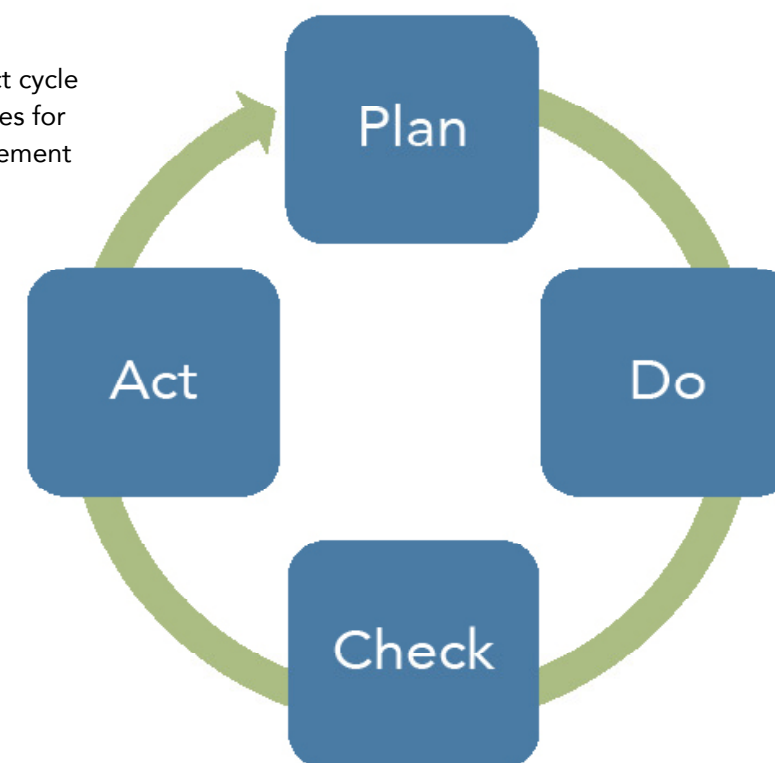
One of the organisations we supported in identifying their strategic fleet management approach placed programme delivery centrally: The fleet should enable staff to spend maximum working hours with the beneficiaries in the field. For another organisation, it was the audit findings and recommendations that transformed their vehicles as a global fleet, and not a set of individual assets that created enterprise risks in individual country offices.

Professional Fleet Management Requires Looking Beyond the Vehicles

Improving fleet performance in your organisation calls for a holistic approach. Purchasing the most suitable vehicles for your type of operations is, in most cases, the easiest part. What makes it more challenging are the efforts needed to ensure that you have the right procedures, knowledgeable and skilled staff, the right performance indicators in place, and a solid data collection and analysis system.

Another often forgotten area is the impact that users of your fleet have on its management. Do they perceive having access to a vehicle and a driver at any time as a right or do they see the fleet as a tool to achieve their work objectives? As one fleet manager once said: 'I wish I didn't have to deal with programme staff as they are so demanding'. Fleet Forums' approach in improvement programmes combine the vehicle fleet lifecycle approach (from procurement to disposal) with management techniques such as the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle – this coupled with a strong people-oriented change management focus to ensure that the envisioned improvements can be achieved.

Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle allows opportunities for continuous improvement



The Starting Point: Assessing Your Current Fleet Management

'Can you support us to improve our fleet?
We have between 500 and 2000 vehicles...or anything in between'.

This request from a global fleet manager in one of the UN agencies is not unique. Many aid and development organisations do not have a complete oversight of the fleet at a global level due to the decentralised way in which the organisations work.

Fleet Forum always starts with an assessment to gain insight in numbers, issues, and challenges. Typically, one of our consultants will visit HQ and several field operations to assess the current fleet management practices using Fleet Forums' Humanitarian Fleet Management Standards. The standards reflect good practices at basic, advanced, and professional level and provide insight where the organisation currently stands. The consultant will also analyse available fleet data in the area of costs, accidents, and effectiveness (such as availability and utilization).

After an International NGO asked us to assess their fleet in their East Africa operations, they were able to operate more efficiently with a 21% reduction in fleet size.

Create Strategic Options and Develop a Fleet Management Strategy

Now you have gained understanding about the current fleet management situation in your organization, it is time to identify and develop the fleet management strategy. From the findings of the assessment, two or more strategic options will be developed. The strategic options will be linked to the priorities that are set by your organisation.

In one of the agencies we worked with, having the fleet ready to respond to emergencies within 21 days was the most important priority. The fleet management assessment showed that currently there was no fleet management in place during non-emergencies - making it impossible to meet this objective. In the strategic options, we suggested that the global fleet manager either outsource fleet management to external professionals or to build a professional internal fleet management unit who would serve as a service provider to the country offices.

From these options, the strategy will be developed alongside an implementation plan. The strategic implementation plan will help the organisation to stay focused on the ambition set in their strategy and support them along the way. Where the strategy focuses on the 'Why' and 'What' the implementation plan describes the: 'Who, Where, When, and How'.

The implementation plan is built around five core areas:

- People
- Resources
- Structure,
- Systems,
- Culture.



Measuring and Managing Your Progress

Successful implementation of a fleet management strategy usually takes 3 to 5 years. Because it takes a long time to professionalize the fleet in your organisation measuring and managing the progress is extremely important. By its very nature, the Fleet Management Improvement Programme involves changes and this can be disruptive to your organisation and lead to confusion and turmoil. To manage this, Fleet Forum works with so-called Islands of Stability. The Islands of Stability include the programme values that will guide all the stakeholders involved as well as the milestones where implementation of predefined strategy implementation steps are stable. This stability is an important base for the next step.

Our measuring approach does not only focus on the hard data, for example: reduction in the number of reported crashes, but also considers the softer elements – such as how many staff members have structurally changed their behaviour.

To manage the change that the organisation must go through we regularly conduct 'Change Health Checks' - a practical tool that will help the fleet manager to ensure the implementation is on the right track.

Putting People at the Centre of Your Fleet Management Strategy

No matter how technically sound your vehicles are, or how extensive the functionalities of your fleet management systems are, the successful implementation of your fleet management strategy depends on your staff. From Country Directors to drivers, your fleet management strategy will most likely impact many stakeholders in the organisation and will require a new approach to how they manage, operate, or use the fleet.

To be effective, it is crucial to engage with staff members, involve them in the design process of the strategy, listen to ideas or objections they have, and to help them adjust to the new strategic direction through training and communications. Most people don't like changing their current work practices and if they have the feeling that this is ordered from 'above' they will most likely reject it.

When you want your staff members to make changes in their behaviour, their attitude, or the way they work to achieve your fleet management strategy, you need to show them the benefits of these changes. By doing so, it is more likely that staff members start to act the way you want them to.

Involving staff pays off

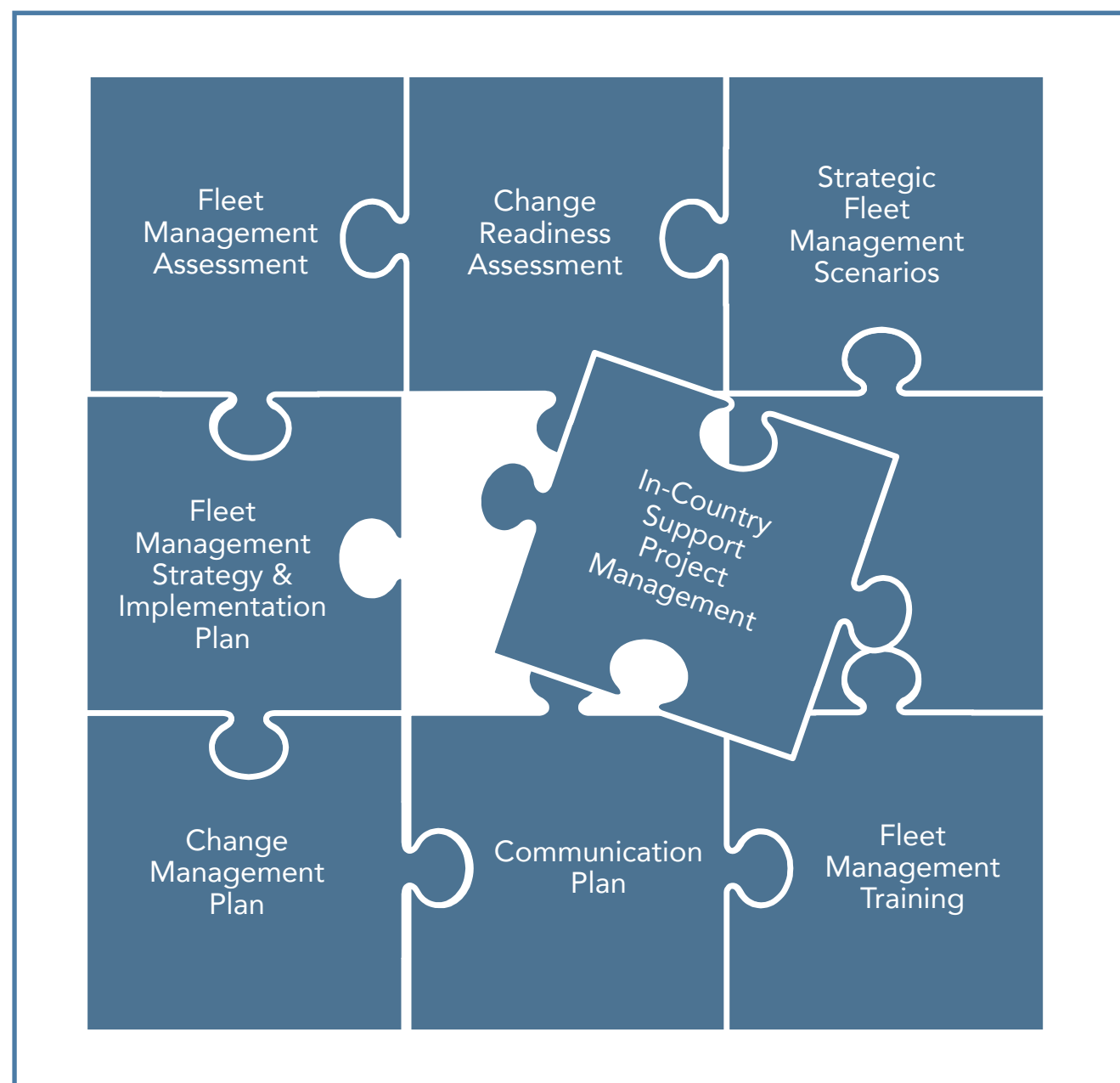
One example that illustrates this is a UN agency that changed their fleet management system to get better insight in the fleets' performance.

Spending numerous hours of talking to suppliers and hundreds of thousands of dollars on the procurement of the system, the organisation forgot to involve the staff in the country offices that would have to work with the system.

After some months, they noticed that the usage levels of the system were extremely low as staff in the field continued to use their own data collection systems.

When asked, staff mentioned that the new system, instead of easing their workload, was complicating it as they had to do double entries. This could have been prevented if staff would have been involved in the first place.





LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	
AREA	DESCRIPTION
Fleet Management Assessment	Tailor made assessment of current fleet management performance. The outcome of the assessment will be an organisational findings report, including SWOT analysis, gap analysis, and recommendations for improvements. This assessment report is crucial in the development of the strategy.
Change Readiness Assessment	Before an organisation can start making changes to the current fleet management practices it is important to understand to what level the stakeholders are ready to make the change. An assessment is typically carried out after the initial change activities are complete but before implementation. It can be a survey for larger projects or a series of informal discussions for smaller projects. It assesses if the need for change is clear to people, the process is understood and that individuals are positive. A successful change readiness assessment will alert you to any adjustments before implementation and help you manage the risk of failure. Fleet Forum provides consultancy services to help the organization understand its change readiness.
Strategic Fleet Management Scenarios and their Consequences	Fleet Forum consultant will support the organization in identifying different scenarios how the future fleet management model could look like and the consequences for the organization. The options will include advantages and disadvantages of each option, the needed requirements from the organization or external stakeholders such as donors and provide an estimation of the measurable results that could be achieved for each scenario. The scenarios will be presented to the stakeholders and will help them to make decisions on the strategic way forward.
Fleet Management Strategy and Strategy Implementation Plan	Based on the preferred strategic direction, Fleet Forum will provide support to write the fleet management strategy. The strategy will describe at high level which elements of the fleet management framework will be put in place to fulfill the demand for transport and in what way the organization will organize its fleet, taking into account the project values. The strategic implementation plan will describe in more details how the strategy will be implemented including timelines.
Change Management Plan	Fleet Forum can provide expertise in developing a change management plan that describes techniques and methods how organisations can successfully manage the change process that is needed from staff at different levels in the organization and that will support the organization in implementing the fleet management strategy and business model successfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS	
AREA	DESCRIPTION
Communication Plan	Communication is crucial to achieve strategy. Fleet Forum supports organisations in developing the communications rollout plan alongside content.
Fleet Management Training	Building fleet management knowledge and skills is needed implementation of a fleet management strategy. In 2015 Fleet Forum developed, in collaboration with UNHCR, Fleet Management Training. The training is based on a blended learning methodology and consists of e-learning modules, classroom training and supporting tools. The training is based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle in fleet management, which is applicable to all humanitarian organisations.
PROVIDE EXPERT SUPPORT	
AREA	DESCRIPTION
In-Country Support	Fleet Forum provides expertise to countries in the implementation of their Fleet Management Implementation Plans. The support is focused to equip managers and supervisors with the right skills and knowledge to independently implement the action plans. In other words: We will not do the implementation for you: But we will get you started and empower you to take it to the next level by yourself. This approach provides the right environment to successfully achieve the objectives set in the strategy.
Multi Stakeholder Project Management	In many organisations the 'fleet' is a cross cutting responsibility for departments such as Administration, Procurement, Finance, Logistics and Operations. Over the years, Fleet Forum has developed expertise to successfully manage these different stakeholder groups.