INTERSECT / Open Source Strategy

Draft, v0.1

In attn OSC / March 1st, 2024

This document defines the general approach for creating a strategy, setting a terminology, best practices, building the foundational model, and proposing a starting point for populating the framework.

Mission	We open Cardano to the world. We empower Cardano's community to shape the future of blockchain technology.
Vision	We envision a future where decentralized innovation and open source excellence enables co-creation of a society based on empowerment, transparency, and equity.
Core values	Transparency, Inclusivity, Quality, Sustainability, Community Empowerment
Strategic areas	Community Engagement and Collaboration Governance and Decision-Making Sustainability and Funding Models Innovation and Continuous Improvement
Objectives[1]	Launch the governance model with a great emphasis on community engagement Launch and fund three major community-driven projects Expand the global Cardano community Operational Excellence in OS Contribution
Initiatives[2]	xxx
North Star metric	Global community engagement rate
Metrics[3]	Community representation rate / Governance Portal usage / Number of community-proposed projects funded / Innovation impact score / Community growth rate / Contribution efficiency / Contributor satisfaction score

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[1] Proposal stage - should be validated and discussed w/ OSC
[2] Proposal stage - should be validated and discussed w/ OSC
[3] Proposal stage - should be validated and discussed w/ OSC

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Setting the ground - key elements and definitions

The first step in embarking on a new journey is to define what this journey is, why we do it, where we want to go, and especially what we want to avoid, or where we don't want to land.

What is strategy

Let's move beyond the buzzword, and reflect on what a strategy is in plain words. Simply put, **strategy is flying high to advance forward effectively.**
Strategy is <u>a feature of any initiative</u> that gives to participants and contributors a high level understanding of what and why they do what they do.

Consider those analogies:
- A lighthouse. Or a beacon
- A map, a sextant, and a reason to travel
- Considering a messed pile of puzzle pieces, the strategy could be the final picture we have to create. Without it, it is almost impossible to achieve the task.

There could be (and usually are) **multiple layers of strategy**. If the organization (or the initiative) is big and complex, we can deal with a layered or hierarchical strategy.

For example, there is an overarching strategy for Cardano that describes its long term aim, and how it will transform the world - *creating a secure, transparent, and fair global society*. OSPO and Intersect MBO contribute to this big and inspiring goal, but they will set their own strategy for this contribution.
For this reason, **one's tactic could be another's strategy**. In the example above, transitioning in the Voltaire era is a tactical initiative for Cardano's vision of *creating a secure, transparent, and fair global society* but it will be defined as a strategy for Intersect-MBO and its OSPO. In fact, even for IntersectMBO, OSPO it's a solution, a tactical approach - *How can we be successful in open source? By operationalizing an OS Program Office*

Always, the layered strategies are connected - top strategies determine the shape of lower positioned strategies. For this reason, it's important to start on top, and continue downstream.

Here are some key elements of a solid and efficient strategy:
- Layered or hierarchical
- Defined top-down (for a portfolio or an complex org)
- Flexible
- Vertical (its elements vertical organized)
- Long term focused
- Well communicated
- Monitored
- Evaluated (constantly)
- Supported by tools

What isn't strategy

Strategy isn't *the how*. Strategy ends when the how starts.
A good strategy describes the final destination, possible paths to get there, why we want to reach that point, but **it doesn't describe how** we'll travel - by plane, by train, etc. Those types of decisions will be taken considering how much time we have, budget, intermediate sightseeings we want to reach along the way, terrain (is there any big ocean to cross, mountains, etc).

Most of the time strategy is mixed, or confused with tactical planning: roadmaps, gantt charts, etc. For sure, a strategy could include timeframes, SMART goals, and some general planning. But those things are generally defined using a zooming out device, not a magnifier lens.

Cardano's strategy vs OS strategy

As was stated above, in complex or big organizations, ecosystems or portfolios could be the case when an entity's strategy drives / influences / determines another entity's strategy. As Intersect-MBO and OSPO exist to implement Cardano's vision about an open world and blockchain society, everything in Open-Source strategy is highly connected to Cardano's strategic approach. ➜ It's connected, but it isn't the same.

So, everything about how Cardano will live and flourish in the open source world is an iteration with more specific elements of Cardano's own strategy.
To conclude:
-    OS strategy != Cardano strategy
-    Cardano strategy ⟹ OS strategy

Strategy vs tactics

Here are the key differentiators between strategy and tactical elements:
- **Timeframe** - strategy is long-term focused; tactical elements operate within a relatively short timeframe, concentrating on immediate results
- **Metrics** - tactical elements primarily measure short-term results and immediate impact, such as transaction times, while strategic elements are more concerned with long-term impact, including metrics like customer lifetime value or market share
- **Scope** - tactical elements have a narrow scope, often reacting to new information or changes in the market, and are executed within specific areas or channels. In contrast, strategic elements take a holistic approach, considering broader organizational efforts like market research, target audience identification, and branding
- **Implementation** - tactical planning occurs after strategic planning and involves outlining specific steps and actions to achieve the goals set in the strategic plan. Tactical planning is more reactive and focuses on immediate changes, while strategic planning looks ahead to the future
- **Relationship**

Strategy toolset - frameworks and principles

If everything is valid in the section above, then we can state some axioms about defining OSPO strategy:
- OS strategy derives from Cardano's strategy
- OS strategy implements Cardano's strategy
- OS strategy has all elements of a strategy and lives by its own. It follows the general best practices of a strategy.
- OS strategy is a living entity - it's flexible and can be adapted according to the market and community feedback
- OS strategy is constantly monitored
- OS strategy is constantly communicated

OS Strategy - foundational model

Here it is the foundational model used to define Intersect Open-Source Strategy
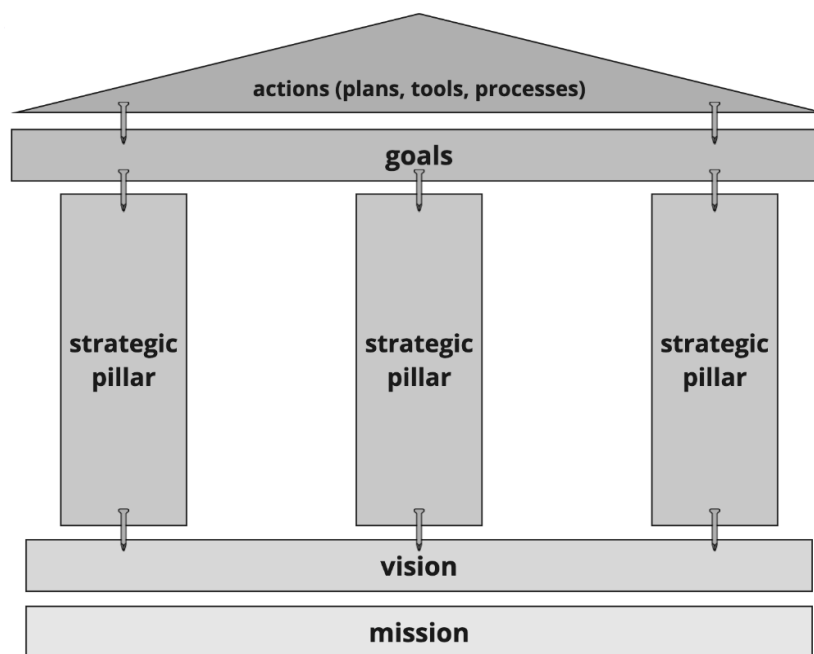
Few considerations before diving in more details, and explaining each element:

- Start at the bottom. A solid house needs a solid foundation ➜ don't build the roof before having the foundation and the ground set.
- Have quality nuts and bolts on hand - the structure needs to be glued together
- Pillars emerge from the foundation. They are strong and flexible, like reinforced concrete.
- Everything above stays on top of that. Stronger the foundation and the pillars, higher the construction can be.

Mission & Vision - the foundational layer
The mission is the bedrock of any strategy. It defines the organization's purpose and the core reason for its existence.

The vision builds upon the mission. It outlines the desired future state that the organization seeks to achieve.

Examples:
Ubuntu:
"To bring free software to the widest audience"

Open Source Security Foundation:
"To make it easier to sustainably secure the development, maintenance, and consumption of the open source software (OSS) we all depend on"

Meta Open Source:
"We believe open source accelerates the pace of innovation in the world. By sharing our code, our stack, or even our hardware designs, we're moving the industry forward while giving other companies and individuals a chance to use our platform to scale more quickly and build great products. "

Strategic Pillars - supporting structure
Strategic pillars are key focus areas that implement the long-term strategy, mission & vision. They are strong and flexible, each representing a fundamental component of the strategy.

Similar terms: strategic areas, strategic bets, levers

Axioms:
- **Strategic alignment** ➜ strategic areas emerge from long-term strategy (mission, vision, values)
- **Phase alignment** ➜ strategic areas are aligned with the OSPO's current stage of development ➜ on long term, strategic areas are fluid

Goals (objectives)
Goals are specific, measurable outcomes that OSPO aims to achieve. They are built based on the strategic pillars. There isn't a 1 to 1 relationship to Strategic Pillars, Goals may span several pillars, reflecting a cohesive approach to realizing the OS mission and vision. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals are a good choice.

Note: the terms objectives and goals are quite similar. We prefer to use goals due to the SMART goals framework

Axioms:
- **Alignment** ➜ goals emerge from the Strategic Areas

- **Prioritization** ➜ goals are prioritized according to their impact on Long-Term Strategy
- **Commitment** ➜ committed goals receive full attention and funding
- **SMART** ➜ goals are defined in SMART framework
- **Ownership** ➜ each goal has an owner who is the key driver in make things moving forward

Action items

Actions could include any plans, tools, and processes necessary to achieve the goals. They form the roof of the strategic edifice, completing the structure and ensuring that the house is fully operational and protected.

Axioms:
- **Alignment** ➜ action items derives directly from goals ➜ the are the way the goals are driven to success
- **Ownership** ➜ each action item has an owner assigned. !! no proxy ownership !!
- **Levels of granularity** ➜ not all action items are equal ➜ they follow a granularity definition
- **DoR, DoD** ➜ no AI without clear DoR and DoD
- **Backlogs** ➜ OS' AIs are organized in backlogs (we'd recommend Kanban boards)
- **Tooling** ➜ AI are managed and tracked in a specialized tool

Values - nuts and bolts, keep everything together

Values are the non-negotiable core of an organization that influences all actions and strategies. They serve as a liaison that keeps everything together, with all components of strategy being true to OSPO's identity and purpose.

Key characteristics
- Align decisions with the mission and vision
- Ensure that strategic pillars are pursued in a way that is true to the organization's identity
- Foster a strong organizational culture that guides goal setting and the execution of actions
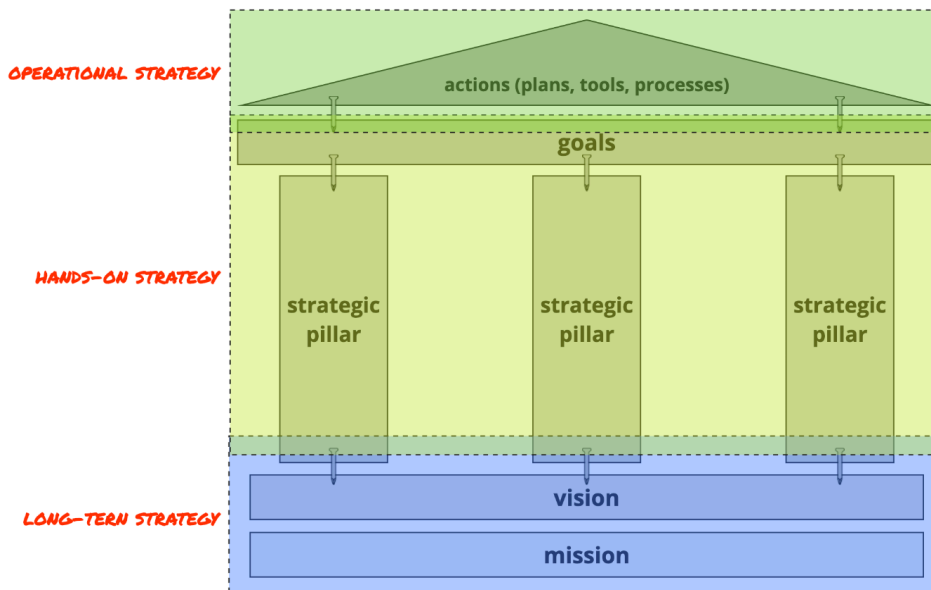
Long-Term Strategy

Long-term strategy is about setting a vision for the future and defining the mission and values that will guide the organization towards that future. It is aspirational and provides a sense of purpose. It's about answering the questions like *"What do we want to become? / What is our purpose?"* and ensures all members of our community are aligned towards a common end-state. This strategy is less about the specifics of day-to-day operations and more about setting the direction for the years to come.

Hands-On Strategy

Hands-on strategy, on the other hand, translates the mission, vision and values into more actionable steps. It is about the implementation of the long-term strategy through strategic pillars and goals that are more tangible. This is where the broad strokes of the long-term strategy are broken down into specific projects, initiatives, and metrics that will lead to the achievement of the long-term vision. Hands-on strategy is the response to a question like *"What are the key focus areas to achieve the vision?"*, and it is more dynamic, evolving in response to challenges and opportunities.

Operational Strategy

Operational strategy is the execution arm of Intersect-MBO, focusing on the day-to-day activities and processes that support the strategic goals and initiatives. It involves detailed planning of resources, operational processes, policies and performance metrics to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.. Operational strategy is concerned about *"How do we operate efficiently on a daily basis to meet our strategic objectives?"*

The three strategies—long-term, hands-on, and operational—must be aligned to ensure the community's actions are coherent. The long-term strategy sets the destination, providing inspiration and a point of reference for all subsequent planning. The hands-on strategy charts the course, breaking down the vision into specific, actionable areas of focus that can be addressed in the medium term (1-2 years).

Finally, the operational strategy ensures that each step taken is efficient and effective, aligning shorter-term actions with the broader goals.

This alignment ensures that each level of strategy reinforces the others, creating a unified approach that can respond to change without losing sight of the end goal. It also forms a feedback loop where the learning from operational, daily experiences informs hands-on strategy adjustments, which may also lead to a reevaluation of the long-term strategy to reflect the changing business environment or new opportunities.

OSPO Strategy - operating model

To be detailed. The below diagram will be explained
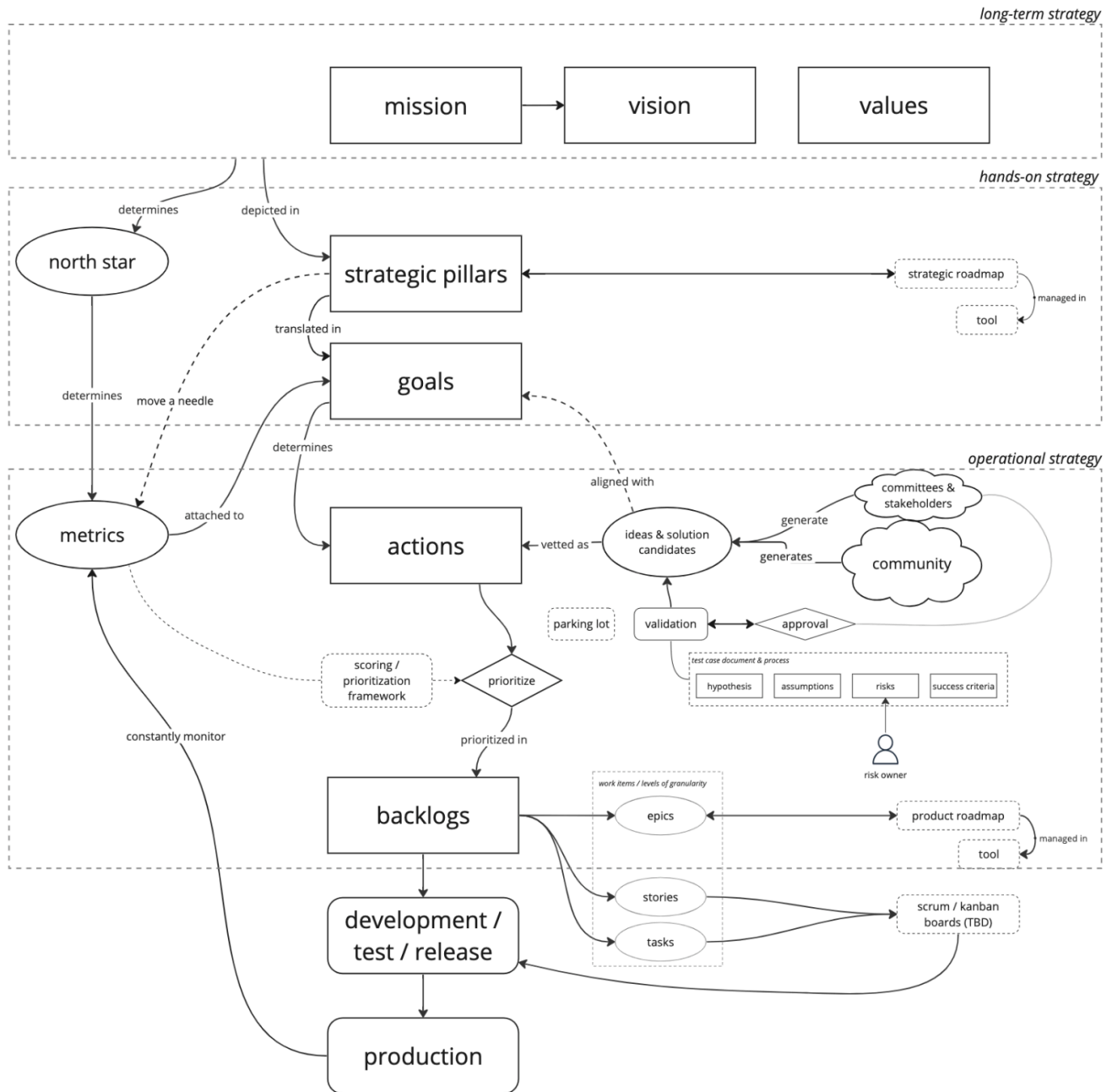
OSPO Strategy - filling in the blanks

Mission

Statement[4]

We open Cardano to the world. We support and encourage global citizens[5] to shape the future of blockchain technology.

Description[6]

Empowering Cardano's growth and evolution, our mission at Intersect is to lead open source innovation and community collaboration. We are dedicated to fostering a transparent, inclusive, and dynamic environment where stakeholders can contribute, learn, and shape the future of blockchain technology.

Vision

Statement[7]

We envision a future where decentralized innovation and open source excellence enables co-creation of a society based on empowerment, transparency, and equity.

Description[8]

Our vision is to position Cardano as a global benchmark for open source excellence, driving transformative change in the blockchain landscape. Through strategic governance, cutting-edge technologies, and a thriving community, we aim to redefine the boundaries of decentralized innovation, ensuring accessibility, security, and sustainability for all.

Values[9][10]

- **Transparency**
  All open-source initiatives will adhere to transparent development processes, allowing the community to monitor progress and contribute effectively.

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[4] Created as a shorter version for the initial Mission statement
[5] Could be replaced by "Cardano Community"
[6] Extracted from Open Source Strategy (WIP)-confidential document
[7] Created as a shorter version for the initial Vision statement
[8] Extracted from Open Source Strategy (WIP)-confidential document
[9] Were listed in various places. Also known as core values, key principles
[10] In various places there were identified other potential core values: Legitimacy, Citizenship

- **Inclusivity**
  We believe in creating an environment that welcomes contributors from all walks of life, enabling a diverse range of perspectives to shape our projects.
- **Quality**
  The quality of our open-source projects are upheld through rigorous testing, documentation, and adherence to best practices.
- **Sustainability**
  All our initiatives are designed to be sustainable and encourage long-term collaboration, ensuring their continued relevance and impact.
- **Community Empowerment**
  The strategy centers on empowering the community to take ownership of projects, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.

Strategic Areas (pillars)

AXIOMS:
- **Strategic alignment** ➜ strategic areas emerge from long-term strategy (mission, vision, values)
- **Phase alignment** ➜ strategic areas are aligned with the OSPO's current stage of development ➜ on long term, strategic areas are fluid

Strategic Areas is a main component of the Hands-On Strategy. They are the broader / longest term action items. In agile methodology and some tools we might find them under the name of Themes, or even Initiatives, depending on how many levels of granularity are set.

In the Intersect's knowledge base and documents we have investigated, we identified a significant number of actionable items.
Here is the complete list (duplicates and similar items were excluded):

1. Feedback Mechanisms
2. Internal Education
3. Community Events and Outreach
4. Continuous Improvement
5. Intellectual Property (IP) Management
6. Legal and Risk Management
7. Security and Vulnerability Management
8. Training Programs
9. Contributor Onboarding
10. Release Management
11. Contribution Workflow
12. Diversity and Inclusion
13. Reporting
14. Metrics

15. Documentation Standards
16. Compliance and Licensing
17. Tooling and Infrastructure
18. Codebase Accessibility
19. Developer Rewards
20. Communication and Documentation
21. Collaboration with External Projects
22. Measuring Success
23. Community Engagement and Collaboration
24. Governance and Decision-Making
25. Technical Development
26. Innovation
27. Sustainability and Funding Models
28. Challenges and Opportunities in Open Source

According to the Granularity Framework (see here), Strategic Area definition, and Intersect's priorities we selected the following items as potential Strategic Areas to be considered for the present draft of the Strategy:

1. Community Engagement and Collaboration
2. Governance and Decision-Making
3. Sustainability and Funding Models

There could be another one added with their subsequent items (on a lower granularity level)[11]:
4. Innovation and Continuous Improvement
   ● Measuring Success
   ● Reporting
   ● Metrics

We consider those items to be best aligned with the Mission and Vision statements, and with the current maturity and development stage of Open-Source initiative / Intersect-MBO business entity.

Here are those items together with some areas of interest, and actions[12] to be considered (and detailed) on further layers of strategy - goals, initiatives, plans:

Community Engagement and Collaboration
● Foster Active Community Participation: Encourage diverse viewpoints and create a welcoming environment for new contributors.
● Effective Communication Channels: Establish robust community interaction, idea-sharing, and collaboration platforms. Community choice.

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[11] This document will introduce soon the concept of Parking Lot
[12] Extracted from the document "Intersect Open Source Strategy - Notes"

- Empower Community Leadership: Develop leadership roles within the community to guide project directions while respecting community inputs.

Governance and Decision-Making
- Transparent Governance Structure: Implement clear and transparent governance structures to balance openness with intellectual property protection.
- Community-Driven Decision Making: Decisions should be transparent, involving community feedback and participation.
- Ownership and Support Balance: Ensure that creators retain ownership of projects with supportive roles played by Intersect.

Sustainability and Funding Models
- Long-Term Viability: Ensure projects have a dedicated team and a sustainable funding model.
- Criteria for Project Onboarding: Define clear criteria for onboard projects, focusing on compatibility with organizational goals and open source values, declare any conflict of interest upfront, and set up success and quality metrics.
- License Compatibility: Adopt business-friendly and open-source compatible licenses.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement
- Robust and Secure Technology: Focus on building scalable, secure, innovative technology solutions.
- Improve Developer and User Experience: Address user and developer experience challenges to make development and usage more accessible and efficient.
- Continuous Improvement: Adapt to new technologies and methodologies to stay relevant and efficient.

Goals (objectives)

AXIOMS
- **Alignment** ➜ goals emerge from the Strategic Areas
- **Prioritization** ➜ goals are prioritized according to their impact on Long-Term Strategy
- **Commitment** ➜ committed goals receive full attention and funding
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As a best practice it is recommended as a goal not exceeding a timeframe of 18 months

Committed Goals

These are critical objectives that align closely with the mission, vision, and strategic pillars of the OS strategy for Intersect-MBO and are essential for the near-term success and sustainability of the initiative.

G1. Launch the governance model with a great emphasis on community engagement
By Q4 '24, fully implement a transparent and inclusive governance framework that increases community representation in decision-making processes to at least 40%. This includes the creation of a governance portal and the productization of community-driven boards.

Strategic Areas covered
- Community engagement and collaboration
- Governance and decision-making

Possible initiatives
- Launch a community ideas portal and voting platform
- Establish the Open Source Committee with community-elected members
- Integrate continuous improvement mechanisms into the governance model

G2. Launch and fund three major community-driven projects
Identify, fund, and begin the development of three significant projects proposed by the community (aligned with strategy's priorities) within the next 18 months. These projects should focus on innovative solutions that address current challenges or opportunities within the blockchain/Cardano ecosystem.

Strategic Areas covered
- Sustainability and funding models
- Community engagement and collaboration
- Innovation and continuous improvement

Possible initiatives
- Develop a funding strategy (+ marketing)
- Introduce a community-driven innovation challenge program / support it with engagement initiatives like workshops and hackathons

G3. Expand the global Cardano community
Expand the global Cardano community by 20% and foster international collaboration on development within 18 months.

Strategic Areas covered
- Community engagement and collaboration
- Governance and decision-making

Possible initiatives
- Launch global community inbound/outbound programs(+ marketing)
- Establish community ambassador roles

G4. Operational excellence in OS Contribution

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the open-source contribution process by 30%, reducing the time from contribution submission to integration, within 12 months.

<u>Strategic Areas covered</u>
- Innovation and Continuous Improvement
- Governance and Decision-Making
- Community Engagement and Collaboration

<u>Possible initiatives</u>
Implement simple end effective tooling for code review and integration, streamline the contribution review process with clear guidelines and feedback mechanisms, and offer regular training sessions for contributors.

Measuring and monitoring progress. Success definition.

AXIOMS
- **Alignment** ➝ NSM emerges and sustain long-term strategy / other metrics derives from goals
- **Success definition** ➝ metrics are primarily tool to measure and evaluate success
- **Dashboards** ➝ metrics are organized in dashboards
- **Tools** ➝ metrics are monitored and managed by specialized tools

North Star Metric

NS metric is the single indicator that guides OS activities, and measures their success. It emerges directly, and is fully aligned with the Long-Term Strategy (mission, vision, and values).

Global community engagement rate
This is a composite metric that measures active participation rates in governance, project contributions, and community events. It directly reflects the mission to "empower Cardano's community" and the vision of fostering "decentralized innovation and open source excellence," enforced by values of transparency, inclusivity, quality, sustainability, and community empowerment.

Metrics

Here are some proposed metrics. They are subsequent to the NSM, and are derived from Goals (each goal has a metric attached a a mean of measuring the success)

- **Community representation rate**
  % of decision-making processes involving direct community participation or representation - G1
- **Governance Portal usage**
- **Number of community-proposed projects funded**

- **Innovation impact score**
  qualitative assessment of how well these projects align with strategic vision goals, addressing current challenges and opportunities
- **Community growth rate**
  % increase in the global Cardano community membership - G3
- **Contribution efficiency**
  time taken from contribution submission to integration -G4
- **Contributor satisfaction score**
  based on regular surveys to measure the open-source contributors' satisfaction with the process, tooling, and support.

Implementation considerations
- Regular monitoring ➜ set a regular cadence for reviewing metrics, allowing for timely adjustments to strategies and initiatives
- Dynamic adjustments ➜ be prepared to refine metrics and the North Star as the OSPO evolves and new insights are observed/acquired
- Community feedback ➜ incorporate community feedback mechanisms to ensure metrics remain aligned with community values

How to communicate
- Transparent reporting ➜ share progress on these metrics with the community through regular updates ➜ value of transparency
- Engagement in metric maintenance ➜ invite community input on the development and refinement of metrics

Areas still to be covered, next steps

After receiving feedback on the first draft from the OS Commeetty, the following areas will be further defined, or adjusted:

- Final terminology
- Incorporate feedback for the general framework
- Missing items from the general ontology:
  - Prioritization framework
  - Scoring system
  - Levels of granularity
  - Roadmap
- Template library