



# ***LIFELINES for ORGANISATIONS***

Developed by Martech consultants based on experience in helping organisations become more effective and of more value to stakeholders



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## **LIFELINES for ORGANISATIONS**

*Proven processes to help organisations achieve what they hoped to. We call them ‘Lifelines’ because they connect sound management practices that might otherwise expose organisations to gaps, perhaps chasms, and avoidable difficulties.*

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### **BACKGROUND**

If you are part of a board or management of an organisation, you might wish to know this ...

...for the past decade Martech consultants have been working to help organisations develop processes that:

- identify how they wish to operate
- get the best out of their resources
- help leaders and boards enjoy what they are doing – because their time and efforts are effective
- help key staff have clear goals and know what information their board requires
- keep in view who the most important people and relationships are

and to achieve all this without breaking the bank.

### **INTRODUCTION**

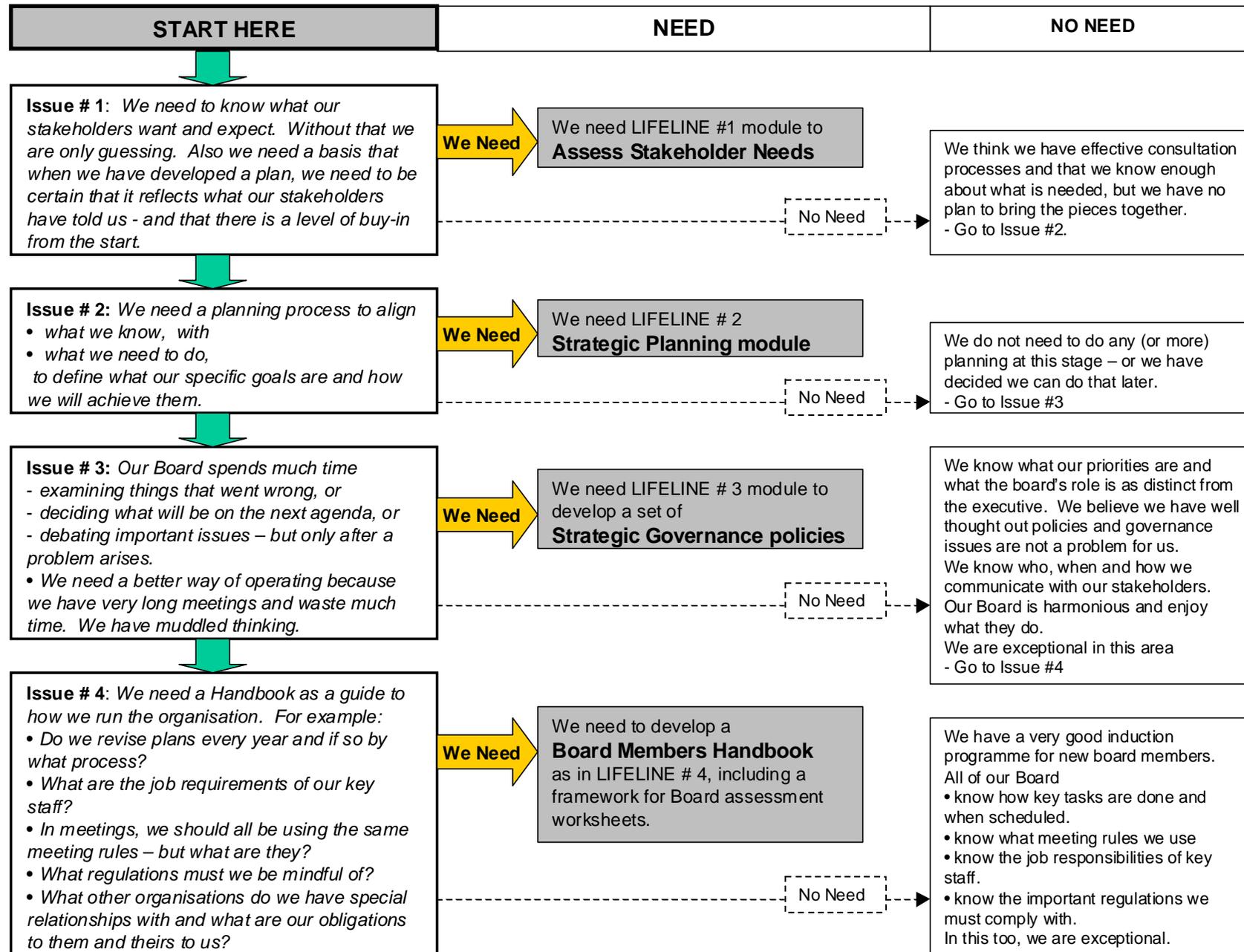
Every organisation is different, but there are frameworks to make things a lot better than they usually are. Faced with the question “*how do you go about setting up or refining an organisation*”, this document brings together our learning as to where to start and outlines how the main planks fit together.

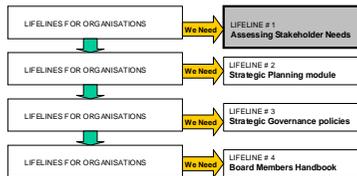
What the Martech team have found is that the theory is important, but often the translation from theory to practice is too complicated or it comes with having to bring in consultants who cost far more than the organisation is prepared to invest. We too were concerned that there had to be a better way.

Starting in the mid 1980s, Martech consultants have progressively developed and refined an integrated set of tools and techniques that have proved to be very effective. Each ‘Lifeline’ process has been thoroughly tested and we can cite client testimonials to support this. Also important is that each has been improved with refinements to ensure that they work well, link together and reflect best practice. On the following page is a guide to where each *Lifeline* module would be of value to organisations.



## Lifelines for Organisations – application diagram





## Lifeline 1: Assessing Stakeholder Needs

Obtaining information from key stakeholders is vital to all plans. Our approach is to use a facilitated workshop process where stakeholders clarify to themselves and other participants how they think the organisation should proceed. Importantly it identifies and ranks both:

- (a) Immediate Constraints/ limitations and hazards, and also
- (b) Strategic Issues.

It works equally well with organisations that have members and for businesses who have customers. Both groups have much to tell – and they all have their opinions. They have their opinions anyway – so why not ask them? The main thing that changes is that then you know what those opinions are.

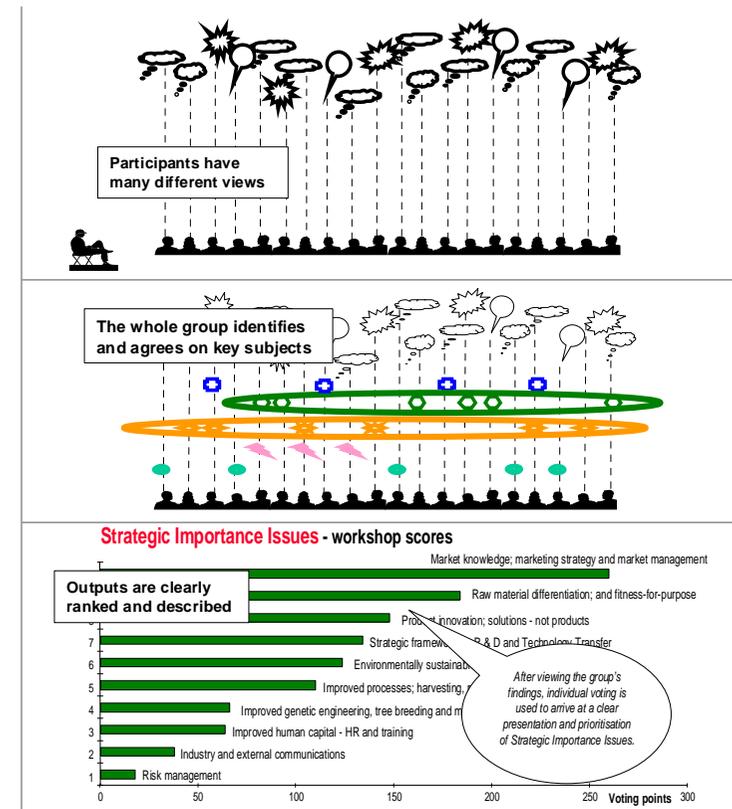
A major benefit is the level of buy-in that comes from, for example, asking major customers to join in a planning session. They are usually flattered and pleased to participate – and your group gets both the knowledge and the information. The only risk is that you may do nothing as a consequence – but who would wish to take no action when major gains are identified for you?

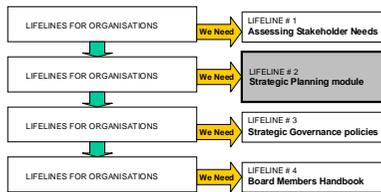
- 1.1 Our **Stakeholders Needs Analysis Programme** (SNAP) is best suited to workshops of 8 to 30 persons and take about 4 hours. The timings are usually set to also give the opportunity for some refreshments and networking.
- 1.2 For larger groups with less time available our **Community Workshop Programme** can handle groups of up to 100 persons and takes about 2.5 hours.

For both workshop types, some preliminary work is required and each is preceded by briefing materials to help all participants have a base level of overall information and not just their own niche area.

- 1.3 As a preliminary step, or where workshops are not practical or required, our **“PULSE” interview process** is ideal for any team seeking input from other persons. These can be set up quickly with all of the findings consolidated by one team member.

[Martech has a separate document available on **Effective Consultation** that shares our experiences in that field.

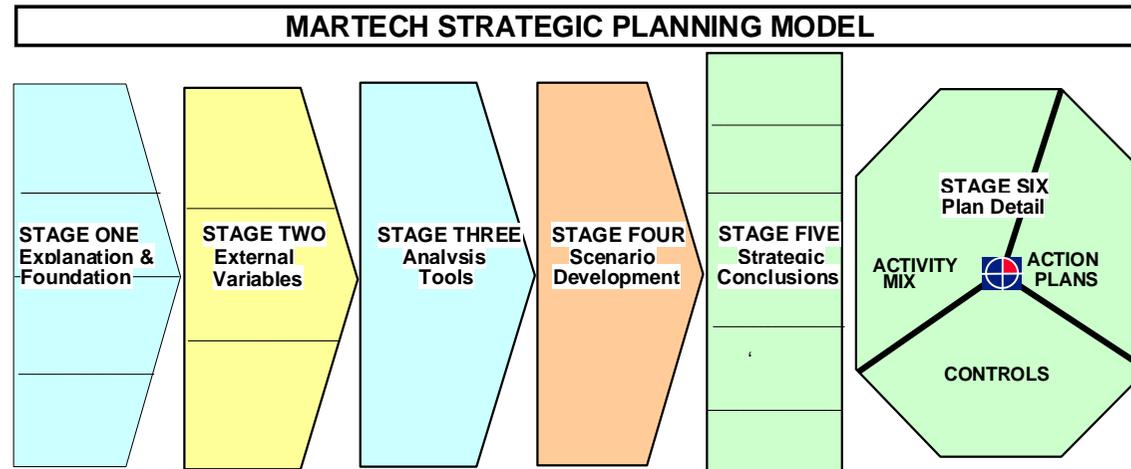


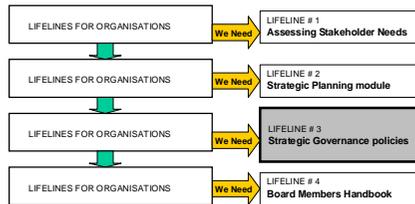


## Lifeline 2: Planning a Strategy.

Putting your information into a framework is the next vital step. Our *Martech Strategic Planning Model* evolved from work we carried out with a number of government owned trading enterprises in Pacific countries. At the time we had some good academically-based marketing planning models. These were good in theory, but not so good in arriving at an action plan that is easily followed and has clear steps for implementation. Over a period of 10 years we have continuously refined this work.

***Martech's Strategic Planning Model*** is structured in six easily followed stages. Each stage is supported by worksheets that provide for input from a wide range of people, for example regional managers or sub-unit leaders. It is usual for a small task team to be charged with bringing the plan together. Two critical steps require the team to meet, but both steps can be covered in the one session. Once the main points are agreed, the final detail can be drafted by whoever is going to carry out the plan.





## Lifeline 3: Strategic Governance

The big advantage from adopting a strategic approach to governance is that it will help an organisation to be more effective. To view Governance as only a process for compliance, and perhaps reduce or avoid wrongdoing, is to miss the biggest opportunity that adopting well thought out governance policies can offer. Consider the following two situations:

### What the situation should **NOT** be:

When Boards stumble it can be because they did not take time out to specifically consider and agree:

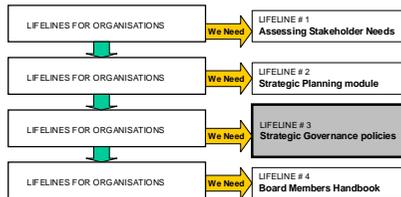
- (a) what their role is, and
- (b) what their position and needs (policies) are on matters that will come before them
  - = disharmony and fire-fighting.

### What the situation **SHOULD** be:

Once clarified by an agreed set of *Governance Policies* and processes, a Board should expect to:

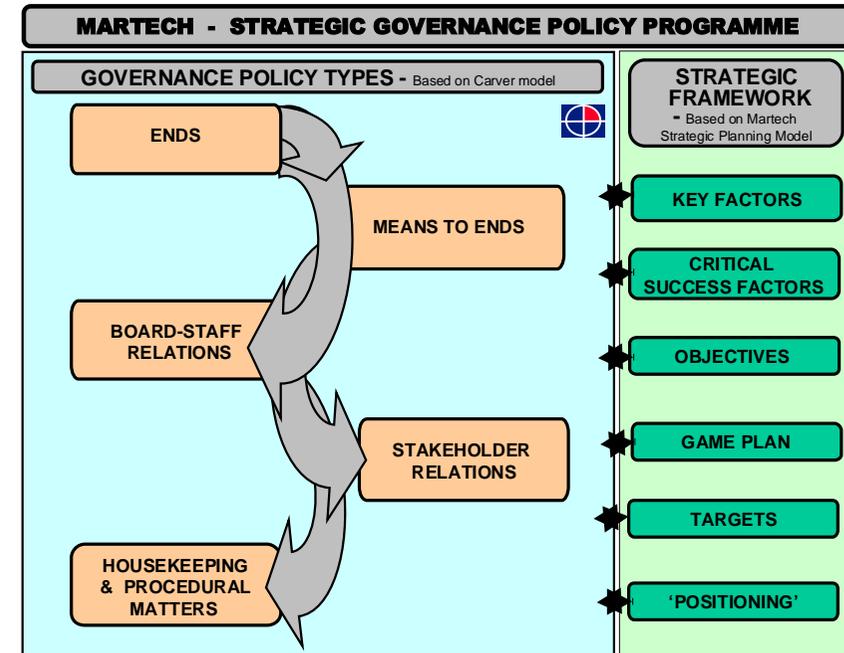
- be constructive
- be harmonious
- make effective use of time and resources
- have clarity of process and purpose
- have effective communications with stakeholders.

Martech's *Strategic Governance Policy Programme* outlined on the following page aims to achieve this situation.



### Lifeline 3: Strategic Governance (continued)

- Martech's *Strategic Governance Policy Programme* is a framework by which the Board itself is coached in developing its own policies for the range of matters it needs to be involved in.
- As to what those matters are, and the depth or level to which the Board deems that it needs to be involved, are all determined through the process of this programme. Each programme of governance policy development is therefore unique to the specific organisation.
- This is the main aspect that differentiates our *Strategic Governance Policy Programme* from others we have reviewed. Our programme is based upon the best learning on good practice in Governance. The concepts and practices in international use are shared with the Board at the opening session.
- This programme is not a strategic development assignment. What it does do is to align policies with strategies to ensure that the policies adopted are appropriate and will help the organisation to be more effective. The Carver model provides the framework for developing those policies.

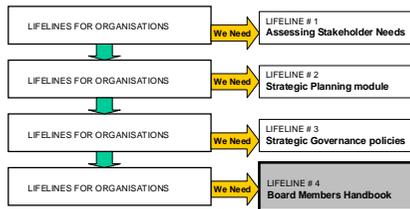


The model and concepts apply equally well to private sector businesses, NGOs, government business units and volunteer organisations - because it is a robust framework by which each develops their own particular requirement.

The adoption of policies is the foundation of good governance. Having defined how it should be, the board has clarity as to

- what it is to achieve,
- how it is going to get there
- and who does what.

Importantly, given the same set of policies, executive officers have equal clarity.



## Lifeline 4: Board Members Handbook

The *Board Members Handbook* addresses three important situations:

- (a) *Where a person is considering becoming a Board Member, how do they gain an insight as to how the Board functions in the organisation they are expected to help? It can be very different coming in on the theme of one or two important issues and then finding there is a much wider range of business and other issues that must be addressed.*
- (b) *Having joined a Board, how does a new member get up to speed on so many aspects that others already know by having been told or been party to a particular issue?*
- (c) *Where and how does the Board define its roles and information needs – and the Executive staff has a reference point for theirs?*

The *Board Members Handbook* also provides a brilliant induction document for new board members.

The format for developing the *Board Members Handbook* evolved from our work with a client who had gained much from using *Lifeline #2 Strategic Planning* model and *Lifeline #3 Strategic Governance Policy Programme* to restructure its organisation. Martech consultants helped them work through these two processes, and then supported them in the production of a first *Board Members Handbook* that has become the benchmark for this fourth of Martech's *Lifeline* modules. Many of our *Lifeline #3 Strategic Governance* programmes now culminate in this type of output.

The special value that we saw in developing this fourth *Lifeline* was that it brought together the following:

- **Governance Policies:** an immediate reference for the Board to know what had been decided as to the approach to 'X', for example: complaints procedures, strategic planning, communications with staff, schedule of subjects for meetings – all as part of *Lifeline # 3* module,
- **Legal Responsibilities of Board Members:** a summary of statutory requirements with which all organisations must comply.
- **Board Assessment Worksheets:** questions for a Board to review its mission, planning, asset management, board composition, etc.
- **Constitution:** a readily accessible copy of the organisation's foundation document.
- **Rules for meetings.**
- **Special Relationships:** a schedule of organisations with whom the organisation has a special relationship – and the background to the relationship. A vital section of corporate / institutional knowledge.
- **Job descriptions** of key staff.

*Lifeline #4* is a booklet or binder that has the essential information a Board requires. The contents are unique to each organisation.



## Examples where Martech's LIFELINE Modules have been used

	Lifeline # 1 S.N.A.P. Workshops	Lifeline # 2 Strategic Plans	Lifeline # 3 Strategic Governance	Lifeline # 4 Board Handbook	
Auckland City Council	X (14)				Over 400 persons involved; the basis for city strategic plan development
BioGro			X	X	Development of governance policies and Board Members Handbook materials
Centre of Excellence - Bio-sciences	X				Joint task for Massey Univ., HortResearch, Crop& Food, AgResearch
Cook Islands - Govt./ Asian Dev. Bank	X	X			Establishment of Business Development Board (like a TradeNZ)
Fishing Sector R&D	X				For The Royal Society of NZ
Forestry sector R&D	X (4)				R&D Strategy for NZ Forest Industries Council
Gullivers / Holiday Shoppe	X				Workshop with franchisees to review strategy
Kingdom of Nepal / UNDP - World Bank		X (3)			Privatisation / commercialisation of paper mill, brick and leather & shoe factories
Kingdom of Tonga / Asian Dev. Bank		X (3)			Commodities Board privatisation tasks
Large independent school			X	X	Also assistance with subsequent governance review
MAF Policy / Codex	X (2)				To define NZ position on standards for foods derived from biotechnology
NZ Agrichemical Education Trust	X				Review of <i>GrowSafe</i> programmes and Trust strategy development
Organic Sector	X (4)		X	X	Development of Organic Sector Strategy leading to Establishment Board
Republic of Kiribati / Asian Dev. Bank		X (12)			Privatisation of 12 state-owned enterprises: hotels, airline, trading businesses, etc.
The Helicopter Line (now THL)		X			Original investigation and successive market development input
Waitakeri City Council	X				Community workshop for 50 persons - Te Atatu peninsula community development
NZ Winegrowers		X			R&D Strategy for New Zealand's wine industry
Vision Manawatu	X				Framework for a NZ Animal Health Research Network - based on Inst. of Vet. & Animal Biosciences (IVABS) and Hopkirk Research Inst.

Martech have also carried out many other assignments that investigate and develop improved outcomes - from restructures to market research and case studies.



## CONTACT

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## About Martech

- Martech is a strategic consultancy with significant experience in:
  - Investigation, consultation and facilitation
  - Strategy development
  - Strategic management
  - Development of marketing plans and their implementation
  - Optimising innovation and knowledge
  - Enhancing business value
  - Governance development and evaluation
- All of Martech's work is with national organisations, or businesses or organisations that have national significance.

The key person for contact at Martech is its Director, Alastair Aitken

### Alastair Aitken

- Alastair is the Director of Martech Consulting Group and he has been a management consultant for over 20 years. He has worked with a wide range of organisations in New Zealand and off-shore totalling over 150 enterprises. He was a senior consultant with international PA Consulting Group for 12 years before establishing Martech Consulting Group Ltd in 1996. He has had consulting projects with private and public sector clients, including assignments for the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.
- In strategic planning work, Alastair is a past winner of a national marketing award – for establishing The Helicopter Line – now THL. He consulted to them for over 10 years.
- Alastair was the primary author of Martech's *Strategic Planning* process and also its *Stakeholder Needs Analysis Programme* – a consultative workshop that is especially effective in helping disparate groups to agree on strategic issues. He has been involved in the development of Martech's *governance programmes* from their inception in the 1990s and has been involved in all of Martech's governance assignments.

In working with diverse groups in strategy and governance, an example is his work with the Organic Sector. The diversity of the people involved in that sector would be as wide as any sector. In 2005 the national body for organics presented Alastair and Martech with an award in recognition of their work in helping that sector to establish a new national organisation, strategy and governance framework.