

Planning your Project

'Plans are useless but planning is essential' – General Patton

A project worth undertaking should be developed as a Project Plan, listing the main issues you will need to address to make your project happen and to achieve your main aims and objectives. Evidence of detailed planning is usually seen as an indicator of a good project.

1. What is a Project Plan

Within a Project Plan you should include:

- What you are going to do?
- What difference it will make to the people or organisations that your project will benefit
- How you are going to do it – including the resources you need to do it (premises, equipment, staff, Recruitment, training etc)?
- When you will do it?
- Where you will do it?
- Who will be responsible for doing it?
- How you will know you've made a difference to the people or organisations your project you aim to benefit?
- What will happen to your project once external funding ends?

Your Project Plan should cover everything from the activities and tasks that you have set for yourself at the beginning of the project to the outcomes you are expecting as a result. It is important that you can demonstrate that a difference and change to people's lives has been made.

If your project is focussed, the objectives can be summarised in a few lines. This document can then act as a briefing note to a potential partner(s) or for circulation externally/internally.

2. Added Value

In most circumstances funding is only available for activities that are additional to the usual day-to-day (core activity) of an organisation. External funding from whatever source; domestic or EU, charitable or Government is invariably for activity that is not the core business of statutory agencies (and increasingly the voluntary sector as well).

Project development staff from within statutory agencies should ask themselves whether a partnership / project should have a voluntary/community organisation as lead partner, this may widen access to external funding, without compromising the aims and objectives of the project.

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3. Relationship to KCC Objectives

Do not 'chase external funding' i.e. find out about a source of funding and then try and 'invent' a project to secure the money.

All projects should deliver against KCC/Directorate Key Aims/Objectives, if they don't then we shouldn't be involved.

4. Evidence Need

You must evidence the need for your project and show that your project is an appropriate means of addressing it. Three points to think about are:

- What needs do your community or users have?
- How do you know they have these needs?
- How will your project meet those needs?

The level of information you may need to provide often depends upon how much funding you are seeking. For larger amounts you may need to undertake a fully costed options appraisal, perhaps with some research into different ways of meeting the need.

Remember it is of little value to have a good idea if you have not researched to see if this is what people want and need. Good projects tend to be developed as a result of consultation and discussion, rather than having a "good" initial project idea then attempting to find the need for it.

5. Budget

When considering the financial information to provide, you will need to justify the amount you are asking for e.g. if you want funding for salaries you will need to show how you decided the numbers/roles of staff. When drawing up budgets estimates, please try to be accurate as possible, do not over or under estimate the figures.

6. Project Management

Funders will need evidence that you can manage your project, you can account for the money and that you can deliver the project. Assess the skills, experience and availability of staff and managers who could potentially be involved, and identify any gaps that may require the recruitment of new staff or outside expertise. Provide evidence of various policies e.g. Health & Safety, Employment, Equal Opportunities, Empowerment, Child Protection and more importantly how these will be implemented.

7. Monitoring/Evaluation

Funding organisations invariably make grants available to contribute to a short or longer term difference to the lives of their target groups/areas/sectors i.e. disadvantaged people. Your key aims and outcomes must fit in with the main

objectives of the funding organisation to which you are applying. It will be extremely important to establish how you will put in place monitoring/evaluation procedures and to collect information about the impact of your project will make so that you can evidence your achievements. Don't collect any more information that you need to! Depending upon the size of your project you may need to consider building into the budget resources for the employment of an independent evaluation – funders will often welcome (expect) this!

8. Outputs/Outcomes

Do not promise what you can't deliver or measure - back up what you say with evidence and your project aims.

What are the areas of change you hope for as a result of your work and how do they relate to the needs of your clients / users.

Outputs are the result or product of an activity/project (e.g. people trained, research report). They are usually direct activities that are easily measured.

Outcomes are the effects or end results of activity or outputs (e.g. qualifications gained, adoption of report by policy maker). Outcomes are all the changes and effects that actually happen as a result of your project work, expected or unexpected, welcome or unwelcome. You may be requested or find it useful to prioritise your main outcomes. Outcome indicators can be:

- Quantitative (hard) – where you count numbers of things that have happened
- Qualitative (soft) - where you assess people's views and experiences.

9. Other Issues

Include a risk analysis of your project; details of the assumptions you have made when planning and how you will react if things do not go to plan, i.e. contingency arrangements for all the 'what ifs' such as not securing the expected funding, are staff of the right calibre available, is a building available etc.

You might consider undertaking a SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – of both your organisation and the project, detailing how you would respond to these.

A well written Project Plan will make any application for external funding considerably easier, equipping you to respond to very short deadlines that frequently present themselves.



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Project Planning Checklist

Identify a lead agency and lead person – this doesn't mean this person does all the work. Share the workload between partners	
Preamble - introduction, background etc.	
Detail all partners – including other 'funding' partners	
Brief description of the project – explain how this differs from your core business.	
Geographic area – local, regional, national, transnational	
Aims and Objectives – the changes you plan to achieve or the difference you want to make. Do you have a mission statement?	
Outputs – i.e. services and facilities delivered. When identifying make them achievable - better to over-achieve rather than risk not delivering. - think SMART!	
Outcomes – i.e. the changes and effects that happen as a result of your project - think SMART!	
Key milestones - Break these down into quarterly/years - be realistic. Could include: appointment of staff, securing other funds, leasing / building property etc.	
Evidence of need - this is an important one, include any research whether anecdotal or empirical, user feedback and user involvement.	
Financial information – includes everything, be realistic, and detail any other funding (e.g. match funding).	
Risk assessment - address issues such as appointment of staff, other funding, market analysis and anything else appropriate to your project.	
Marketing Plan (if appropriate)	
Business Plan (if appropriate)	
Links to key strategies (UK, EU and KCC) - important particularly if you want their money.	
Methods for monitoring and evaluation	
Forward/Exit strategy – i.e. sustainability, funding beyond the 'external funding', continuation of the project, mainstreaming etc.	