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London Sustainability Exchange

Why Projects Work: Effective Project Management

- i) Project Parameters***
- ii) Aims, Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes***
- iii) Risk Management & Overcoming Barriers***
- iv) Monitoring & Evaluation***

Project Parameters

Phase 1: Conceive – the idea is born

Most projects begin as an informal idea that later gains acceptance from a wider group. These ideas will need to be developed further to systematically clarify objectives and to assess them against organisational aims. An inception meeting should be held with specific people invited to input. Some typical questions to ask during the meeting include:

Background

- Why is project necessary?
- What is the overall problem or opportunity?
- Has the current situation been explored and understood?

Context

- Is it in line with organisation's strategy?
- Does it form part of a programme of projects?
- Define – should we do it? Can we do it?
- What's likely timescale?
- Will end result be of value to another part of what we are doing?

Approach

- Have all needs been identified and analysed?
- Are there predetermined solutions?
- Is there a best option and a least worst option?
- What specialised skills are expected to be required for the project work?

Objectives

- Are the project primary deliverables known?
- What does the 'target' need/want/wish to get from the project?
- Can these deliverables be clearly defined?
- What are project benefits? Have they been quantified?
- Resources – money/people/equipment
- Cost / benefit analysis

Constraints

- What are they? (Think time, resources and expertise.)

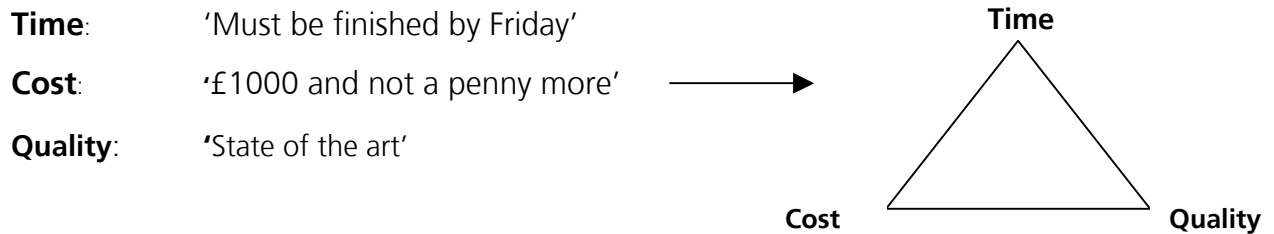
Two key questions to ask at this stage:

Should we do it? Are the benefits expected worth the cost of doing it? Does it achieve the organisation's mission?

Can we do it? Is the project technically feasible? Are the required resources available?

If the answer is no – do not proceed unless you can identify a way of making it feasible and desirable for your organisation

The three project parameters that will help you refine your ideas and begin to define your project are: **quality, time** and **cost**. By determining time and costs you are measuring the amount of **inputs** or resources that will be used to fund the project; the money, facilities and equipment.



Phase 2: Define – a plan is developed

This phase is often the most difficult because it is here that you must now define in realistic terms what the project is about, what it will achieve and how it will be run. This is also a critical phase since the project definition will form the nucleus of the project and provide the baseline against which progress will be measured and controlled.

Defining your project properly can help avoid misunderstandings as to what the project is about, and build consensus on its objectives. If done properly, the definition process will set up channels of communication and draw participants into involvement with the project.

Step 1 - Define the overall aims & objectives

Aims: What do you want to happen as a result of the project?
Objectives: What will help you achieve your aims?

Step 2 – Define project outputs - the deliverables

Outputs or deliverables are all the detailed activities, services and products you will actually do or provide.

Step 3 – Describe outcomes and identify indicators

Outcomes are what result from your activities: i.e. what behaviours have actually changed. Indicators are what indicate these outcomes (it is important to note that indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and are value neutral e.g. they are what you measure not what you want to change)

Step 4 - Defining roles and responsibilities

Typically, roles and responsibilities can be broken down as follows:

Project sponsors

- Commissions and owns the project
- Is clear about the objectives and scope
- Finds and wins resources for the project
- Chairs the steering committee
- Represents the first-line issue resolution for the project manager

Steering committee

- Has representatives from different functions and user community
- Reviews overall project direction, schedule, cost and quality of deliverables
- Resolves major issues/problems

Project manager

- Manages the project, the people and paperwork
- Responsible for achieving project objectives within scope, time and budget
- Prepares terms of reference, and plans the baseline
- Evaluates risk and prepares contingency
- Manages the project and implements the plan
- Builds, leads and motivates the team
- Reviews and replans
- Maintains good communications with team and all stakeholders
- Tackles problems areas sooner rather than later
- Manages sponsor expectations

Team member

- Technical expert qualified to complete project tasks
- Give regular feedback on progress to project manager
- Focuses on delivering quality
- Contributes to teamwork and moral

Step 5 – Identify Stakeholders

Who needs to be involved in developing the project? You should think in terms of internal and external stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders are the individuals needed to make a project happen – e.g. senior management to provide go ahead, board members to provide endorsement, project individual or team who deliver project etc. External stakeholders might be potential project partners, future service users, technical experts etc.

Standard stakeholder groups can include:

- Key external stakeholders e.g. private sector, boroughs, equalities target groups
- Functional bodies e.g. LDA, TfL, etc.
- Key internal stakeholders e.g. Mayor, Directors, employees, Unison
- Investors/sponsors
- Suppliers/distributors/contractors

The stakeholder matrix over can help you to understand the 'politics' of a situation and determine an appropriate action in response.

	Unlikely to affect	Likely to affect
High impact		
Low impact		

Step 6 – Identify resource need

What is the project going to cost? Determine the costs of the project in terms of:

- **Staff resources**
How many members of staff will work on the project? What percentage of time will be allocated? Will you require volunteer/intern input?
- **Money requirements:**
To cover core costs (e.g. rent, office equipment etc.) and project specific costs (e.g. salaries, publicity, materials, venue hire etc.)
- **Expertise or technology requirements**
Will it be necessary to develop new skills internally or seek external support?

While inputs are quantifiable and relatively straightforward to measure, it is essential to do the necessary research to establish realistic estimates. If you are not an expert in every aspect of the project plan, don't make guesses if you do not know what's involved in a particular process. Take the time to speak to those who **do** have the knowledge and background to ensure you have realistic expectations for the project.

Phase 3: Plan

The development of a project plan lies at the heart of any project. It involves identifying the key tasks of the project and then breaking them down into subtasks. This allows for a more accurate estimate of the time the project will take along with a measure of the resources needed to complete the tasks. At this stage you will acquire the necessary resources, establish the project team and produce a full proposal for the project.

3 key elements of the full proposal include:

1. A statement of work

Purpose: How and why it came about – the scope of the project, general approach

Objectives: The specific outcome you will produce

Constraints: Restrictions that will limit what you want to achieve, how, when and at what cost

Assumptions: Statements about uncertain information you are taking.

2. The Project Brief

Project origins – a need or opportunity statement

Project rationale – why is it necessary now?

Benefits of the project – external and internal

Project Budget

3. UUUUUA Gantt chart (mapping key tasks against the delivery schedule)

Think of the following hierarchy in relation to your project activities:

- Big Task
- Tasks
- Sub-Tasks

These should then mapped, with the project milestones (such as monitoring & evaluation / reporting deadlines, etc) against a delivery schedule on a 'Gantt' chart. Please find a bank chart attached.

Project management terminology – understanding the lingo!

- Product – outcomes/results
- Resources – people, money, equipment, facilities, information
- Schedule – start and end dates, timeline of activities
- Inputs – your resources (e.g. time & money - effort)
- Outputs – your deliverables (e.g. the project activities carried out with the resources)
- Outcomes – the impacts or effects of project activities
- Indicators – tools that measure/simplify/communicate your outcomes

Some useful tools and techniques:

- 1. Generating ideas, creative thinking and problem solving

SWOT analysis -

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threat

- 2. STEEPL – this can help identify the implications of the project and inform the SWOT analysis

Sociological	
Technological	
Economic	
Ethical	
Political	
Legal	
Environmental	

Characteristics of a project

A project has...

A finite and defined lifespan
Clear objectives
Measurable outcomes
A structured approach
Monitoring and control of activities
Multi-disciplinary working
Defined responsibilities to manage the project

It may be...

Stand-alone
Part of a sequence of related projects
Part of a programme or corporate strategy

Why Projects fail...

Incomplete/no terms of reference
Lack of end-user involvement
Unrealistic expectations
Lack of management support
Inadequate planning
Lack of co-ordination
Lack of communication
Lack of skills/experience/knowledge
Poor estimates of time and cost
Insufficiently measurable outcomes
Lack of control
Lack of quality control
Changing requirements/specification
Lack of resources

or succeed...

Clear statement of requirement
Focus on the business objective
End-user involvement
Executive management support
Team estimates and generates the plan
Use two-level approach to planning
Use deliverables-based task planning
Motivate and empower the team
Structured approach and methodology
Track work progress and re-plan if necessary
Manage and respond to risk

Aims, Objectives, Outcomes & Outputs

Definitions

Aims:

The over arching goals of the project: i.e. more sustainable consumption & production / more sustainable communities in the capital

Objectives:

What you are going to do to achieve the aim: i.e. increase recycling amongst the Muslim Community in the LB Tower Hamlets

Outputs:

What you will actually do or provide as part of your project: i.e. produce a resource toolkit.
NB Outputs normally refer to some tangible product but activities are also an element of a project outputs

Outcomes:

What will change as a result of your project: i.e. behaviour of LB Tower Hamlet's Muslim community / the borough's recycling rate.

Once you have defined the aim of your project, break it down into a series of objectives. These will describe the work required to achieve the aim. It is often helpful to think of aims and objectives in terms of:

- For **yourself**
- For **your organisation**
- For **others**

Objectives are the main things that the project will 'do' and should:

- State **what should be achieved**
- Be **realistic, achievable** yet **challenging**
- Be **easily quantifiable**
- Be set and **reviewed at regular intervals**

Objectives should always be clear and specific – less is more, be clear and concise. Don't use technical jargon or acronyms. Objectives should also be **SMART!** :

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**imebound

Inputs → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact

