

How to Complete a Project Plan

This resource will guide you through completing a project plan (also called a logframe or logical framework).

Part A: laying the foundations for a good project plan

Steps to follow before completing a project plan

1. The partnership has carried out a thorough **needs assessment** that includes good consideration of the cultural, institutional, and political factors that might impact on the partnership's ability to address that need.
2. The partnership has **agreed its approach** to addressing the need.
3. The partnership has done a **Theory of Change** for the project to assess the logic of your approach; how will these activities ultimately deliver change? For guidance on how to do a Theory of Change see: <http://www.thet.org/health-partnership-scheme/resources/tools-guidance/project-planning-theory-of-change-1>

Completing the project plan template

Representatives from both sides of the partnership should be involved as it documents the changes you want to achieve, how you will achieve them and importantly, how you will track and assess your achievements. All these elements need input from the key people involved in project implementation including monitoring and evaluation.

Use your Theory of Change, mapping it across to the different levels of the project plan: activities, outputs, outcomes and the goal. Further guidance on how to differentiate between these different levels is given below.

Remember

This document is not set in stone. In fact, your monitoring and evaluation activities which you will undertake regularly to gather data for each indicator will give you feedback on the feasibility of your objectives and what is possible in terms of progress measurement. If an objective, measure, or source of information is no longer appropriate or possible, you need to amend it to ensure this project plan remains useful and accurate.

Part B: How to complete the project plan (logframe)

Download THET's project plan template.

Complete the activities table, marking an X in the month(s) that the activity will occur.

Outputs

Each output describes a *change* as an immediate result of your activities. Either one or several activities could lead to one output.

Example: your activity is a workshop to train 20 nurses, 10 doctors and 8 support staff members involved in cleaning and waste disposal. This activity would lead to a *change* in their previous understanding and or skill, which is the output: *38 health workers with a good understanding of infection control procedures appropriate to the maternity and neo-natal unit of Kenyatta Hospital.*

Outcomes

The outcome statements also indicate a *change* which should follow from the change specified in the output statements. Several outputs may contribute to an outcome.

Example: Your output is 38 health workers with a good understanding of infection control procedure. You expect this to lead to a change in practice, as expressed in this outcome: *38 health workers competently implementing appropriate infection control procedures in the maternity and neo-natal unit of Kenyatta Hospital, six months after training.*

The outcome will therefore indicate a *change in practice*. In this way, outcomes describe the longer-term, more complex changes of the project.

Goal

The goal refers to the overall change to which your project will contribute, within the scope of the health partnership. References to national or regional goals beyond the scope of the partnership will not be helpful.

Example: change in practice will lead to a change in the *quality of health services* provided by the institution: *A 50% reduction in the incidence of post-operative infections in the maternity and neo-natal unit of Kenyatta Hospital, in year 2 of the project compared with year 1.*

Note in this example we have been very specific about where and for what time period this goal is relevant.

Indicators, targets and means of verification/sources of information

Indicators are the measures you will use to assess progress of each element of your plan. For each indicator you should set a *target*, and set out the *means of verification* – the ways you will find the indicator data or evidence, such as documents, observations, interviews, or audit. You also need to specify who will collect the data, such as specific health workers or volunteers.

Each indicator, target and means of verification, taken together, should be:

- Specific, so that anyone could understand what must be measured;
- Measurable, given the resources you have for monitoring;
- Achievable with the project resources;
- Unambiguously Relevant to the change you want to see;
- Time-bound – with respect to when you expect to reach the target.

By reflecting upon the resources you have (time, people, data and tools) you will cover most of these considerations when formulating your indicators.

Assumptions

Assumptions are the conditions and resources required for the success of your project, but which are beyond your control.

Example: You expect that *Health workers with a good understanding of infection control procedures* [output] will *competently implement appropriate infection control procedures* [outcome].

You are assuming that the health workers' level of understanding is the only barrier to their implementation of more effective infection control procedures; in other words, that the health workers have the time, motivation, supplies, equipment and managerial support to improve infection control, and lack only the understanding. Therefore you would enter these elements (time, motivation etc) into the assumptions column at output level as they describe the conditions that are required to progress from the output to the outcome. Repeat the exercise to determine your assumptions for outcome-to-goal.

It is important to identify and monitor these assumptions, since if they are incorrect you might find your project achieves its lower-level (output) objectives but has no effect on the objectives of real interest, such as improved infection control (outcome).

To determine the most important assumptions for your project, try this thought experiment:

Imagine you are at the end of your project, your project outputs have been achieved exactly as planned but there is no effect on your project outcomes. What went wrong?

You are assuming that the output-to-outcome factors described above (time, motivation, etc.) will not interrupt the change process. On reflection, does that seem realistic? If not, you may need to amend your project plan to address them explicitly (e.g., add a strand of work that strengthens managerial support for health workers to use their improved understanding) or consider an alternative way of achieving your outcomes. If you believe your assumptions are realistic, put them in the assumptions column and be prepared to monitor them regularly.