



PM4NGOs



Social Good DPro

**Project Management
for Social Good**

Publisher

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We also acknowledge and deeply appreciate the foundational work of the Project DPro and MEAL DPro contributors. Their insights, tools, and frameworks laid the groundwork upon which Social Good DPro was built. This guide stands on their shoulders, adapting their legacy to new audiences and contexts.

Edson Marinho
on behalf of the Board of PM4NGOs

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Preface

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” – *Margaret Mead*

Social Good is the work done to benefit society, improving lives, strengthening communities, and protecting the environment. It includes initiatives that reduce inequality, promote education, expand healthcare access, defend human rights, support marginalized populations, and encourage inclusive development. Social good is a shared objective across not-for-profits, public agencies, social enterprises, and purpose-driven businesses.

At its heart, social good is what inspires people to act – to respond to urgent needs, address systemic challenges, and create lasting change. Whether it's supporting youth in underserved neighborhoods, advancing gender equity, or launching a community-led sustainability effort, the goal is to make a positive impact. And the better these initiatives are planned and managed, the greater their reach and effectiveness. Social Good DPro helps turn intention into action, and action into measurable results.

Who This Guide Is For

A project could be funded through a donor grant, a corporate social responsibility initiative, a local government program, or even internal resources allocated within an organization. Regardless of the source or size of funding, if a team is working toward a specific goal with a defined end point, they are managing a project.

The **Social Good DPro** guide is designed to support anyone involved in managing or contributing to projects that aim to create positive social impact. This includes individuals working in not-for-profit organizations, social enterprises, community-based groups, and even impact-driven for-profit ventures. Our goal is to make project management accessible and relevant not only to professional project managers, but also to project teams, volunteers, coordinators, and anyone who plays a role in planning and delivering social change initiatives.

In larger organizations, particularly in the not-for-profit sector, project managers are often part of a formal structure, supported by departments and systems that specialize in planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. But in many small or emerging organizations, there may be no dedicated project manager at all.

In fact, the responsibility for managing a project often falls to a program coordinator, a communications officer, or a passionate founder. And in many cases, the idea of formally managing a project only emerges when external funding is secured and, even then, it may not come with project management training or resources.

The **Social Good DPro** recognizes these realities and aims to fill that gap. It provides practical tools, adaptable processes, and real-world examples to help individuals and teams, regardless of their formal title or

background, plan, implement, and close projects effectively and sustainably. Whether you're a social entrepreneur launching a new initiative, a community organizer implementing a grant-funded program, or a team member helping coordinate activities, this guide is for you.

A Shared Framework for Different Contexts

Social Good DPro builds upon the solid foundation of **Project DPro**, adapting its methodologies to reflect the unique context and challenges of social change initiatives, particularly those based in urban areas and developed countries. While both guides follow the same core principles, processes, tools, and phase model, Social Good DPro offers a new lens through which to understand and apply project management in driving meaningful and lasting social impact.

Project DPro was developed to strengthen project management practices across the development and humanitarian sectors. Its structure provides a comprehensive framework for professionals working in complex environments, including international NGOs¹, national partners, and technical consultants. It emphasizes formal planning, coordination, and control processes essential for delivering results in structured organizational settings.

Social Good DPro is tailored to the realities of individuals and organizations addressing social issues in urban and institutional contexts. These may include social enterprises, not-for-profit initiatives, volunteer-led efforts, advocacy campaigns, or municipal service projects. The guide uses accessible language, relatable examples, and community-driven scenarios to engage users who may not identify as “project managers” but who nonetheless carry out project-based work to improve lives and systems. It reflects the importance of flexibility, inclusion, and responsiveness when managing projects aimed at shifting behaviors, systems, or policies in complex social environments.

While the structure and core content of the two guides remain closely aligned, **Social Good DPro** introduces adaptations that help teams apply these concepts within fast-changing, resource-constrained, or non-traditional project settings. It encourages readers to contextualize tools based on local realities and the specific needs of the communities they serve.

For a more detailed comparison between the two guides, please visit the Social Good DPro page on the PM4NGOs website (www.pm4ngos.org/social-good-dpro). There, we will regularly publish articles and videos highlighting the differences and similarities between the guides.



¹ NGO: non-governmental organization, such as charities, advocacy groups, community-based organizations, or foundations that operate independently from government to address social, environmental, or humanitarian issues.

The Value of Certification for Practitioners, Implementing Organizations, and Funding Organizations

Effective project management is no longer a luxury or an afterthought. For individuals and organizations working to create positive social change, it is a necessity. Whether you're launching a local food drive or implementing a city-wide advocacy campaign, the ability to plan, execute, and close projects effectively can mean the difference between limited outcomes and lasting impact.

For **individuals**, building project management skills and earning a certification like the Social Good DPro is a powerful investment in your career. It not only increases your confidence and competence but also demonstrates your commitment to professional excellence and social impact. Employers, donors, and partners recognize the value of certified professionals who speak the language of project management and bring structure, accountability, and results to their work. Certification opens doors, whether you're applying for jobs, seeking funding, or stepping into leadership roles.

For **implementing organizations**, having a team trained and certified in project management significantly increases your credibility and competitiveness. Donors and grantmakers are increasingly expecting not just good intentions, but clear plans, measurable results, and transparent accountability. A certified team signals that your organization has the capacity to deliver on its promises, manage resources responsibly, and adapt in dynamic environments. It can make your funding proposals stronger, your reporting more coherent, and your partnerships more strategic.

This is especially critical in today's funding landscape, where **donors** want to ensure that every dollar does what it was intended to do. They are not just investing in ideas. They are investing in the teams that will implement them. Project management is what turns donor resources into real, measurable outcomes. It brings rigor, clarity, and effectiveness to your mission, helping to build trust and long-term sustainability.

Social Good DPro is more than a guide. It's a tool to **build capacity, strengthen credibility, and maximize impact** – for individuals, teams, and entire organizations working to *make the world better, managing change for social good*.

Section 1. INTRODUCTION

“Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.”

– James Cash Penney

1.1 Changing the World Through Projects

Imagine a scenario where you have all the time and resources needed to make a difference in your community. What would you do? Organize a community garden to support families in a food desert? Protect a local park from environmental damage? Implement a tutoring initiative for children who are falling behind in school? Run a food drive for hungry families?

Not surprisingly, few people say, “I want to manage projects!” However, behind every successful social change initiative – whether renovating a community daycare center or organizing a 5k race for your favorite cause – a project is usually being managed. In other words, “We change the world through projects!”

Projects are the means through which good intentions and bold aspirations are transformed into tangible social good, but often, there is little emphasis on project management as a crucial skill. When forming a project team and engaging volunteers, the priority is frequently on their commitment to the mission or their technical expertise while assuming that project management skills will naturally fall into place. This can be a risky assumption!

That is why we wrote the Social Good DPro Guide. It is for anyone who wants to enhance their ability to manage or support projects that promote social good. It aims to support the activities of individuals working with or volunteering for organizations working to promote social good.

Organizations that promote social good include entities that operate for a specific social, charitable, educational, or community purpose rather than solely for making a profit. This includes foundations, charities, non-profit organizations, voluntary associations, community groups, government agencies, and others.

In this guide, we take a step-by-step journey through the basics of project management. We introduce practical and adaptable tools that help teams deliver projects on time, on budget, and within scope, while producing the social good drives our work.

As we move through the Guide, we will follow the work of a community organization located in the fictional city of Havenford. Recently, Havenford Cares has become aware of an increasing number of youth living without stable housing. We observe the organization as it progresses from the earliest stages of a project idea through the design, planning, and implementation of a project aimed at assisting unhoused youth.

Press Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Maria Ellis****Executive Director, Havenford Cares**

Havenford — In response to rising rates of homelessness in the city, Havenford Cares, a trusted nonprofit in Havenford, is launching an initiative to explore how it can best support young people experiencing housing instability. The effort follows a recent community assessment that revealed a troubling increase in the number of teenagers and young adults without stable housing, many of whom are sleeping in cars, couch-surfing, camping outdoors, or seeking shelter in unsafe conditions.

The assessment also pointed to a significant gap in services, particularly for vulnerable subgroups such as young women and individuals with alternative lifestyles. These populations often face unique risks related to safety, exploitation, and access to inclusive support.

“Our mission has always been to meet urgent needs with compassion and action,” said Maria Ellis, Executive Director of Havenford Cares. “What we’re seeing in our community is deeply concerning. We believe it’s time to listen, learn, and thoughtfully develop a response that centers youth voices and recognizes the different experiences they bring.”

As part of this response, Havenford Cares intends to initiate a pilot project that will test new ways to connect youth with essential services. The project will incorporate a gender-responsive, data-informed approach to ensure services are safe, affirming, and effective for all young people.

Depending on the results and community feedback, the pilot project may evolve into a permanent part of Havenford Cares’ core ongoing services.

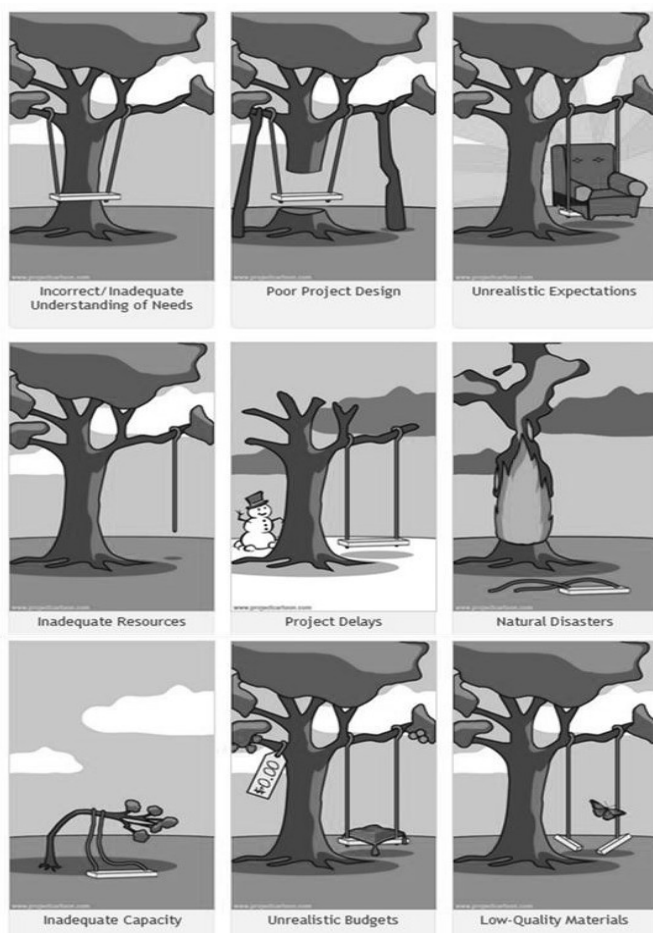
The organization is currently engaging with local stakeholders, city agencies, and youth representatives to shape the design of the pilot. Community involvement and partnership will be crucial in ensuring the project accurately reflects local realities and creates meaningful change.

About Havenford Cares

Havenford Cares is a tax-exempt organization based in Havenford dedicated to advancing the well-being of individuals and families through accessible, community-centered programs and services. With a focus on equity, dignity, and inclusion, Havenford Cares works to address the evolving needs of the community through collaboration and innovation.

The Challenge of Managing Projects

Project management is complex! It requires balancing multiple moving parts — often with competing priorities, limited resources, and high expectations. To succeed, you must simultaneously manage people, expectations, change, and complexity. Managing projects requires combining technical skills, emotional intelligence, and leadership.



This graphic provides a visual account of some of the many challenges that can derail even the simplest project. – In this case, building a tree swing.

Each image illustrates a potential pitfall if the project is not carefully designed, planned, or implemented.

And the challenges in the graphic aren't exhaustive. There are numerous challenges that can pop up along the way, such as:

- Team dynamics may be strained, leading to collaboration challenges.
- Monitoring data may be inaccurate, delayed, or not actionable.
- Project suppliers may fail to deliver on time or meet quality expectations.
- Stakeholders may be disengaged or unsupportive, affecting project momentum.

Figure 1: The challenge of managing projects (www.projectcartoon.com)

In short — there's a lot that can go wrong! To succeed, the Project Manager must address these challenges — anticipating problems, analyzing risks, and taking decisive action. Furthermore, when working on projects that promote social good, the challenges can be even more difficult. Effective project management will require navigating complexity, engaging stakeholders, and staying agile in the face of uncertainty.

Without effective project management, even the most well-intentioned projects can falter. Deadlines are missed, budgets are inadequate or mismanaged, team members become confused about their responsibilities, and the project may drift away from its original purpose. In the worst cases, projects fail, wasting resources and letting down the people and communities you aim to serve.

Effective project management is especially important when managing projects that promote social good, where stakes are high because real people's well-being is on the line. When we do project management well, it helps ensure that all the project puzzle pieces fit together to achieve the desired outcome.

1.2 Projects and the Triple Constraint Triangle

Before proceeding, let's clarify some basic terms² used repeatedly in the Guide. Understanding these terms may help you see how your work fits into the bigger picture:

Project - A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. with a specific set of objectives, timeline, and budget³.

In the context of an organization that promotes social good, a project creates products, services, and results that typically align with the organization's overall mission and ongoing services.

Ongoing Services - The regular, continuous, and sustained activities or programs that an organization delivers to its target population as part of its core mission.

Projects differ from ongoing services in that they are not meant to be perpetual and are often used to test, pilot, or implement specific interventions that contribute to long-term goals.

Examples of projects that promote social good include:

- Developing a new website for a community organization
- Launching a community garden at a new site
- Running a 10-week course on digital literacy
- Piloting a new initiative that may become a core component of future ongoing services.

If you are managing a project that promotes social good, it is essential to clearly identify the social value it aims to create. That social value defines the "why" of the project.



Returning to the Havenford Cares case study, the organization is exploring options to conduct a project that serves unhoused youth. Once completed, the project's products and services will become a core part of the organization's ongoing services, where they will be maintained, sustained, and funded in the long term.

Havenford Cares still needs to decide the specific project outputs of the project, but they know the ultimate social value the project aims to achieve might be:

"To enhance the capacity of unhoused youth to transition to independent and self-sustaining adulthood."

Achieving a project's social value can be particularly challenging. This challenge arises because projects in our sector aim to achieve complex and nuanced outcomes related to behavior change, societal change, and shifts in power dynamics.

² Refer to the Glossary of Terms for a more extensive set of definitions of terms used in the Social Good DPro Guide.

³ A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide), Third Edition, Project Management Institute.

One final observation about definitions pertains to the use of the terms ‘project’, ‘programs’, and ‘portfolios.’ You might have noticed that the terms are frequently used interchangeably. This is problematic because it creates confusion in both communication and execution. These terms represent distinct levels of work and management, each with its own purpose, structure, and strategic value.

We have already defined the term project, so now let’s take a look at the other two.

Program – A group of related projects managed together to achieve broader benefits or strategic outcomes.

Portfolio – A collection of projects and programs that align with an organization's strategic objectives.

The relationship between projects, programs, and portfolios is illustrated in the graphic below.

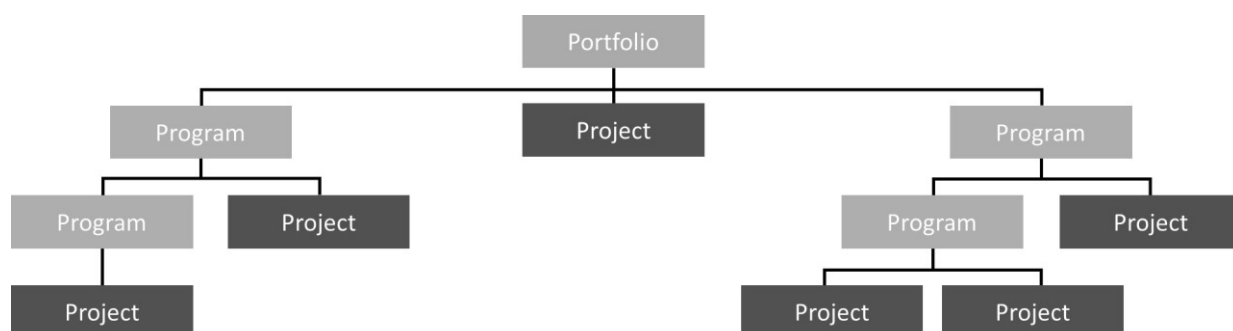


Figure 2: Projects, Programs, and Portfolio

Why would a project be included as part of a larger program? Because projects managed via a coordinated program have the potential to realize change (or benefits) that would be impossible if they were managed separately. Some areas of potential program alignment include:

- **Geographic Area** – When projects are in close proximity, they can share resources such as staff, facilities, transportation, and equipment. This minimizes duplication and reduces costs.
- **Objectives** – Projects working toward similar objectives, such as improving access to education or strengthening healthcare systems, often feature overlapping activities or target groups. Managing them as a program helps ensure they collaborate effectively, rather than operate in silos, which minimizes duplication and fosters a more cohesive strategy.
- **Funding** – When multiple projects are funded by the same funder, grouping them into a program allows for **centralized communication** and coordination.
- **Target populations** – Serving the same population through multiple, independently managed projects can lead to fragmented efforts or even duplicated services. A program structure helps align timelines, goals, and service delivery, ensuring that support is sequenced and sustained, thereby reducing gaps or overlaps in care or services.

If your project is part of a larger program and/or portfolio, be sure to align its work with the objectives and strategies at the program and portfolio levels. Simply put, managing projects as part of a program or portfolio is based on the belief that we can deliver more value if they work together rather than in silos.

The Triple Constraint Triangle

Projects need to create social value by delivering a combination of products, services, and results. To do this, projects need to balance the constraints of scope, time, and costs - the triple constraint triangle.

Triple Constraint Triangle - A foundational model in project management that illustrates the three primary, interconnected elements that define every project: Scope, Time, and Cost. These constraints form the three sides of a triangle, where changing one side will inevitably impact the others.

To understand the triple constraints of project management, envision a triangle with each side labeled as follows.

- **Scope/Quality** – What are the products/services that the project will produce? What tasks/activities/work are required to produce these deliverables?
- **Cost/Resources** – What money, materials, and personnel are available to deliver the project's product/services and to complete the work of the project?
- **Time/Schedule** – What is the amount of time required to complete the activities and deliverables of the project?

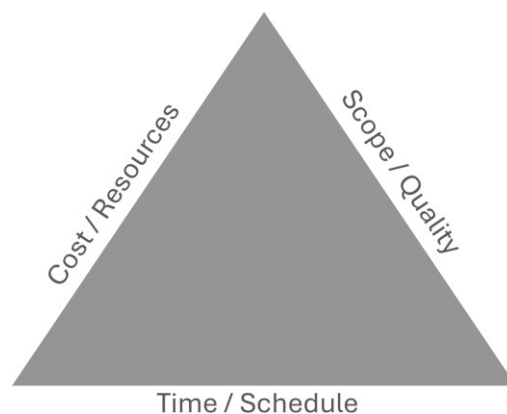


Figure 3: Triple Constraint Triangle

The Triple Constraint Triangle becomes especially important when something changes on one of the triangle's sides. When that happens, you usually have to adjust one or both of the other sides to keep things on track.

Let's say you are managing a project to open a youth center on September **1st**, and have a team of 10 people working on the renovations. Now, imagine your Board asks you to move up the launch date to **June 1st** in order to align with a community event. - three months earlier than originally planned. To meet the accelerated timeline, you have a few options:

- You can **add more resources** (like extra team members or tools),
- Or **scale back the scope**—maybe launch with fewer services or make the renovation design simpler.
- Or adopt a combination of both approaches.

To determine which option you will take, first identify which project constraints are fixed and which are flexible.

Fixed Constraints - The sides of the triangle that are non-negotiable and must remain constant, regardless of other changes in the project.

Factors that impose these fixed constraints include contractual commitments, regulatory rules, seasonal considerations, event timing, staff availability, and organizational financial limitations.

Flexible Constraints – These are the sides of the triangle that can change. These elements of a project can be adjusted to accommodate changes in other areas, such as shifting deadlines, limited budgets, or evolving project requirements.

If, for example, the Board in the example above indicates that the timeline must be accelerated by 3 months AND the scope is fixed, then the only flexible constraint to adjust is the cost. That means that the budget must be increased if the project is completed by **June 1**.

The graphic below provides a visual representation of this scenario. Note that the updated plan for the project identifies an approach to deliver the project’s full scope (fixed constraint) three months early, but this is only possible if the budget (flexible constraint) is increased.

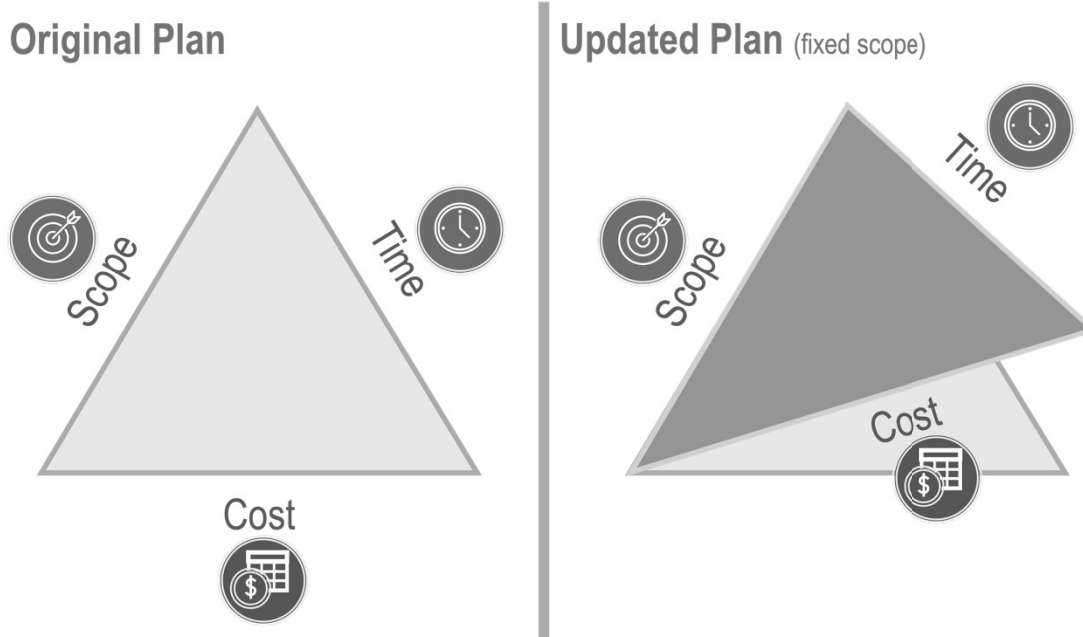


Figure 4: Flexible Constraints

1.3 The Project Life Cycle

Projects progress through a series of phases, starting from when someone has an idea or identifies a need, all the way to completing the work and closing the project. Together, these phases constitute the project life cycle, which outlines a logical sequence of activities aimed at achieving the project’s goals or objectives. The graphic below provides a visual representation of the 5-phase project life cycle we use in this Guide.

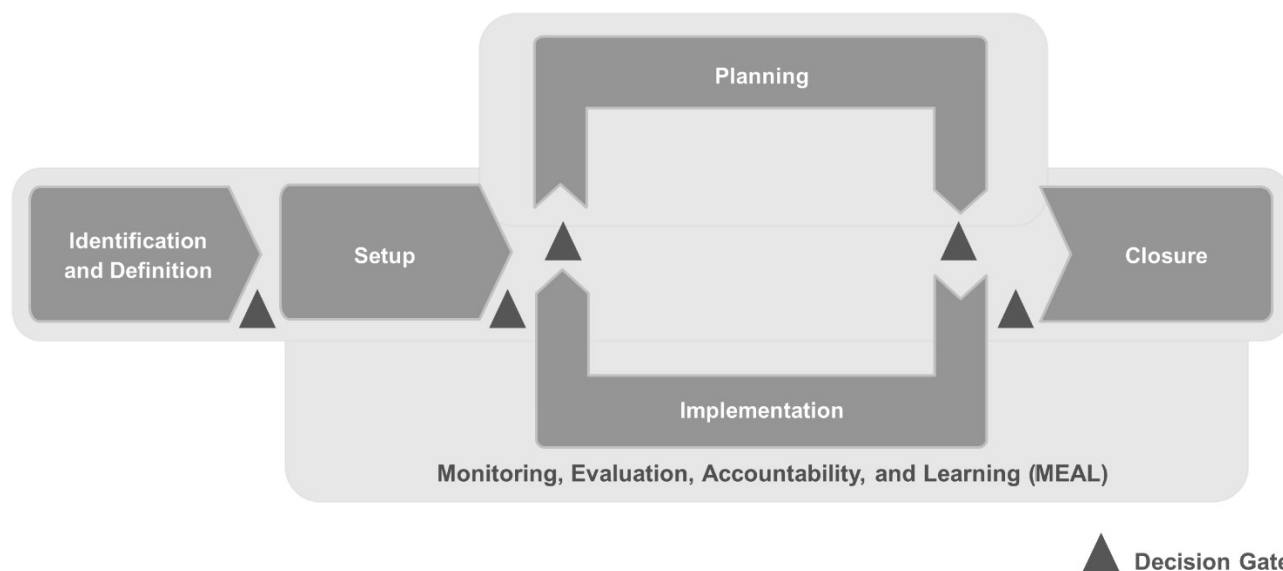


Figure 5: The Project Life Cycle

The format, sequence, and wording of project life cycle diagrams can vary; however, their objectives remain unchanged. By organizing the work of the project into a project life cycle, the Project Manager can navigate the phases that connect the beginning of a project to its end more effectively, while managing the necessary processes that must be completed during each phase.

Let’s learn more about each phase.

1. **Identification and Definition:** This is where a project begins. An individual or team identifies a need or core problem to be addressed – for example, “The incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford is rising.”

In this phase, you explore causes, effects, options, and potential interventions. This involves asking questions such as: What causes the core problem? What are its effects? What value are we trying to deliver? Who will benefit? Which approach might work? The answers to these questions provide the strategic foundation for everything that follows.

By the end of this phase, you should have a clear concept of the project’s need, the proposed solution, and the expected results. If your project is externally funded, this is when you will likely submit project proposals.

2. **Project Setup:** The purpose of this phase is to ensure that the project's foundations are in place, providing clarity for the project team and stakeholders regarding how the project will be managed. It is also during this phase that the project team ensures tools and processes are in place for an efficient planning phase.
3. **Project Planning:** During this phase, the project team develops a comprehensive and detailed plan for executing the project. This includes creating detailed work plans, schedules, and budgets. When planning, you determine the *who, what, when, and how* of a project's activities.
4. **Project Implementation:** This is the phase where the proverbial "rubber hits the road." Project implementation is "action time" – when you carry out the project activities according to the plan.

During this phase, the Project Manager is responsible for leading the team, coordinating resources, monitoring progress, and managing the issues that inevitably arise.
5. **Project Closure:** By definition, projects are temporary – they must have an end. Project closure involves wrapping everything up neatly. In this final phase, the project completes all the remaining work, presents project deliverables, and concludes according to the parameters agreed upon during the project definition phase.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) in the Project Life Cycle

You might have noticed that Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) is integrated as a continuous set of activities occurring throughout all phases of the project life cycle.

Monitoring: The continual and systematic collection of data to provide information about project progress.

This involves revisiting the progress and tracking what's being done, how it's being done, and whether it's helping the people it's supposed to help. By monitoring, projects can identify problems early, make necessary changes, and demonstrate to funders and communities that the work is making a real difference.

Evaluation: The user-focused, systematic assessment of the design, implementation, and results of an ongoing or completed project.

Evaluation helps projects understand their impact, learn from their experiences, and demonstrate to funders and communities the real value of their work.

Accountability: A commitment to balance and respond to the needs of all stakeholders (including project participants, funders, partners, and the organization itself) in the activities of the project.

In simple terms, accountability means taking responsibility for how the project is run and being transparent about its process and its results. It's about making sure the project team uses money and resources wisely, follows through on promises, and explains their actions to funders, partners, and the people they serve.

Learning: An ongoing, intentional culture and process of using evidence and insights to inform decision-making, improve project performance, and strengthen future programming.

In the Project Life Cycle graphic, the phases are represented in a linear order - you identify and define before you plan, you plan before you implement, and so on. However, this is not the case in practice because the phases aren't strictly sequential or linear. There is often overlap and iteration. For example, you might start some planning while still finalizing the project definition or begin certain implementation tasks even as other parts of the plan are still being refined.

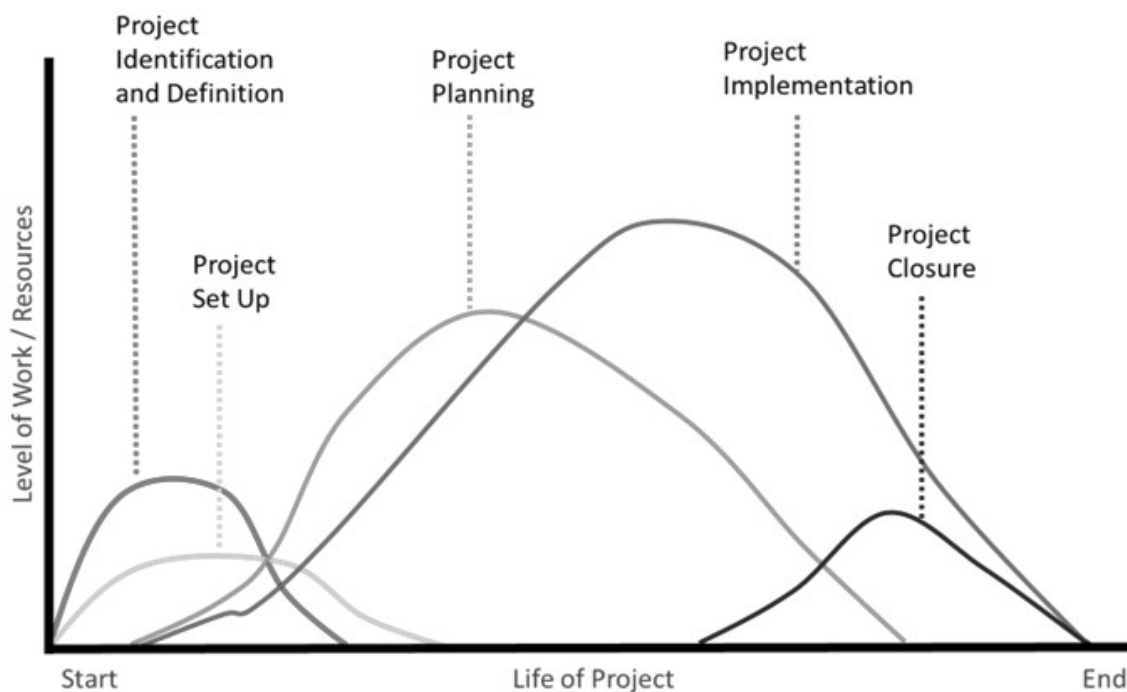


Figure 6: Project DPro Phase Interaction

In the graph above, you might have observed that the overlap between the Planning and Implementation phases is especially large. This is because project planning and implementation are iterative. This is illustrated by the fact that these two phases are represented in the project life cycle as two arrows forming a circular loop.

This reflects the reality that projects take place in dynamic, real-world environments where change is constant and issues are unavoidable. As projects unfold, issues emerge, conditions shift, and new information and learning become available, requiring teams to revisit and adjust plans to stay on track. This continuous loop of planning, doing, and refining allows for greater flexibility, responsiveness, and improvement over time. An iterative approach reflects strong, proactive project management that values learning, adaptation, and delivering real results.

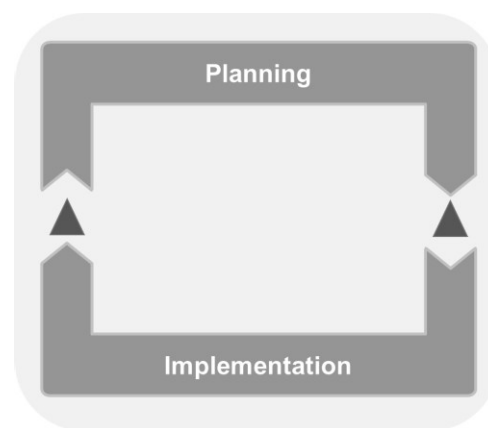


Figure 7: Planning and Implementation

As we conclude this discussion of the project life cycle, it is essential to acknowledge that many organizations have developed their own project life cycle diagrams to identify the phases that map the project process from start to finish. The sequence and wording of these life cycles can vary. However, their core objectives are the same: to map out the processes and outputs needed to deliver a successful project.

Decision Gates

You may have noticed the triangles placed between the phases of the Project Life Cycle graphic.

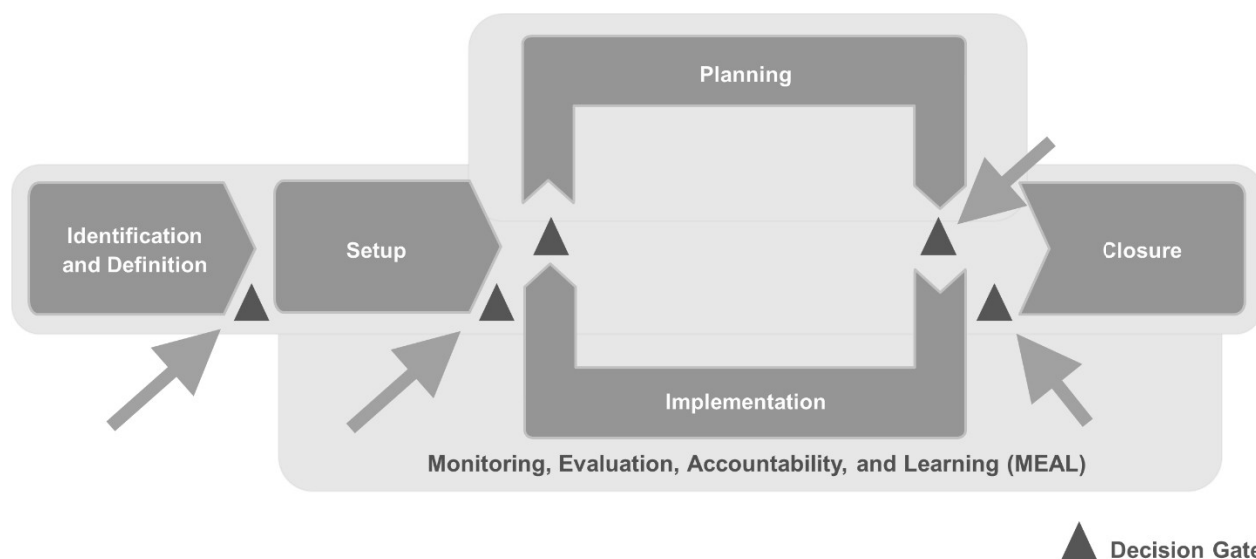


Figure 8: Project Life Cycle and Decision Gates

These triangles represent the project’s decision gates.

Decision Gate - A checkpoint where key stakeholders review the project’s status and plans and decide whether to continue, adapt, or stop the project.

Decision gates are critically important for effectively managing projects. They provide opportunities to examine the project with a critical eye and decide whether to:

Go	Continue the project unchanged
Stop	End the project and its activities
Hold	Pause the project with the possibility of resuming later
Adapt	Adjust the project design or plan before proceeding further.

Table 1: Decision Gate options

At their core, the discussions at each gate provide an invaluable opportunity to ask, “Are we still doing the right project and are we still doing it in the right way?”

Decision gates are a key tool in promoting strong project management in the following ways:

- **They provide formal opportunities for learning**
At each gate, the project team pauses to evaluate evidence, reflect on outcomes, and assess whether its assumptions remain valid.
- **They encourage evidence-based decisions**
Rather than proceeding on autopilot, stage gates require justification for continuation. Preferably, this evidence is based on data, not opinions.
- **They promote adaptive management**
Decision gates support a culture of controlled adaptation.

Adaptive Management - An iterative approach to project management that allows for adjusting plans, strategies, and activities in response to new information, stakeholder feedback, learning, or changing conditions.

Decision gates can take several different forms, and the number and types of decision gates will depend on the project’s value, complexity, and risk. Here are some examples of the types of decision gates a project might use.

Internal Decision Gate	Decision gates managed and led by stakeholders inside the organization to review progress and authorize the next steps.
External Decision Gate	Decision gates managed and led by stakeholders outside the organization. This might include project participants, funders, regulatory agencies, or external partners.
End of Phase Decision Gates*	Decision gates that occur between the phases of the project life cycle.
Emergency Decision Gate	<p>An unscheduled decision gate is introduced into the project life cycle in reaction to a critical issue, emerging risk, or external disruption that threatens project viability, safety, or strategic alignment.</p> <p>For example, a project that provides employment counseling chooses to schedule an emergency decision gate after it learns that the town’s largest employer is shutting its doors.</p>
<p>* Note: In the Guide’s Project Phase diagram, you might have noticed that the decision gate triangles only take place between each of the phases of the project life cycle - this is an example of End of Phase Decision Gates. However, in practice, decision gates do not only occur between project phases.</p>	

Table 2: Types of decision gates

1.4 Guiding Principles of Project Management

Understanding the project's phases is important; however, understanding the guiding principles that inform your approach to the project work is equally crucial. The graphic below adds one final component to the Social DPro Project Life Cycle diagram – the guiding principles of project management.

There are five key principles that project managers should follow when managing projects that promote social good: Governance and Control, Participatory, Comprehensive, Integrated, and Adaptive.

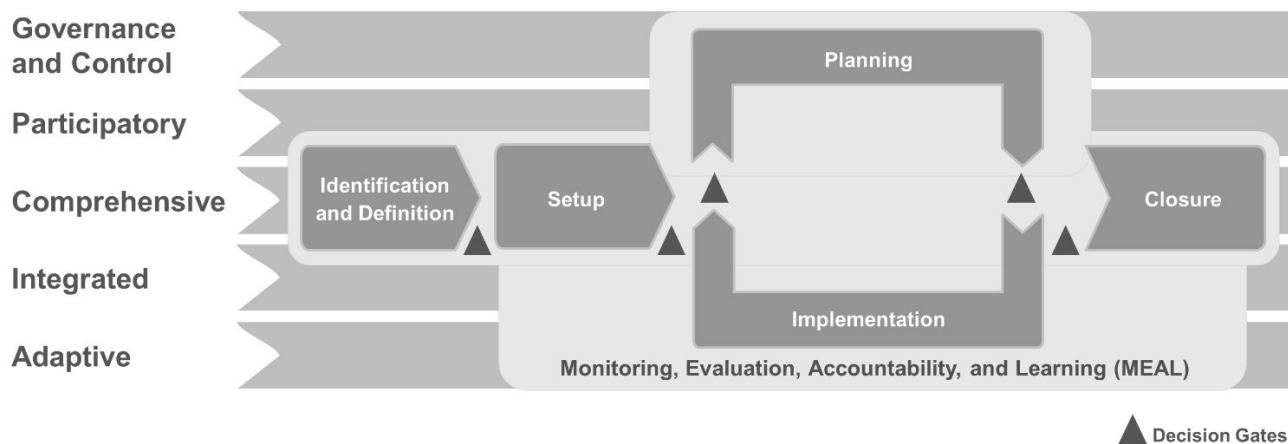


Figure 9: The Project Life Cycle and the Principles of Project Management

Consider these principles to be the 'values' or 'mindsets' that keep your project management practices effective and grounded. Let's briefly explain each one:

- Governance and Control:** This principle ensures clarity in roles, decision-making authority, and escalation procedures. This means that from the start of a project, there should be a clear structure outlining who has the authority to approve changes, resolve issues, and make key strategic decisions. Without proper governance and control, the project can become disorganized, with decisions being made inconsistently or delayed.
- Participatory:** This principle emphasizes involving stakeholders throughout the project's life. Stakeholders include individuals and groups with an interest or role in the project. This might include people the project serves, community members, partner organizations, funders, the project team, and others.

Involving stakeholders early and consistently in the Identification and Design, Planning, and Implementation phases of a project is not merely a best practice; it is often a critical success factor. When people are actively consulted and engaged, it enhances the relevance and quality of the project design. This participation helps to identify risks early, improve communication, reduce conflict, enhance estimating and planning, and increase project ownership and sustainability.
- Comprehensive:** Being comprehensive means taking a holistic view of the project. Comprehensive project management considers all aspects of the project. That includes the direct work that

contributes to the creation of the project results, and the indirect work that is often overlooked. Examples of the indirect work include staffing, communications, safeguarding, training, and more.

- **Integrated:** An integrated project means the various elements of the project are aligned and not managed in isolation. This principle dictates that all phases, processes, activities, and tools of project management should connect and support one another. It also necessitates that different stakeholders (internal and external) collaborate instead of working in silos.

In practice, integration involves ensuring that when you change one aspect of the project (for example, extending the timeline), you must update other related components of the plan (budget, staffing, contracts, communications with stakeholders, etc.).

- **Adaptive:** The adaptive principle emphasizes flexibility and responsiveness to unexpected events. Regardless of how thoroughly you plan, change is inevitable. Challenges will arise – a key staff member may leave, costs may increase, a pandemic may strike, or the needs of the community may shift.

As we proceed through the Guide, we will revisit the project management principles and explore how they apply to the project's work as you navigate the phases of the project life cycle.

1.5 The Project Management Competencies

The Art and Science of Project Management

Have you ever worked with a Project Manager who excels at making plans but struggles with teamwork? They may be a wizard at developing spreadsheets—carefully organizing tasks and planning scenarios—yet things tend to fall apart when it comes to team communication. The result is a confused team, frustrated stakeholders, and a project that lacks clear direction.

This raises an interesting question: “Is project management more of an art, requiring strong people skills, or a science, focused on technical expertise and structured processes?”

The answer? It’s both. Just as in many areas of life, success in project management stems from finding the right balance between the art and science of the work.

“The Science” – The science of project management encompasses the skills, tools, and processes utilized for planning, budgeting, scheduling, risk management, and more. As a project manager (or project team member), you will need to feel at ease developing project calendars, budget spreadsheets, and many of the other technical tools of project management.

“The Art” – The art of project management involves essential people management and leadership skills for effectively guiding teams and engaging project stakeholders. These skills encompass problem-solving, influencing, communicating, delegating, managing team performance, facilitating meetings, resolving conflicts, negotiating with vendors or partners, and motivating everyone during tough times.

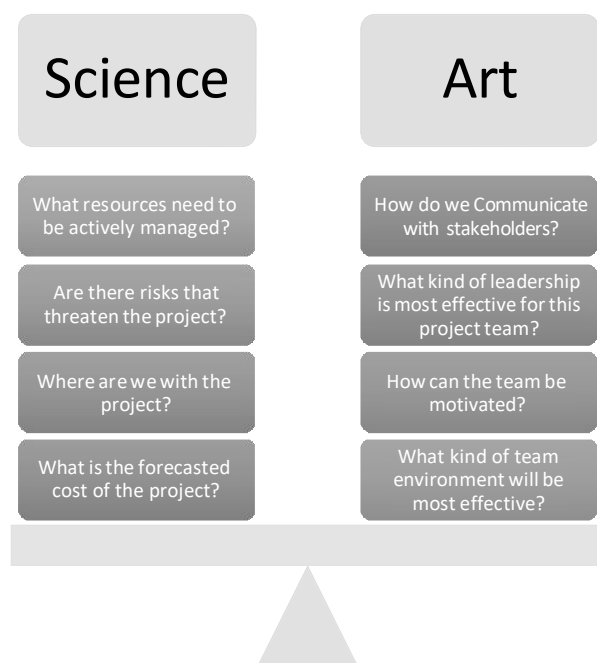


Figure 10: The Art and Science of Project Management

The lesson here is that effective project management requires balance. Pay attention not just to the technical work of project management, but also to how you lead the people with whom you work. Celebrate successes, provide constructive feedback, and foster an environment where team members and stakeholders feel valued and heard. This is even more important when working with volunteers – people are giving their time because they care, and if the management aspect becomes too frustrating or impersonal, they may disengage.

The Project DPro Project Management Competency Model

While categorizing project management skills into art and science is helpful, it is only the first step in identifying the characteristics of a successful project manager.

A more comprehensive project management competency model helps to identify the requisite skills of project managers and can then serve as a tool to assess skill levels, identify areas for improvement, and map areas for career development. While multiple competency models exist for project managers, the Project DPro model organizes project management competencies into four areas:



Figure 11: The Project DPro Project Management Competency Model

Project Management Technical – These are often referred to collectively as the ‘science’ behind project management. Can the Project Manager identify, select, and employ the right tools and processes to ensure project management success?

Leadership/Interpersonal – Often referred to collectively as the ‘art’ of project management. For example, how does the Project Manager communicate, inspire, and resolve conflict?

Personal/Self-Management – The Project Manager’s ability to manage behaviors and time in order to achieve goals. For example, can the Project Manager stay motivated, effectively prioritize, manage time, and organize work?

Sector Specific – The ability to apply the technical, leadership/interpersonal, and personal/self-management competencies in the context of projects that serve the social good.

Competency	Characteristic
Project Management Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proactively manage scope ● Comprehensively identify the activities required for project success ● Manage the overall schedule to ensure work is on time ● Define and collect metrics to measure project progress ● Identify, track, manage and resolve project issues ● Identify, manage, and mitigate project risk ● Establish logistics systems ● Ensure that project deliverables are of acceptable quality ● Identify if and when changes need to occur and the impact of those changes on the project ● Plan and manage the budget and the expenditure of the project
Leadership/Inter-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vision the ‘big picture’ of a project within an organization portfolio ● Champion the project (promoting buy-in) ● Communicate vision – setting reasonable, challenging expectations ● Provide timely and helpful performance feedback to team members ● Facilitate a productive team environment ● Communicate proactively (verbal and written), including active listening ● Motivate team members to willingly follow direction and achieve goals
Personal/Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizational skills ● Attention to detail ● Ability to multitask ● Logical thinking ● Analytical thinking ● Self-discipline ● Time management
Social Good Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the values of organizations that promote social good ● Understand the different stakeholders involved in projects that promote social good ● Understand and navigate complex environments ● Work effectively with an array of implementing partners ● Cope with the unique pressures that are common in projects that promote social good ● Exhibit cultural sensitivity

Table 3: Competencies and characteristics

As the responsibilities of a Project Manager increase – from relatively simple projects to more complex projects – the knowledge, skills, and behaviors in each of these competency areas will need to increase as well. Furthermore, one of the most distinct skills that project managers need to develop over time is the ability to identify alternatives that exist to address a challenge (budget overruns, team conflicts, ambiguous roles, shifting schedules, unanticipated risks) and respond using the appropriate competency that fits the unique needs of each situation.

While all four competency areas of project management are critical to ensuring project success, the scope of the Social DPro Guide specifically focuses on the “science” of project management - and more specifically the Project Management Technical competency area. If you would like to take a survey to assess your skills in this competency area, a self-assessment is available at www.pm4ngos.org.

1.6 Bringing It All Together

Managing a project is a journey! You start with a passionate idea to improve your community (or beyond), then apply structure to turn that idea into action, collaborating with project participants, team members, and partners throughout to ensure those actions lead to positive outcomes change

What’s next? In the upcoming chapters, we will explore practical tools and processes for each phase of the project. We’ll revisit the Havenford Cares case study and examine how the team uses tools in action—from stakeholder analyses and project charters in the early phase to Gantt Charts, monitoring reports, risk registers, and evaluation surveys in later phases. Don’t worry if these terms sound new; we will explain each one in a step-by-step, approachable manner.

By the end, you should feel prepared to design, plan, and implement a project of your own, whether it is big or small. You’ll be able to approach your projects with confidence, knowing you possess a solid understanding of both the technical framework and the softer skills necessary for success.

Finally, remember that no one is born a perfect project manager. It’s a learning journey. Every project you manage (or participate in) will teach you something new. By being aware of both the technical and human dimensions of project management, you’ll grow into a role that is both effective and rewarding. As we often say, project management is a skill set you refine over time – each project is an opportunity to improve and build your confidence.

Right-Sizing Your Project Management Approach

One final note before you proceed: it is critical to recognize that every project is different and should be managed accordingly. A multi-million dollar project run by a large social services agency will be managed with more formal processes and documentation, whereas a small project led by a handful of volunteers will use a lighter approach. Project management is not a one-size-fits-all process; it should be tailored to fit the context.

Right-sizing is all about being pragmatic —choosing the right combination of tools, processes, and documentation that match the scale and complexity of your project, so you can deliver real value on time, on budget, and within scope.

Always ask: “What project management tools, approaches, and systems will help the project succeed without overburdening the team?” However, remember that even if you choose to adapt tools and processes, you must never compromise the fundamental project management principles. Right-sizing your project management approach should not undermine its commitment to being well-governed/controlled, comprehensive, integrated, adaptive, or participatory.

Sections 2. IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION

“All things are created twice; first mentally; then physically. The key to creativity is to begin with the end in mind, with a vision and a blueprint of the desired result.”
 — Stephen Covey

2.1 Getting Started

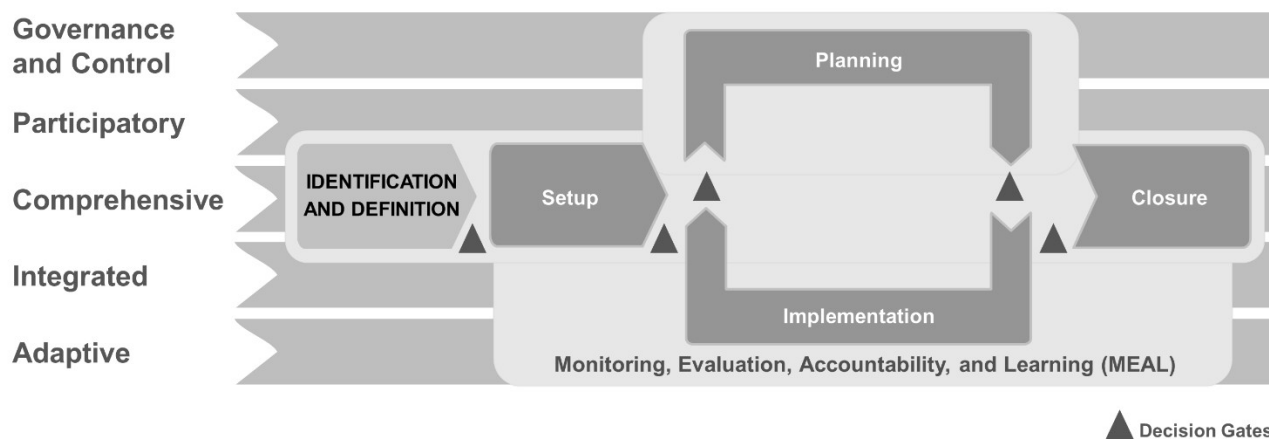


Figure 12: The Project Life Cycle - Identification and Definition

Projects that aim to achieve social good usually require a significant amount of work before the project is approved. First, the team needs to identify project needs and define the intervention strategy.

During the Project Identification and Definition phase, the project begins with a fundamental question: “Are we doing the right project?” This question is answered by conducting activities that help you understand community needs, brainstorm solutions, and identify the appropriate strategies.

The Project Identification and Definition phase is critical, as it lays the foundation for everything that follows. Time and effort spent here help ensure the project is grounded in evidence and delivers value that aligns with actual needs. Decisions made in this phase create the overall framework within which the project will evolve, connecting the project idea to organizational strategies, community priorities, and available resources.

If the project identification and definition activities are executed effectively, you're already halfway to success. However, if the team fails to make the right decisions in this phase, regardless of how well they eventually execute the project, the impact will fall short. Another reason this phase is so important is that it is the easiest and most cost-effective time to make changes. Early on, nothing is set in stone yet. If you discover that you need to adjust your project's objectives, scope, or approach, you can do so with minimal cost and disruption. Later in the project cycle, especially once implementation begins (hiring staff, spending money, rolling out activities), changing course becomes much harder and more expensive.

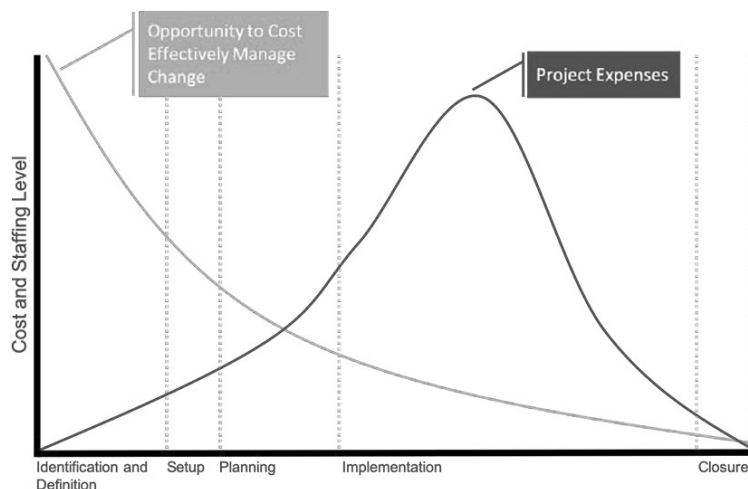


Figure 13: Cost and Staffing Level

Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs

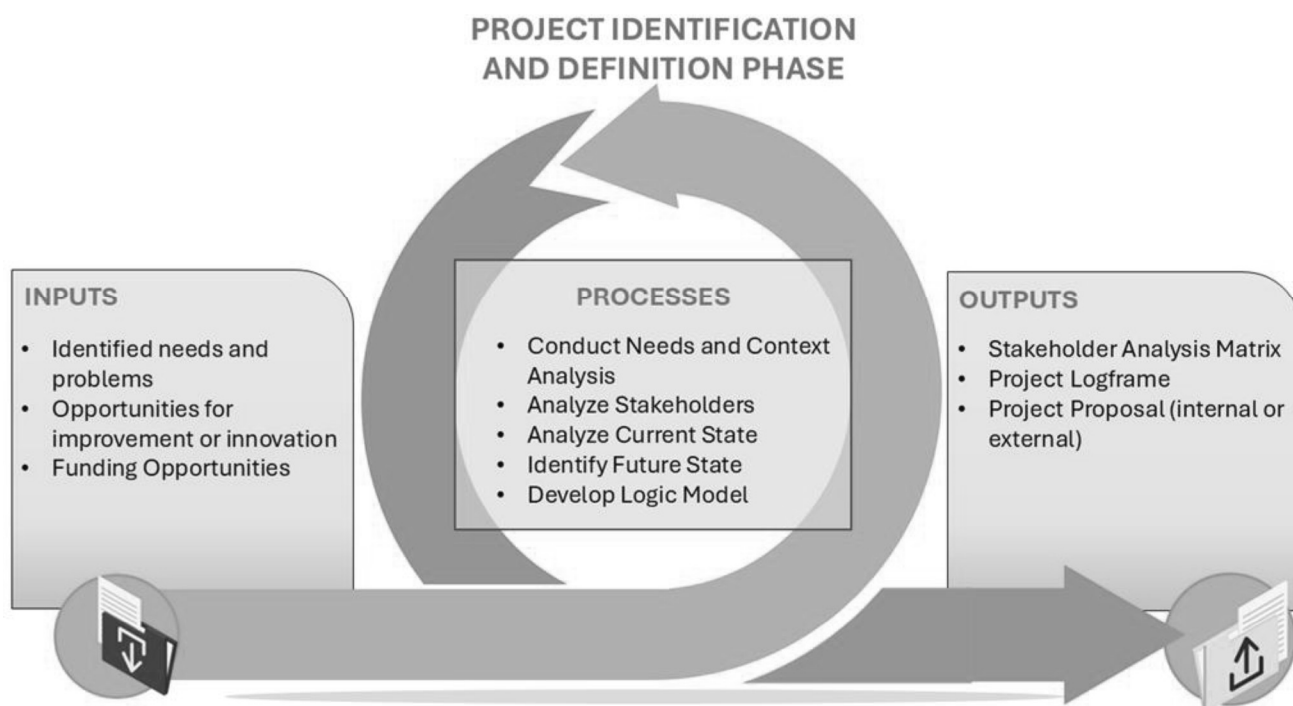


Figure 14: Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs - Identification and Definition phase

Inputs

All projects begin with an idea that is then assessed and analyzed. Where do these project ideas come from?

Source	Example
Identified Needs or Problems	An organization observes rising rates of teenagers among the homeless population and proposes a drop-in center that addresses their unique needs.
Opportunities for Improvement or Innovation	An organization observes the success of a hospital-based counseling service for at-risk youth and decides to pilot a project to collaborate with their counselors in order to expand the scale their impact.
Funding opportunities	A foundation calls for proposals to support addiction-recovery services that focus on the needs of youth.

Table 4: Where do the project ideas come from?

Processes

During the Identification and Definition phase, a number of processes are completed to assess and analyze a project idea or opportunity. Processes conducted during the Identification and Definition phase include:

- **Conduct Needs and Context Analysis:** Collecting data related to the needs to be addressed and the operating context of the project. This might include information about needs, strengths/weaknesses, resources, services, legal/regulatory issues, etc.
- **Analyze Stakeholders:** An initial assessment of the individuals or groups that have an interest in or are affected by a project.
- **Analyze Current State:** Documentation of the core problem your project will address, along with evidence and data that confirm the problem is real and significant.
- **Identify Future State:** A structured process used to define and visualize the desired conditions, capabilities, or outcomes that a project aims to achieve at a specific point in the future.
- **Develop the Logic Model:** A logic model is a structured, visual representation of how a project or program is intended to work. It illustrates the logical relationships between the resources invested, the activities carried out, and the short-term, intermediate, and long-term deliverables and changes.

Based on the results of these processes, decisions are made whether to develop an idea or opportunity into a project and whether to pursue funding for the initiative.

Outputs

Upon completion of the Project Identification and Definition phase, the following outputs will be created:

Output	Definition
Stakeholder Analysis Matrix	A tool used to systematically identify, assess, and categorize stakeholders based on their interest in and influence over a project.
Logical Framework (logframe)	A logic model that outlines the project’s Goal, Outcomes, Outputs, and Activities and how they relate in an “if-then” sequence. The logframe also identifies assumptions (external conditions that need to hold true if the project is to succeed) and indicators to measure success.
Project Proposal	A document that outlines a planned project’s purpose, scope, approach, and resource requirements. It is typically used to seek approval or funding internal decision-makers or external funders.

Table 5: Table 39: Project Identification and Definition phase outputs

Decision Gates in the Identification and Definition Phase

Decision gates are essential in all phases of the project but are particularly relevant in the Identification and Definition phase. The foundations of the project are set at this phase, so getting it wrong during this here will have a domino effect on the success and impact of the project as it moves forward.

Establishing formal decision gates, and involving stakeholders in the process, helps to ensure that you are doing the right project, in the right way. The graphic below provides an example of a series of decision gates that the Havenford Cares has decided to include in the Identification and Definition phase.

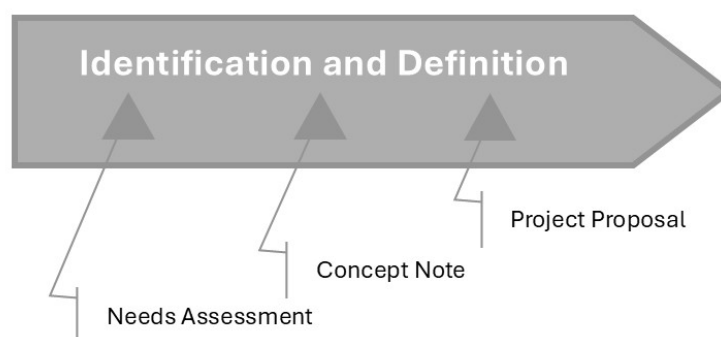


Figure 15: Decision Gates in the Identification and Definition Phase

Decision Gate	Description
Needs Assessment	Validates that the need exists and is a priority for the community, stakeholders, and project participants. Informs the parameters of the project through data and feedback from stakeholders.
Concept Note	Presents a high-level project concept in which stakeholders (the organization, program team, and/or funder) determine if the project meets the criteria for moving forward to the project proposal.
Project Proposal	Outlines the high-level elements of the project including: scope of work, budget, timeframe, risks, stakeholders, intervention logic, and resource requirements.

Table 6: Decision Gates in the Identification and Definition Phase

Keep in mind that additional decision gates can be included in this phase and will be dependent on the type and complexity of the project as well as the timeframe between the initial project idea (or request for proposal) and submission of the project proposal.

2.2 Needs Analysis

Before you can plan and implement a project, it is critical to first understand the project's context, its stakeholders, and the needs and problems. This can only be achieved by conducting a needs analysis that collects data related to:

- **Community needs and priorities:** What do community members see as their biggest needs and hopes?
- **Community context:** What are the strengths of the community? Cultural norms? Values?
- **Existing infrastructure and resources:** What facilities or services are already available? (e.g., existing shelters, youth programs, healthcare facilities).
- **Organizational landscape:** Are there other organizations or initiatives addressing similar issues?
- **Legal or regulatory factors:** Which laws or policies could potentially impact the project (for example, local regulations related to preparing and serving food, or safeguarding requirements that apply when providing services to minors)?

Collecting Data

There are many ways to collect data. However, keep in mind that you will likely have limited resources. Therefore, consider your constraints when deciding on the source(s) and method(s) you will use to collect the data.

To help make these decisions, start by answering the following:

- What data do I need to collect? (SCOPE)
- What resources (budget, logistics, staffing etc.) are needed? (RESOURCES)
- When is the data needed? (CALENDAR)

Congratulations! You have just completed a triple constraint triangle for your data collection activities. Once you are clear about your needs (and constraints), you can start to explore options for your data collection plan.

Primary vs. Secondary Data

If your resources are limited – and time is tight - one way to work around these constraints is by using secondary data, since you may not have time or budget to collect and analyze data yourself.

Secondary Data is existing information available through published and unpublished sources.

Strengths of Secondary Data	Weaknesses of Secondary Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relatively cost-effective ● Requires fewer human resources. ● Less time-consuming in comparison with primary and secondary data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data may not be current. ● Not all sources are reliable and trustworthy ● information may not be specific to your project context.

Table 7: Strengths and weaknesses of Secondary Data

Often, secondary data will not be enough to complete your needs and context analysis. This might be because:

1. Secondary sources are not available that address your data needs (or are not specific/appropriate to your needs).
2. Secondary sources do not provide sufficient information and additional data is needed.

In these situations, you can choose to collect primary data.

Primary data is information that is collected firsthand for a specific purpose. It is original and has not been previously published or analyzed by others.

Strengths of Primary Data	Weaknesses of Primary Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data is often more relevant and specific ● Data is often more timely ● The project can exercise greater control over data quality ● Primary data can be used to fill gaps left after collecting secondary data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data collection can be costly and resource-intensive ● Planning, training, fieldwork, and analysis can delay project timelines. ● Poor questionnaire design or unskilled data collectors can compromise data quality.

Table 8: Strengths and weaknesses of Primary Data

Quantitative Data vs. Qualitative Data

Regardless of whether you intend to use secondary or primary sources, you will need to decide whether to collect quantitative data or qualitative data.

Quantitative data refers to numerical information that can be measured, counted, and statistically analyzed. It answers questions about quantity, frequency, magnitude, or patterns.

Quantitative data is especially well-suited for describing what the current situation is because it provides measurable, objective information that can be systematically analyzed. This type of data includes statistics, counts, percentages, and trends. This type of data is especially useful when identifying the scale and scope of an issue with precision.

In contrast, qualitative data is particularly valuable for explaining why a situation is as it is because it captures the lived experiences, motivations, and contextual factors behind the numbers.

Qualitative data refers to non-numerical, descriptive information that captures people’s experiences, perceptions, meanings, and narratives. It explores the depth, context, and complexity of an issue.

Through methods like interviews, focus groups, and open-ended surveys, qualitative data reveals deeper insights into people's attitudes, perceptions, and barriers. For instance, while quantitative data may indicate low participation in a program, qualitative data can reveal why unhoused youth felt unwelcome, faced transportation challenges, or lacked trust in the service provider. This type of data provides the nuanced understanding needed to better understand complex contexts and design effective interventions that are relevant to the communities served.

The table below provides additional information related to quantitative data and qualitative data – comparing and contrasting them according to a number of criteria.

	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Nature	Numerical, measurable	Descriptive, narrative
Purpose	To quantify patterns, relationships, or trends	To understand meaning, experience, or context
Collection Tools	Surveys, tests, checklists, administrative data	Interviews, FGDs, observations, storytelling
Data Format	Numbers, percentages, scales	Text, quotes, audio, video, notes
Analysis Methods	Statistical analysis	Thematic or content analysis
Generalizability	High (if sample is representative)	Often low, but provides deep insight
Strengths	Precision, comparability, scalability	Depth, context, understanding of complex issues
Limitations	May miss context or meaning	Harder to generalize or quantify

Table 9: Quantitative Data vs. Qualitative Data

In practice, a mixed methods approach to data collection (which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods) offers a powerful, well-rounded perspective for understanding complex problems and evaluating project outcomes.



The table below provides a simple example of a data collection plan that identifies how the Havenford Cares team will collect data related to unhoused youth in the city of Havenford. As you review the plan, can you identify Primary sources? Secondary sources? Qualitative data? Quantitative data?

What do we need to know?	Sources	Methods	Resources Required	Time Frame
How many youths lack stable housing? What are their demographics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local shelter intake records School district data University or agency studies. 	Desk research	One team member compiles data from reports and databases	1–2 weeks.

Why are youth unhoused and what challenges do they face?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unhoused youth ● Social workers ● Police reports ● Hospital incident reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth center focus groups ● Social worker interviews ● Desk research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 facilitators ● incentives for participation 	2–3 weeks
What existing services are available to unhoused youth? Where are the gaps?	Interviews with organizations (social service agencies, government offices, faith-based groups).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phone calls ● Online research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project Manager ● Intern (optional) 	1-weeks

Table 10: Havenford Cares' data collection plan

The table provides a simplified version of a data collection plan, but it shows how Havenford Cares might approach learning more about the situation in Havenford. The data they gather will confirm (or sometimes challenge) their understanding of the situation and help inform the project's design.

Triangulating Data

As data is received, it is essential to cross-check the information and analyze your data from multiple angles. This helps to confirm that the data is valid and reliable.

Valid data - Information that accurately measures what it is intended to measure.

Data validity reflects the truthfulness and relevance of the data in relation to the specific concept, indicator, or objective being assessed.

Reliable data - Information that is consistent and stable over time, across different observers, or in repeated measurements.

Data reliability focuses on the replicability of results—whether the same method would produce similar outcomes under similar conditions.

High data reliability and data validity work together to reduce bias and subjectivity by ensuring that the information used for decision-making is both consistent and accurate. This helps reduce problems related to bias and subjectivity that often weaken the validity and reliability of data.

Bias - A systematic error or distortion in data collection, analysis, interpretation, or communication that leads to inaccurate or misleading results. It occurs when certain perspectives, groups, or outcomes are favored or excluded, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Subjectivity - When personal opinions, feelings, values, or perspectives influence how data is collected, analyzed, interpreted, or communicated.

One way to reduce bias and subjectivity in defining the problem is to use data triangulation.

Triangulation - Involves looking at a question from several perspectives or using multiple methods to see if you get the same answer.

When conducting needs assessments (or any other data collection), if different perspectives and methods all point to the same conclusion, you can be more confident that your results are reliable and valid. If they conflict, you may need to investigate further.

One way to use triangulation as you assess need is by using Bradshaw's Model of Social Need. Sociologist Jonathan Bradshaw outlined four distinct types of need—**normative**, **felt**, **expressed**, and **comparative**—each offering a unique lens through which to understand an individual's or community's needs.

- **Felt Needs** - Needs that are identified by what people say they need or want. They derive from the community's own opinions or feelings. They matter, but they can be personal and influenced by what people know or expect. Sometimes people don't talk about certain needs because they've gotten used to tough situations or don't know that better options exist.
- **Expressed Needs** - Needs that are apparent based on people's actions. It's what people are already doing to try to meet their needs — for example, how they use services or ask for help.
- **Normative Needs** are needs that are defined by what experts say people should have, based on rules, research, or professional standards.
- **Comparative Needs** - Needs that are identified by exploring differences, gaps, and inequalities between groups. For example, who has resources or services and who doesn't.

When we explore a need through all four lenses (felt, expressed, normative, comparative), our understanding of the situation is more valid and reliable. A "real" need will likely show up in more than one category. If a need is only felt by a few people but not supported by any data or expert opinion, you might need more data to decide whether it is a priority.

The graphic below provides an example where the needs of unhoused youth are explored through each of the four perspectives of Bradshaw's Hierarchy of Needs. Notice that three of the four categories emphasize the importance of housing access. This appears to point to a driving need in this area. However, notice that the issues of employment and mental health counseling were also mentioned.

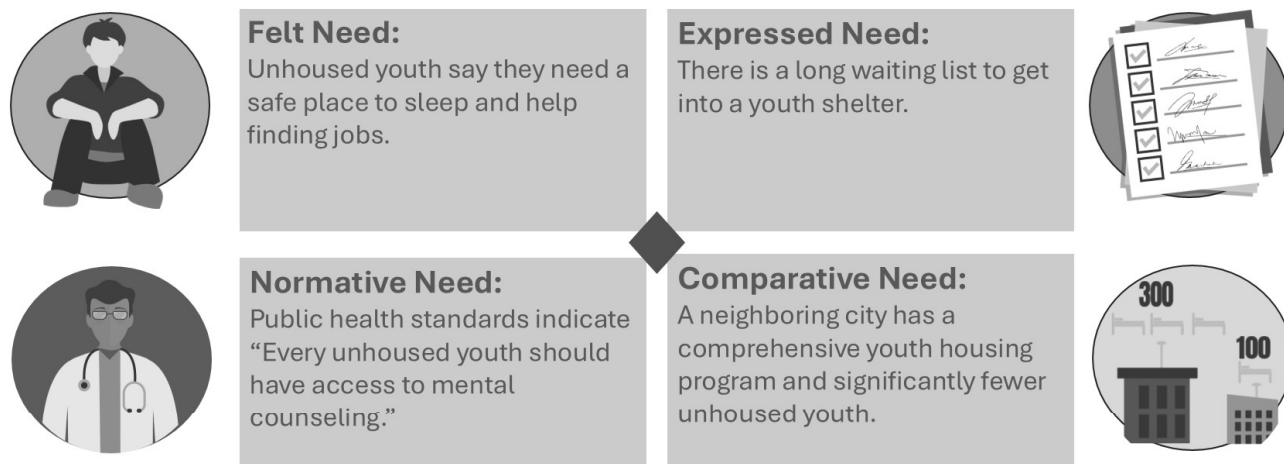


Figure 16: Needs of unhoused youth through the perspectives of Bradshaw's Hierarchy of Needs

Collecting data related to needs and context analysis can be expensive and time-consuming. Be sure to plan your data collection activities with the available time and resources. Attempting to collect too much data can overwhelm staff, delay decision-making, and divert resources from future activities, while collecting too little can lead to gaps in understanding and weak project insights.

Here are some ways to right-size your data collection process:

- Focus on collecting only the data that is most relevant to your key questions
- Use existing data sources where possible
- Consider prioritizing cost-effective methods such as brief surveys or focus groups.
- Avoid tools and templates that require extensive technical expertise

2.3 Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Why is stakeholder identification and analysis so important? Because how you engage people and/or groups can make or break your project.

Stakeholders - The individuals or groups that have an interest in or are affected by a project.

Projects that focus on promoting social good often have a range of stakeholders, including project participants, suppliers, implementing partners, government agencies, and others. And, don't forget the stakeholders internal to your organization; these may include senior management, support departments, and team members.

Benefits of a strong stakeholder analysis process include:

- A clearer understanding of the individuals, groups, and institutions and their interests in the project.
- A better understanding of the motivations and capacities of these stakeholders

- A more informed understanding of who could influence (positively or negatively) project activities and project success.

Project Management Principles PARTICIPATORY

The Project Identification and Definition phase offers an excellent opportunity to engage stakeholders early in the process, making it a genuinely collaborative effort. Although a participatory approach may require more time and resources, the benefits are well worth it! Here's why:

- Strengthen project design – More perspectives mean better ideas and insights.
- Boost project ownership – When people are involved from the start, they're more invested in the outcome.


Embracing participation from the start helps establish important ongoing relationships. By understanding early on who the key players are, you can make informed choices about whom to engage (and how to engage them) throughout the life of the project.

When conducting stakeholder analysis, it is helpful to follow a three-step process.

Step 1: Identify Stakeholders

Start by brainstorming a list of potential stakeholders. It is important to be comprehensive in this process. Ask yourself, "Who has an interest in the project?" and "Who has influence (positive or negative) on the success of the project?"

As you brainstorm your list, be sure to think about the many categories of stakeholders who might have interests in and influence upon the project. The table below identifies six stakeholder categories to consider, including users, governance bodies, suppliers/providers, influencers, dependents, and sustainers.

 Using the six categories as a framework, the Havenford Cares team brainstorms a list of stakeholders who have an interest in or influence on a potential project supporting unhoused youth in Havenford.

Stakeholder Category	Description and stakeholders
Users The people who will directly benefit from the products and/or services of the project.	Young people who rely on the center for social connections, hygiene services, job training, or mental health support.

<p>Governance The people or groups of people who have an interest in how things are managed on the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Internal Project Governance</i> – The individuals or groups who oversee the governance framework of the project ● <i>Auditors/Regulators</i> – The local government agencies who establish the compliance requirements for working with unhoused youth ● <i>Funders</i> - Individuals and organizations who provide financing for the project.
<p>Providers Individuals who actively participate in the work of the project.</p>	<p>Managers, team members, volunteers, implementing partners, contractors, and suppliers fall into this category.</p>
<p>Influencers The people who have the ability to change the direction (positively or negatively) of the project.</p>	<p>This includes local media, social media, influencers, elected officials, business interests, and community leaders.</p>
<p>Dependents Those who want something from the project other than the planned final product or service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family members of unhoused youth, ● Other projects working on related issues ● Government agencies working on issues connected to unhoused youth.
<p>Sustainers Groups responsible for supporting the product or service after the project is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Havenford Cares Operations Department is expected to sustain and manage the project products and services ● The project will be working closely with volunteers. ● Funders are expected to continue funding activities to support unhoused youth after the project closes.

Table 11: Havenford Cares' list of stakeholders

As you review the stakeholder list above, notice the following:

- **Stakeholders may appear in multiple categories.**
For example, funders could be Governance stakeholders (during the project) and Sustainer Stakeholders (after the project closes).
- **You might need to break categories into subcategories.**
For example, Havenford Cares identifies three sub-categories in the Governance category – Internal Project Governance, Auditors/Regulators, and Funders.
- **Stakeholder categories will evolve.**
New stakeholders could emerge, and others could lose their interest or influence.

Step 2: Analyze Stakeholders

Once stakeholders are identified, the project team can use a Stakeholder Analysis Matrix to analyze the project stakeholders and to assess their interests and influence.

Interest - The degree to which stakeholders are concerned about a project's outcomes.

Stakeholders with high interest are keenly attentive to project developments, as the results directly impact them. Conversely, stakeholders with low interest are less affected by the project's outcomes and may not prioritize its progress.

Influence (or power) - A stakeholder's capacity to affect the project's execution and outcomes.

This influence can arise from their position within the organization/community, control over resources, expertise, or authority. Stakeholders with high influence can significantly sway project decisions, while those with low influence have limited ability to do so. It is important to recognize that stakeholders with influence can be either project blockers, project enablers, or in some contexts both.



Here is an example of a Stakeholder Analysis Matrix created by the Havenford Cares team that identifies and analyzes stakeholders with interest (and influence) in issues related to youth homelessness in the city.

Stakeholder Description	Stakeholder Category	Interest in the Project	Influence (Power)	Relationship
Homeless Youth	Users	To increase safety and access resources		Main user of the project outputs
Social Services Organizations	Providers	Interested in improving the incidence and living conditions of unhoused youth.	Influence is significant in day-to-day support, though they may have limited funding.	Close relation with both the unhoused youth and health providers
Law Enforcement	Influencers	Tensions exist between unhoused youth and police.	Have authority and can strongly impact youths' lives	Have regular contact with unhoused youth.
Funders /Funders	Governance	Invested in reducing the incidence of unhoused	Very high influence on project success.	No direct relationship with unhoused youth.
Local Businesses	Sustainers	No current connection	Employment is a key pathway to stable housing	No current direct relationships with other stakeholders.

Health care providers	Providers	Awareness and interest are relatively low	Homeless youth have extensive health care needs.	Homeless youth have limited direct access to health care providers
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Table 12: Havenford Cares' Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

The Stakeholder Analysis Matrix isn't something you create once and forget. It is a dynamic tool that should be updated at key points in the project. Decision gates, for example, are great opportunities to bring the team together, reassess stakeholders, and ensure they are being properly engaged.

Step 3: Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Once the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix is in place, the project can use its information to start developing a stakeholder engagement strategy. One tool that is especially helpful for this purpose is the Influence/Interest Grid. The grid is a 2x2 matrix that places stakeholders into four categories. The project will adjust its stakeholder engagement approach based on the quadrant where the stakeholder is found.



Figure 17: Influence/Interest Grid

- **High Influence, High Interest:** These stakeholders are key players and should be actively engaged and closely managed.
- **High Influence, Low Interest:** These stakeholders need to be kept satisfied, but with less frequent communication.
- **Low Influence, High Interest:** These stakeholders should be kept informed and consulted on matters of interest.

- **Low Influence, Low Interest:** These stakeholders should be monitored, but not otherwise engaged.

We will revisit the Influence/Interest Grid in the project Planning phase, when a more detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan is developed.

2.4 Problem and Objectives Analysis

The Problem Tree

At this point, we have collected data on needs and context and have identified and analyzed stakeholders. The next step is to analyze the problem in detail, asking, “What is the core problem we intend to address?” “What are its causes?” and “What are its effects?”

A commonly used tool to answer these questions is the Problem Tree.

A problem tree is a visual problem analysis tool that looks like a tree with three components:

- The **trunk** of the tree is the **core problem statement**. Always start here!
- The **roots** are the **CAUSES** of the core problem – factors that contribute to the core problem.
- The **branches** are the **EFFECTS** - consequences that result from the core problem.

Creating a problem tree with your team (and other stakeholders, if appropriate) enables a more robust problem analysis and helps everyone clearly see the cause-and-effect relationships. It starts with a single core problem statement. Then you look at the causes. As you identify causes, be sure to drill down further to uncover the root causes of the problem. Do this by repeatedly asking “Why is that happening?” to dig into deeper causes. When identifying effects, follow the same process by repeatedly asking, “So what happens because of that?”

Havenford Cares starts the problem tree by identifying the core problem: “High and rising youth incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford.” Next, it identifies the direct causes and direct effects of the core problem and comes up with the following.

Direct Causes	Direct Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic insecurity and unemployment ● Gaps in support and care ● Lack of access to stable housing ● Broken family relationship ● Lack of awareness of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worsening mental and physical health ● Exposure to exploitation and violence ● Increased demand for shelters and emergency services

Table 13: Direct causes and direct effects of the core problem

Then, for each direct cause, the team identifies its sub-causes, and for each direct effect, the team identifies the longer-term effects.

When complete, the problem tree conveys the **current state** of the increasing incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford – answering questions like, “*What is the problem? What are the direct causes? What are the root causes? Why does this matter?*”

Project Management Principles
COMPREHENSIVE

A problem tree analyzing youth homelessness would have more ‘boxes’ and levels than are included in the example above. It is important that problem analysis be comprehensive and detailed. If you fail to fully understand the causes and effects of the core problem, the project will struggle (and often fail) to develop an effective intervention strategy.



You can review the end result of the Havenford Cares problem tree analysis process in the graphic below.

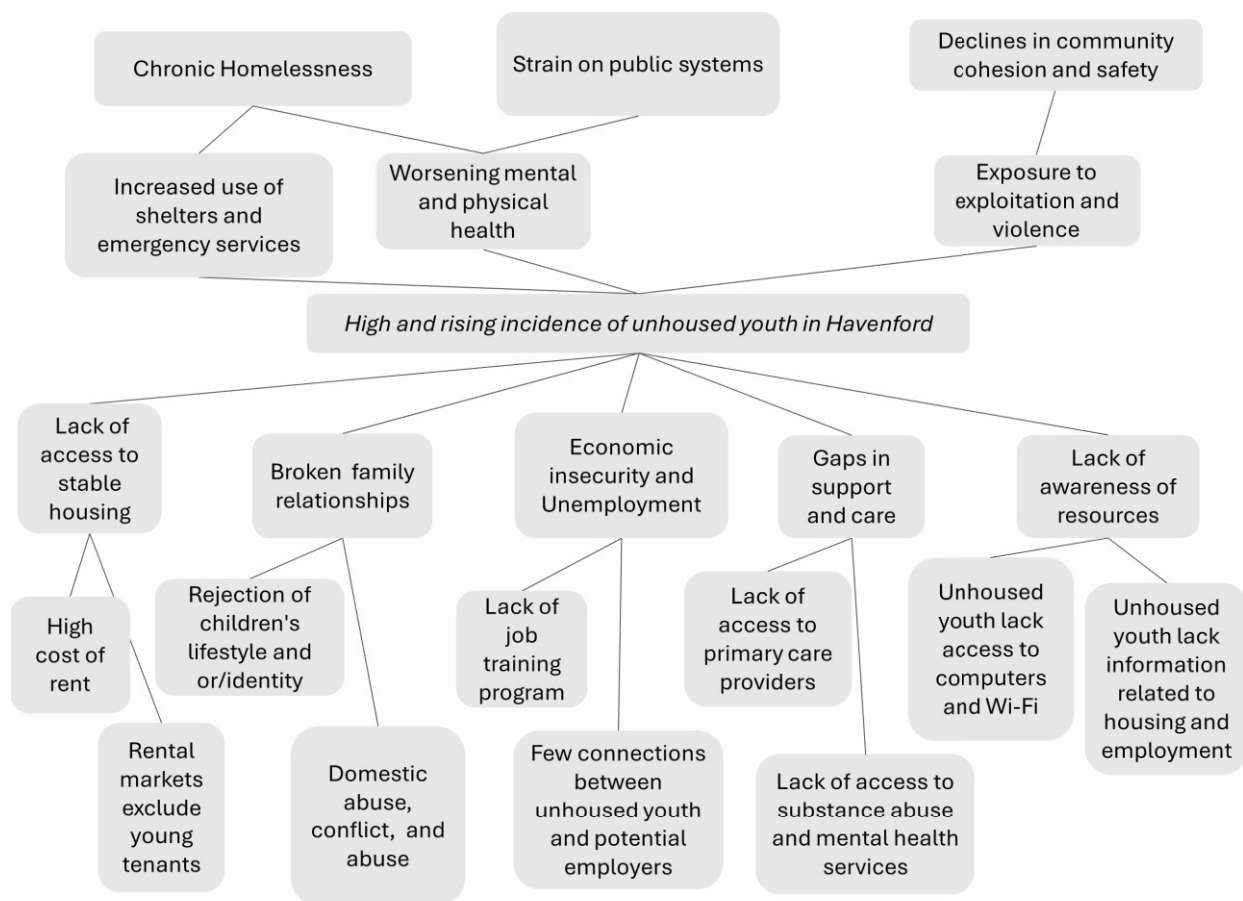


Figure 18: The Havenford Cares problem tree analysis

This problem analysis process sets us up for the next step: envisioning how to address the problem.

The Objective Tree

If the problem tree represents the current state, the objective tree represents a desired future state. To create an objective tree, you turn the negative problem statements in the problem tree into positive objective statements. The core problem becomes the **core objective** (a positive condition to achieve), each cause is turned into a **solution**, and each effect is now an **outcome**.

For the Havenford Care’s example, if the core problem is “High and rising incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford,” we flip that into a core objective statement. This might read something like: “Reduced incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford.” Next, for each root cause, the team writes a corresponding solution.

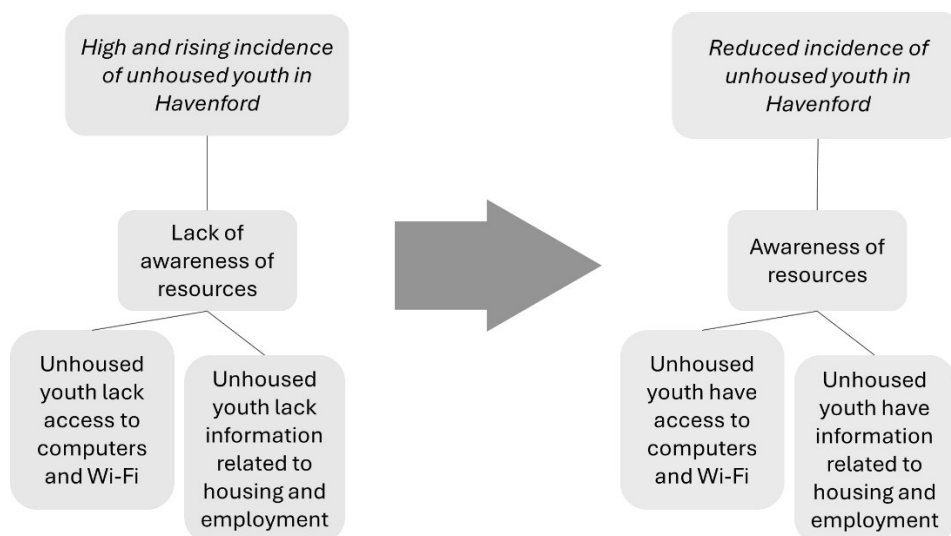


Figure 19: Root causes and corresponding solutions

Then, apply the same approach to write a corresponding outcome for each effect in the Problem Tree. When the process is complete, you have an objectives tree like the following.

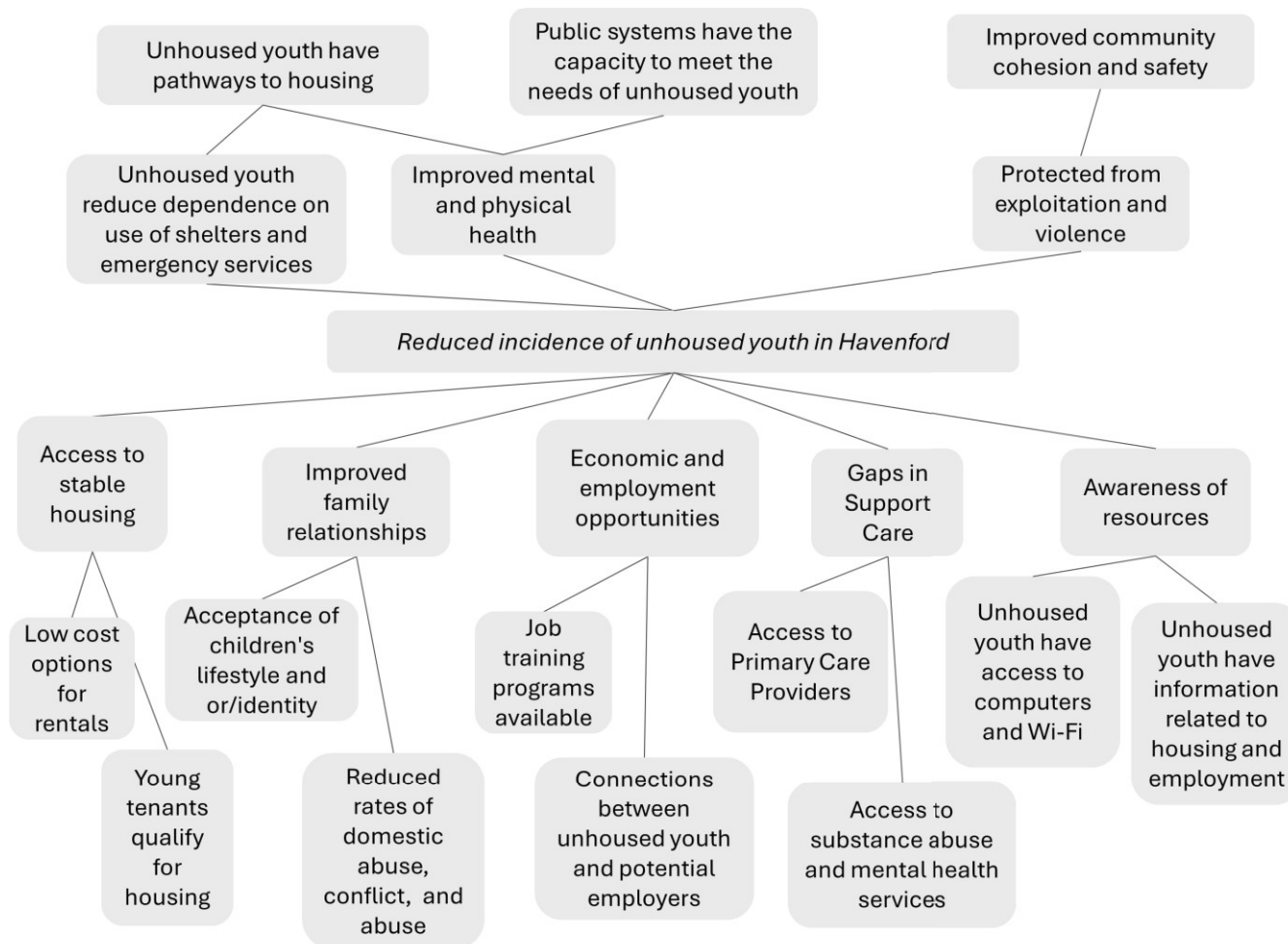


Figure 20: Havenford Cares' objectives tree

Project Scope Criteria

The objective tree presents a broad vision of the many possible options for addressing youth homelessness. In practice, however, it is unlikely that a single organization will have the capacity and resources to address all the causes and effects of a complex social problem. Now comes the hard part! How does your project decide where it will invest/intervene? And what will be left out of the scope of your project?

One useful approach for making these tough decisions is to identify criteria used for making scope inclusion decisions. The table below identifies a number of criteria that should be considered when deciding what will be in the scope of your project (and what will be left out of its scope).

Scope Inclusion Criteria	Guiding Questions
Needs Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What needs received the highest level of emphasis during the assessment/analysis? • Addressing which needs would appear to have the highest potential for impact?
External Programs, Activities, and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who else is working in the proposed area of intervention? • Are they conducting activities that address elements of the objective tree analysis?
Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposed approach acceptable to the target population and key stakeholder groups? • For example, would a shared housing scheme for young adults be appropriate if it served youth of both sexes?
Institutional Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your organization's strengths? • What are your implementing partner capacity levels? (where applicable)
Resource availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is funding available? • Is there potential for growth? • What opportunities exist to leverage other resources?
Cost-Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the rate of return for the investment acceptable?
Technical Feasibility and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the proposed work be realistically accomplished? • Can the work of the project be sustained and maintained over time?
Organizational Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the strategic priorities for your organization? • What are the strengths of your organization? • What other priorities does your organization have (geography? Target groups? Other?)

Table 14: Scope Inclusion Criteria

Note that not all scope inclusion criteria will be equally important. Be sure to assign different levels of importance to each criterion being considered. Weighing your criteria helps ensure that the project's scope inclusion decisions align with your goals, values, and constraints.

After having reviewed the scope inclusion criteria and following a sometimes contentious process of making tough scope decisions, the Havenford Cares team (and some key stakeholders) update their objectives tree so it reflects where it tends to focus its work, and what areas of work it will not do. As you review the updated graphic, notice that Havenford Cares has decided not to intervene in the following areas:

- **Providing access to stable housing.**

Havenford Cares has discovered that another organization has received funding to conduct these activities. That organization will take the lead in Havenford on this issue.

- **Improving family relationships.**

This area of need received a lower level of prioritization among the unhoused youth they surveyed. As a result, it was not included in the scope of the project.

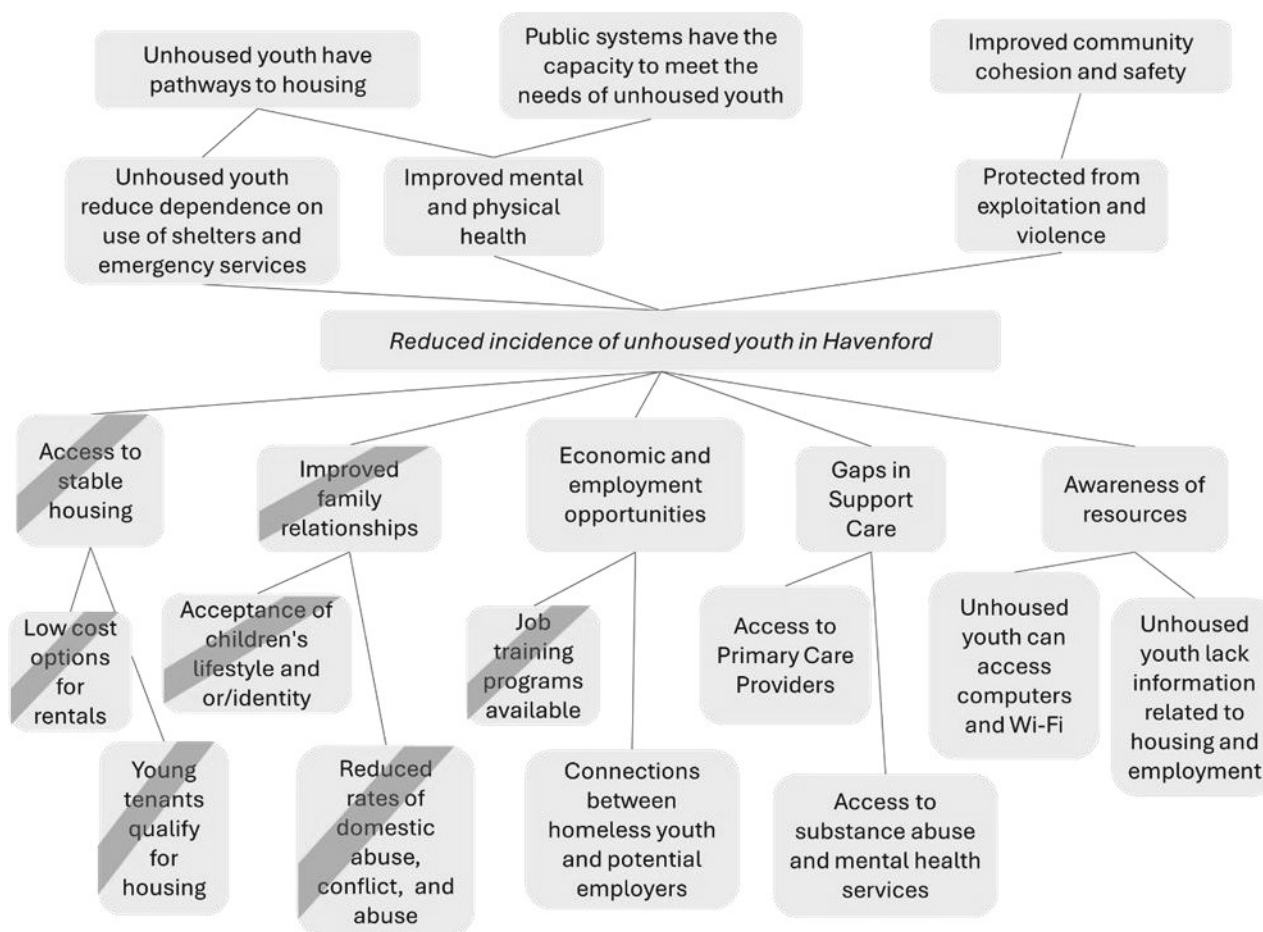


Figure 21: Updated Havenford Cares' objectives tree

Based on the results of this process, Havenford Cares decides to move forward with a project called The Youth Haven Project. This will be a three-year project that aims to reduce the incidence of unhoused youth by opening a drop-in center for youth experiencing housing instability.

The first year of the project will focus on renovating the drop-in center building and completing all necessary work to open the drop-in center's doors. Years two and three will concentrate on providing services to unhoused youth and expanding the project's scale. The Youth Haven Project will offer services:

- Job training and help finding employment
- Mental health counseling and basic health care

(Note: Havenford Cares will not provide these services directly. Instead, they will work with the local hospital and mental health organizations.)

- Information to help youth with emergency shelters, stable housing, and job opportunities.

Their plan is to close the Haven Youth Project at the end of Year 3 and transition its assets and services into the ongoing operations of the larger Havenford Cares portfolio.

Project Management Principles INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE

One more thing to consider when deciding the scope of an intervention is collective impact. Just because your project cannot address all of the causes and effects identified in the problem tree; that doesn't mean the other needs go unmet. Ideally, your project can coordinate with other stakeholders so that together you address all or most aspects of the problem.

For example, multiple stakeholders addressing the needs of unhoused youth in Havenford have created a working group to coordinate their work in order to improve their collective impact. As part of this effort, the different stakeholders will take the lead on key areas of work:

- Youth employment and mental health – Havenford Cares
- Family reconciliation services – Havenford High School
- Emergency Shelter – The Havenford Housing Alliance
- Primary Health Care – The Havenford Clinic

2.5 The Project Intervention Logic

Once you have identified what your project aims to achieve, it is time to begin to map out how you will achieve that result. For this, we will develop a logic model.

Logic Model - A visual and systematic representation of how a project or program is intended to work.

It illustrates the logical relationships between the resources invested, the activities planned, and the results expected, ranging from short-term outputs to long-term impact.

A logic model plays a central role in project management because it maps out the intervention logic — that is, the step-by-step reasoning behind how and why a project is expected to create change.

Here are several ways a logic model can support a project:

- **Clarifies the Project Pathway** – Logic models break down the project into clear components, showing the cause-and-effect flow of the project.

- **Acts as a Communications Tool** – Logic models help ensure that project stakeholders – from team members to partners, to funders, and more – have a shared understanding of what the project aims to achieve and how.

Logical Framework





One of the most frequently used tools for mapping the project intervention logic is the logical framework (or logframe).

Logical Framework - A high-level logic model that outlines the project’s Goal, Outcomes, Outputs, and Activities and how they relate in an “if-then” sequence. The logframe also identifies assumptions (external conditions that need to hold true if the project is to succeed) and indicators to measure success.

The logical framework is a matrix that identifies and communicates the logical relationships in a project by tracking the vertical and horizontal reasoning that connects its levels. The relationship between the elements on each level of the logical framework illustrates the vertical logic that will result in the achievement of the project’s ultimate goal.

There are many variations of the logical framework: some are 4x4 matrices, while others are 4x5. Additionally, various logframe templates often use distinct terminology for the labels of the columns and rows.

Nevertheless, while there are many variations in the structure and terminology of logframe templates, they are all extremely helpful tools for mapping out how change will occur, how progress and impact will be measured, and what risks could interfere with project success.

4x4 Logframe			
Objective Statements	Indicators	Measurement Methods	Assumptions
Goal			
Outcomes			?
Outputs			?
Activities			







5x4 Logframe			
Objective Statements	Indicators	Measurement Methods	Assumptions
Goal			
Strategic Objectives			?
Intermediate Results			?
Outcomes			?
Activities			

Figure 22: Variations of the logical framework

The Social Good DPro Guide subscribes to a 4x4 logical framework matrix template. This is the simplest of the logframe templates and is well-suited for anyone who is just learning about logic models and the logical framework approach.

Let's start our review of the logframe by learning more about the contents of its four columns.

Column 1 <i>Objective Statements</i>	Column 2 <i>Indicators</i>	Column 3 <i>Means of Verification</i>	Column 4 <i>Assumptions</i>
These describe the desired results at different levels of the project. Together, they define the if-then relationships of the project (the vertical logic).	These are quantitative or qualitative measures used to track progress, reflect change, or assess project performance.	These are the sources of data and methods used to collect information for each indicator.	These are the necessary conditions that must hold true for the project's if-then logic to hold true. Assumptions help define the horizontal logic of the project.

Table 15: Logframe - Contents of its four columns

Let's look at each of these columns more closely to better understand the strength of the logframe.

Objective Statements

In our 4x4 logframe template, there are objective statements at four levels:

Goal: The highest-level end result or impact (transformation, sustainability, livelihood, well-being, etc.) to which the project contributes in the long term.

For example, the goal statement for the Havenford Cares project is "To sustainably reduce the incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford." (Note: The Youth Haven Project will contribute to this goal, but this project alone will not achieve it.)

Outcomes: What the project expects to accomplish at the project participant level in the medium term. Outcomes contribute to population-level changes at the goal level.

For example, outcome statements might focus on:

- Usage of project products or services
- Changes in behavior
- Application of knowledge or skills
- Increased adoption or coverage of recommended practices.

Outputs: The immediate project deliverables (both tangible and intangible) resulting from project activities. Outputs include products, goods, services, and changes.

For example, output statements might include:

- Learners improved their knowledge of financial literacy.
- Communication campaign conducted with local businesses.
- Youth outreach center renovated.

Activities: The necessary work needed to deliver the project outputs. When developing the logframe, list the **main** activities that need to be performed. Avoid going into too much detail, because the specific tasks of the project should be included in the project plan (which comes later).

As you construct your objective statements, you will begin to recognize linkages between the levels of the logframe. These connections establish the vertical logic of the project, also known as the “if-then logic” of the intervention.

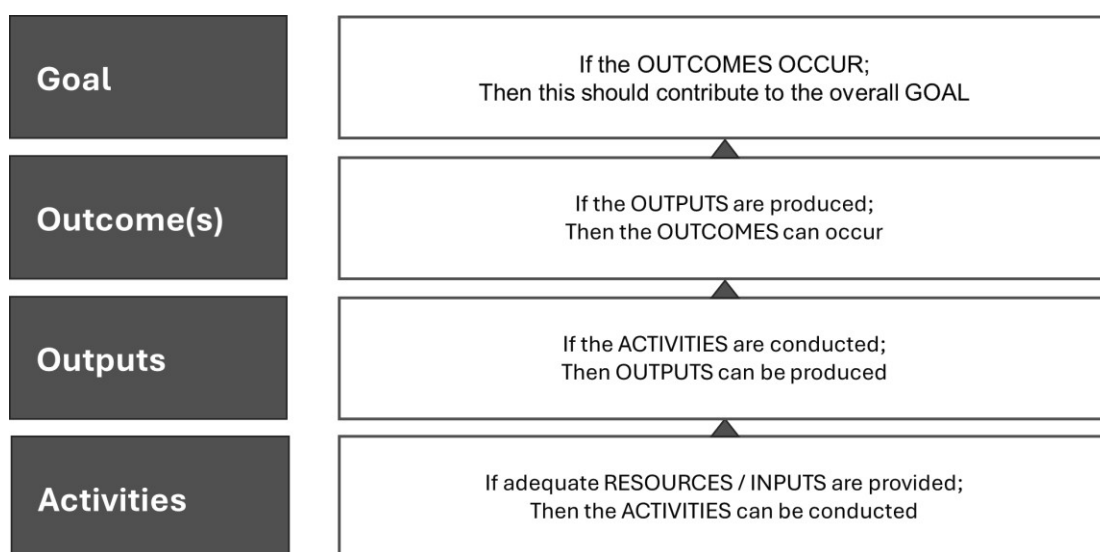


Figure 23: “If-then logic” of the intervention

The Havenford Cares team has developed the following objective statements for its logframe.



	Description
Goal	Reduced incidence of unhoused youth in Havenford
Outcomes	Unhoused youth have: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to a comfortable, welcoming, and safe place that provides facilities and services during daytime hours 2. Increased financial resources to obtain stable housing 3. Increased access to substance abuse services, mental health counseling, and primary health care providers. 4. Improved access to secure stable housing.
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Center opened with facilities for bathroom, shower, laundry facilities, computer, phone, wi-fi, and meals 2.1 Increased access to employment that pays a living wage 3.1 Weekly programs in place to provide programs related to substance abuse, mental health counseling, and primary health care 4.1 Clearinghouse of shelter/housing information made available.
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1 Install bathrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and a kitchen. 1.1.2 Furnish offices, meeting rooms, and communal areas furnished 2.1.1 Hire an Employment Counselor 2.1.2 Conduct outreach visits to local employers 2.1.3 Monitor youths placed in employment positions 3.1.1 Sign the cooperation agreement between Havenford Community Clinic and Haverford Cares 3.1.2 Facilitate the weekly substance abuse fellowship and treatment group. 4.1.1 Hire Housing Advisor 4.1.2 Create an automated communications plan with housing partner agencies

Table 16: Havenford Cares' objective statements

When writing objective statements, be sure to review the linkages between the objective statements found on the different levels of the logframe. It is critical that these linkages are valid! Too often, objective statements that are essential to the vertical logic are missing, or the logframe maps out connections that are only possible through wishful thinking. In these situations, a project could conceivably complete all its activities and even deliver its outputs but may fail to deliver its outcomes or contribute to the long-term value (the goal).

Assumptions

One of the criticisms levied against the logframe is that its linear “if-then” logic structure may oversimplify complex social change processes. One way to mitigate that risk is by including carefully identified assumptions in your logframe matrix.

Assumptions - The necessary conditions that must remain in place for the project’s if-then logic to hold true.

In simple terms, assumptions address the question, “What conditions need to hold true, need to remain in place in order for the vertical logic to happen?”

Assumptions usually involve external conditions or factors that lie outside the project’s control. They define the horizontal logic of the logframe and must remain true for the project logic to be valid.

	Project Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal				If the horizontal logic is followed AND assumptions hold true, then the project will likely succeed.
Outcome(s)				
Outputs				
Activities				

Table 17: Horizontal logic of the logframe

Consider the assumptions of your logframe carefully and critically. If these conditions do not hold true, the success of your project will be at risk. This is especially true when articulating assumptions between the Outcome and Output levels. This is where projects that promote social good often encounter their biggest challenges. They find that while they can complete their concrete project deliverables, these outputs are not being used to positively impact social change among the individuals, groups, and communities they aim to assist. Often, this occurs because either the vertical logic was flawed, or critical assumptions were overlooked.



Here are three examples of assumptions that Havenford Cares has included in its logframe between the output and outcome levels. Notice that the assumptions are articulated as positive statements.

Objective	Assumptions
Outcome 2: Unhoused youth have the financial resources to obtain stable housing.	
Output 2.1: Increased access to employment that pays a living wage	Homeless youth prioritize housing in their spending.

Table 18: Examples of assumptions

Objective	Assumptions
Outcome 3: Increased access to substance abuse services, mental health counseling, and primary health care providers.	
Output 3.1: Weekly programs in place to provide programs related to substance abuse, mental health counseling, and primary health care	The project receives the promised cooperation from the Havenford Community Clinic

Objective	Assumptions
Outcome 4: Youth served by the project have Improved access to secure stable housing	
Output 4.1: Clearinghouse of shelter/housing information made available.	Housing providers are willing to accept references from Havenford Cares as an alternative to eligibility requirements.

Table 19: Examples of assumptions

Indicators and Means of Verification

After objective statements are written and assumptions identified, the final elements of the logical framework are the indicators of achievement and means of verification for each level of the logical framework.

Indicator - A quantitative or qualitative measure used to track progress, reflect change, or assess project performance.

When identifying indicators for the Logframe, start by asking, “What information do I need and why do I need it?” Do you need data to:

- Comply with funder reporting requirements?
- Track the level of project progress and achievements?
- Analyze any variance between expected and actual performance?
- Communicate progress with community groups, government agencies or other organizations?

Your answers to these questions will help identify which indicators to use and how many you will need. For example, while your funding organization may require a specific indicator for reporting, you might need a different type of indicator for decision-making and to provide updates to communities.

Once you are clear about the information you need, you can begin identifying your Logframe indicators. As you identify indicators, use the SMART indicator checklist to determine whether they meet quality standards. SMART is an acronym that represents five specific criteria: measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound — that together help teams assess the quality of project indicators.

SMART Indicator Checklist

Specific	An indicator should be clearly defined and focused, describing exactly what will be measured and to whom or what it applies.
Measurable	Can the indicator be assessed objectively and independently? Are there clear statements of what will be assessed over time?
Achievable	Indicators must be attainable, given the project's constraints (budget, time, and resources).
Relevant	Indicators must accurately measure the change you want to track.
Time-bound	Indicators must identify the timeframe within which the change is expected to occur.

Table 20: SMART Indicator Checklist

Once the indicators are developed, Means of Verification must be identified for each indicator to show exactly **how** progress will be measured and **where** the supporting data will come from.

Means of Verification (MoV) - The sources from which we obtain information to measure the project's indicators.

The Means of Verification should be cost-effective and should directly measure the indicators. The best advice for indicators and MoV is to keep it simple. The more complex the indicator, the more complex (and subsequently, challenging to measure) the MoV.

Bringing it all together

The table below illustrates a partial build-out of the logical framework for the Youth Haven Project. Observe how the objective statements and assumptions delineate the vertical and horizontal logic of the project. Next, review the indicators that will be used to track change and the MoVs the team will use to collect data to measure progress against the logframe indicators.

	Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal	Reduced incidence unhoued youth in Havenford			
Outcome(s)	Unhoued youth have: 1.Access to a comfortable, welcoming, and safe place that provides facilities and services during daytime hours 2.Unhoued youth have the financial resources to obtain stable housing 3.Increased access to substance abuse services, mental health counseling, and primary health care providers. 4.Improved access to secure, stable housing.	By the end of the Year 3: 1.80% of unhoued youth report feeling safer as a result of access to the drop-in center. 2.60% of employed youth have resources to obtain stable housing. 3.a Average wait time for unhoued youth to access mental health counseling is 14 days. 3.b 50% reduction in unhoued youth participants reporting unmet medical needs. 4. 30% reduction in the length of time individuals and families remain homeless.	·Survey Data ·Self-reported income and employment status), program records. ·Clinic attendance logs and appointment records. ·Participant surveys on health service access.	Havenford Cares identifies the hidden homeless youth who are currently not in the system. Community attitudes continue to support the work of agencies supporting unhoued youth.
Outputs	1.1 Center opened with facilities for bathroom, shower, laundry facilities, computer, phone, wi-fi, and meals. 2.1 Increased access to employment that pays a living wage. 3.1 Weekly programs in place to provide programs related to substance abuse, mental health counseling, and primary health care. 4.1 Shelter/housing information made available.	By end of year 3: 1.1 25 youth/day use the drop-in center facilities . 2.1 5 youth/month matched with stable employment via the job training and job placement programs. 3.1a 1 substance abuse group sessions per week. 3.1b Average of of homeless youth attending per session. 3.1c 5 mental health counselling sessions provided per week. 3.1d 15 primary health care visits per week. 4.1 4 youth/month matched with stable housing opportunities.	·Program enrollment records and training attendance logs. ·Attendance sheets for substance abuse group sessions; clinic attendance logs for counseling and health care visits. ·Resource Library usage records (sign-in sheets, usage tracking) and survey data on library utilization.	·Unhoued youth prioritize housing in their spending. ·The project receives the promised cooperation from the Havenford Community Clinic. ·Housing providers are willing to accept references from Havenford Cares as an alternative to eligibility requirements.
Activities	1.1.1 Install bathrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and a kitchen. 1.1.2 Furnish offices, meeting rooms, and communal areas furnished. 2.1.1 Hire an Employment Counselor. 2.1.2 Conduct outreach visits to local employers. 2.1.3 Monitor youths placed in employment positions. communications plan with housing partner agencies. 3.1.1 Sign the cooperation agreement between Havenford Community Clinic and Haverford Cares. 3.1.2 Facilitate the weekly substance abuse fellowship and treatment group. 4.1.1 Hire Housing Advisor. etc.			

Table 21: Partial build-out of the logical framework for the Youth Haven Project

2.6 Project Proposals

Once the project intervention logic model is complete, you will often need to develop a proposal to secure funding or approval for the project. This proposal should draw on the information you have already collected and developed during the Identification and Definition phase, such as the problem analysis, the stakeholder analysis (the need), the proposed solution (the objectives tree), the expected results, proposed indicators, and potential risks (the logframe).

The Project Proposal document might include:

- **Background and need:** A brief overview of the context and problem statement that includes key data points. This section highlights why the project is needed.
- **Project description:** This is a narrative statement of the high-level scope of the project, including the goal, outcomes, outputs, and activities planned (what the project will do, at a high level). (Source: Logframe)
- **Stakeholders:** Who's involved or affected, and any key partners. (Source: Stakeholder Analysis)
- **Initial implementation plan:** High-level timeline and phases of the project, and key milestones or decision points.
- **Initial budget estimate:** Major cost categories and expected budget (often as ranges or rough numbers at this stage).
- **Risks and assumptions:** Key risks or external factors to watch (from our assumptions list).

The format, contents, and structure of the proposal can vary widely depending on the requirements of the funder or the policies of an organization. Some may funders require highly detailed narratives, specific budget templates, or logic models, while others may accept shorter documents. Similarly, internal proposals might follow a standardized format or be tailored to the preferences of decision-makers within the organization. Regardless of the context, the proposal should clearly articulate the project's purpose, activities, timeline, and anticipated outcomes

With this solid foundation, you're ready to move into detailed project setup and planning. In that next phase, you'll break down the work into specific tasks, schedule, and budget everything, and get prepared for implementation. All those next steps will build on the groundwork from the Identification and Definition phase, ensuring that your project is not only well-intentioned but also well-conceived for real impact.

Sections 3. PROJECT SETUP

“First, have a definite, clear, practical ideal – a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends... Third, adjust all your means to that end.”

— Stephen Covey

3.1 Getting Started

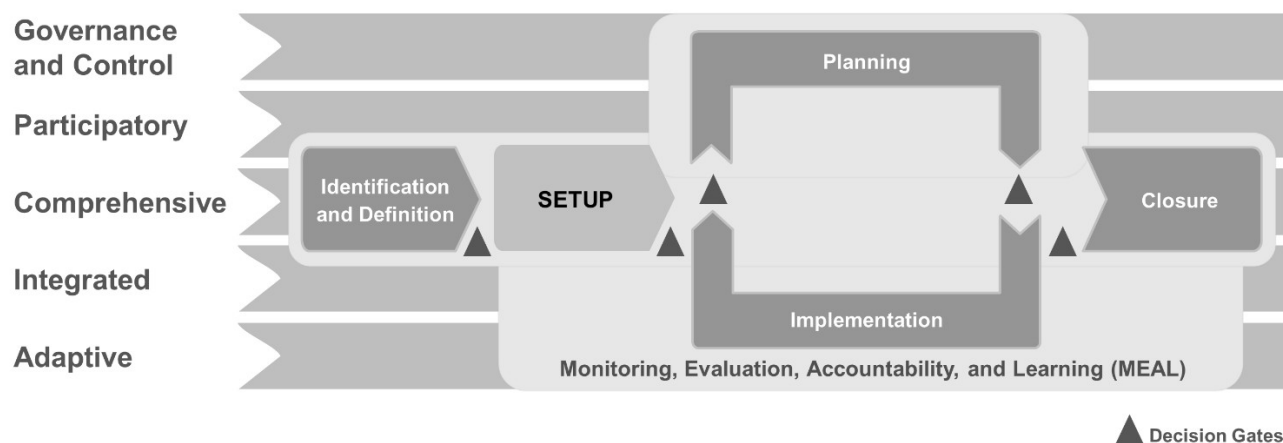


Figure 23: The Project Life Cycle - Setup

Welcome to the Project Setup phase. Consider this phase an opportunity to prepare everyone and everything for the official launch of the project. What makes this phase unique is that it focuses almost exclusively on the needs of the project manager, the project team, and key stakeholders.

Project setup is all about establishing the management framework for the project - and confirming that the foundational project management processes are in place. This includes answering questions like, “How will the project be staffed? How will decisions be made? What risks could potentially interfere with project success? How will planning be conducted? And what will happen after the project closes?” Once these decisions are made, the project is ready for official launch, and the team can move on to the next phases of the project life cycle, detailed project planning, and project implementation.

Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs

SETUP PHASE

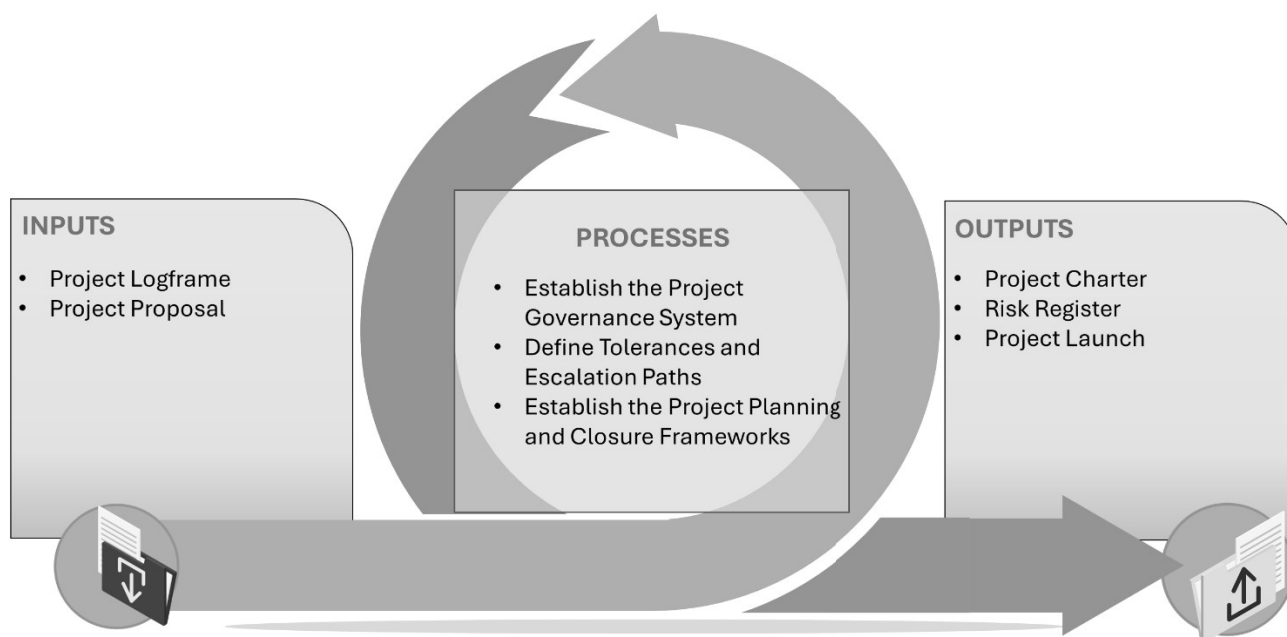


Figure 24: Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs - Setup phase

Inputs

The inputs to the Setup phase were developed during the Identification and Definition phase. These include the Project Logframe and the Project Proposal.

Processes

In order to complete the Outputs for the Project Setup phase, the project will need to complete processes related to establishing:

- The Project Governance System
- Project Tolerances and Issue Escalation Paths
- The Project Planning and Closure Frameworks

Outputs

Upon completion of the Project Setup phase, the following outputs will be created:

Output	Purpose
<i>The Risk Register</i>	Identifies the project risks, including their likelihood and potential impact. It also identifies whether/how each risk will be managed by the project.
<i>The Project Charter</i>	Serves as a baseline reference document that authorizes the project. It provides high-level information on project deliverables, budget, calendar, governance, decision-making, staffing, and risks.

Table 22: Output vs. Purpose

Reality Check: The Project Manager and Setup

It is possible that the Project Manager will not have been hired by the time a project starts the Setup phase. Recruitment processes can take time, and organizations may not want to hire a Project Manager until a contract for funding has been signed. While the Project Manager may not be on board, there should be a focal point who is overseeing the processes and ensuring that everything that needs to be documented is so that when the Project Manager does come onboard, there is clarity as to what tasks have been completed and which processes are in place.

Decision Gates in the Setup Phase

The main decision gate during the Setup Phase is signed Project Charter. Once signed, this document officially approves the project, and Project Manager is authorized to begin work on project activities (and spend project funds).

This authorization is important for accountability – it’s a record that the project was officially approved, which can protect the Project Manager and team later if anyone questions whether they were allowed to do certain activities or spend money. It’s also the moment when the Project Manager is formally entrusted with the authority to lead the project within the agreed parameters.

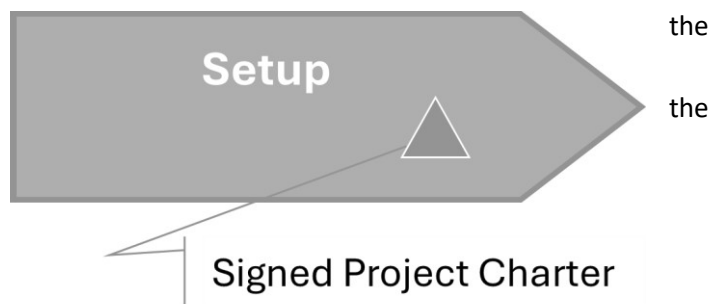


Figure 25: Decision Gates in the Setup Phase

3.2 The Project Charter

A primary objective of Project Setup is to ensure everyone is on the same page about what the project entails. The primary tool is the Project Charter.

Project Charter: A high-level, strategic document that formally authorizes the project and provides the Project Manager with the mandate to begin work. It summarizes key management information—such as the project’s purpose, scope, stakeholders, timeline, budget overview, and governance structure.

The Charter should remain a living document, updated as needed to reflect major decisions, shifts in strategy, or contextual changes throughout the project life cycle

This document serves many purposes; however, several of its most important objectives include:

- To align stakeholders on key project parameters.
- To establish the Project Governance Structure.
- To define Tolerances and Escalation Paths.
- Identify the Project Planning Framework and Project Closure Framework.

Align Stakeholders on Key Project Parameters

The project charter summarizes and communicates the Who – What – When – Why and How of the project in a single document. This information includes a high-level summary of the project’s purpose and objectives, the timeline, milestones, budget, key risks or assumptions, and the list of stakeholders or team members involved.

Documenting this information in a relatively short document establishes a baseline that stakeholders can refer to if they have questions about the project. For example, if someone asks, *Is the project committed to completing XYZ deliverable? or Weren’t we supposed to finish by June?* - The charter provides the official answer that was agreed at the start. The Charter can also be helpful when there is turnover on the team or among key stakeholders because it includes all key information about the project. This makes it easy for new team members and other project stakeholders to pick up the Project Charter and know what the project is about.

Establish the Project Governance Structure

Once the project charter is written, it is submitted to the project’s governance body for signature and approval.

Project governance - The framework that identifies who has the authority to make project decisions and defines the process to make them.

A robust project governance structure clarifies points:

- **Authority:** Who has the power to make decisions?
- **Accountability:** Who is accountable for the success of the project? With no clear accountability for project success, you risk a scenario where nobody is moving agendas to resolve project issues.
- **Project Changes:** What changes can be made by the project manager? What happens when a proposed change extends beyond the project manager’s agreed-upon tolerances?
- **Oversight:** Who monitors and guides the overall project progress to ensure it aligns with organizational strategy and is meeting expected benchmarks related to scope, time, and budget?

- **Supporters and Advocates:** Who provides support and resources for the project when they encounter issues and roadblocks? Who advocates for the project when the task is beyond the control of the project manager?

In other words, the project governance structure identifies the individuals or groups that guide the project, support the project manager, elevate issues, and ensure the appropriate person makes timely decisions. Establishing a clear governance structure from the outset helps prevent confusion later when challenging issues, difficult choices, or significant changes arise.

What does a project governance structure look like? It can take various forms depending on the project's size and complexity. The two most common governance structures are the Project Owner and the Project Board.

Project Owner - An individual who governs a project, providing oversight, strategic direction, and support to ensure the project's success.

For smaller projects which are less complex or of lower value, the governance structure can be a single person – the Project Owner. In these scenarios, the Project Owner supports projects by fulfilling all of the roles identified in the list above (decision-making, change management, project oversight, advocacy, and material support).

Project Board - A governance body responsible for overseeing a project and providing strategic direction and support to ensure the project's success.

For larger, more complex projects with many stakeholders, a Project Owner model might not be enough. In these scenarios, it's common to form a project board to oversee project governance. This is a group of representatives who collectively provide guidance and oversight of a project.

There is no standard approach when establishing a project board. Its size and composition will depend on the organization, size of the project, and stakeholders involved.

- **Size** – At minimum, there should be two people, but it is common to find boards comprised of three, four or five representatives when stakeholder management is complex. For example, if there are multiple funders, multiple beneficiary groups, or multiple organizations working on the same project.
- **Composition** – Board members should represent a variety of stakeholder perspectives, and composition will vary depending on the project. Examples of potential board members might include representatives from implementing partner staff, government agencies community groups, funders, etc.)

Project Board or Steering Committee?

While the Project Board is sometimes referred to as the Steering Committee, it is important to acknowledge that the group is about more than just consultation and 'steering.' Its role is also to engage in oversight, decision-making, and accountability.

Regardless of whether a project is governed by a Project Owner or a Project Board, the governance structure's role remains unchanged - to provide direction and support while holding the project accountable to its goals. Additionally, when a Project Manager encounters an issue that cannot be resolved within her authority or available resources, she should escalate the issue to the Project Board.

Decisions related to the governance structure should be documented in the Project Charter. This includes defining roles and processes; identifying by name (or position) who is the Project Owner, or who sits on the project board (or its equivalent) if you have one; and documenting the schedule of governance meetings. For example: *"The Project Board must approve any scope changes or budget deviations above 10% and will meet bi-monthly to review schedule/budget status."* By spelling this out, the Project Manager and team know exactly where to go for guidance or approvals, and the governance members know what is expected of them.

Returning to the Youth Haven Project, a Project Board will be established to govern the project. The project board will include a representative from Havenford Cares, and additional representation from three organizations with whom the project will collaborate closely: the Havenford Child Welfare Department, the Havenford Clinic, and the Emergency Shelter.

Define Tolerances and Escalation Paths

The Project Charter should also identify the project manager's tolerances.

Tolerances – The acceptable range of variation in key project parameters—such as time, cost, scope, quality, risk, or benefits—within which the Project Manager can operate without needing to escalate issues to a higher authority.

These tolerances should also take into account any external requirements, such as funder conditions, legal constraints, or regulatory permissions that may limit the flexibility to make changes. Being clear about tolerances helps the project take decisive action on the one hand, while avoiding the risk of making unauthorized changes on the other. The charter should also describe what escalation procedures are followed for issues that cannot be resolved by the project manager.

Project Management Principles GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Not all project challenges can be resolved by the project manager alone. Sometimes the potential solutions — such as changing the scope, extending the schedule, or reallocating budget — exceed the project manager's authority or fall outside the agreed tolerances. In these cases, it's essential to escalate the matter to the project's governance structure. The project board or Project Owner plays a key role in reviewing escalated risks and issues, assessing implications, and making decisions that keep the project aligned with its overall objectives. Proactive escalation isn't a sign of failure — it's a sign of good project governance and strong control.

For example, a budget tolerance may indicate that the Project Manager can exceed total expenses in a budget category by up to 5% of the total budget. Beyond that, they must seek approval from the governance body. Similarly, a schedule tolerance might indicate that the project timeline can adjust by up to two weeks on major deliverables, but anything beyond that must be approved by a higher authority. Having tolerances helps to ensure that minor decisions are not delayed by unnecessary bureaucracy, while significant ones receive the appropriate level of scrutiny.

The Project Charter for the Youth Haven Project addresses the issues of decision-making, tolerance levels, and escalation by including the following clauses:

- The Project Manager can make operational decisions without needing approval and has the authority to:
 - Reallocate up to 10% of funds between budget line items in the same category.
 - Extend project milestones and deliverable dates up to 14 days without requiring formal change control.
- Any deviation beyond the project manager's tolerance level must be escalated to the Project Board for impact assessment and approval. The Project Manager is responsible for documenting and justifying all schedule deviations exceeding this tolerance.

Later, during the Implementation phase of the project, the Project Manager learns that there is a 4-week delay in completing the renovation of the drop-in center (due to an issue with the building inspector). This delay exceeds the 14-day tolerance established in the project charter. This means that the Project Manager must escalate the issue to the Project Board for a decision on what to do next. The board convened an emergency meeting where they decided to take action to meet with city officials (leveraging the connections of the city council member on the Project Board). The escalation process worked: As a result, the permitting process was accelerated and completed in 7 days.

Identify the Project Planning Framework

The Project Charter should also identify the project planning framework that will be used and identify who will be involved in planning. That way anyone involved can be notified as soon as possible.

Typically, projects use one of two planning frameworks: Waterfall Planning and Rolling Wave Planning.

Waterfall Planning - A detailed plan for the entire project that is developed before implementation starts.

This is a traditional, linear approach to project planning and execution. It is particularly suited for projects where all the requirements are well understood and are unlikely to change. Waterfall planning assumes stability. While minor updates to the plan may occur, changes are discouraged and often difficult to implement once implementation begins.

The Waterfall Planning approach is well-suited for projects that are predictable and/or short-term. This planning framework works best when the project has limited risks and few uncertainties.

Rolling Wave Planning - A progressive planning approach where an overall implementation plan for the long-term objectives are planned at a higher level – then near-term plans fleshed out as the project progresses, and more information becomes available.

A Rolling Wave approach includes:

The Overall Implementation Plan – A high-level project plan that provides global direction and estimates for the project plan. It ensures strategic direction while allowing for agile, adaptive execution as the project evolves.

Stage Plans – A detailed plan that covers a specific increment (stage) of the life of the project.

Why use a rolling wave planning framework? This methodology allows you to plan and implement the project in smaller increments (stages might correspond with quarters, months, or any logical segment of the project). As the project progresses to the next stage, the team formulates a detailed plan for the upcoming phase. This stage plan should align with the overall parameters of the high-level Overall Implementation Plan while also reflecting the evolving risks, issues, and lessons learned from the project.

This planning approach is better suited for dynamic and uncertain environments. An iterative stage-based strategy allows for more agile and adaptive execution as the project evolves. By dividing the project timeline into stages, you create natural checkpoints to evaluate progress and identify any new developments (risks, issues, opportunities, or emerging learning) that might require an update to the project plan. Breaking implementation into stages makes large projects less overwhelming and facilitates adjustments along the way.

Instead of having a single plan for the entire project, the Overall Implementation Plan outlines what success looks like at the end of Stage 1, Stage 2, and so forth. For example, suppose your project’s outcome indicator in one year is to train 500 people and secure jobs for 200 of them. You might set a Stage 1 (first quarter) target of training 100 people, aiming for 40 to gain employment, and then review those results before planning for the next quarter. If only 60 people were trained in Q1, you can investigate why and adjust your strategy for Q2 (perhaps the recruitment strategy needs to be redesigned).

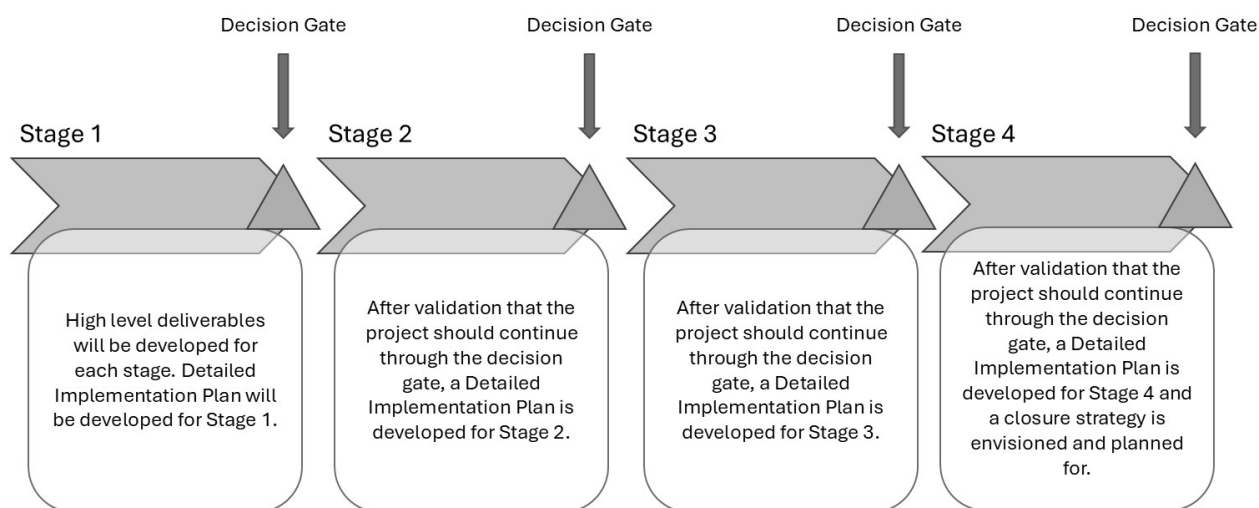


Figure 26: Overall Implementation Plan

Set the Decision Gates for the Project

The project planning framework should also establish whether the project will include decision gates and identify when they will occur. Every organization will have its own decision gate structure; some may have many gates, while others may only have an initial approval and final sign-off.

As a general rule, decision gates should be scheduled on a regular basis:

- Between phases in the project life cycle.
- At other critical project milestones, such as after a major deliverable is complete.
- At the end of a stage (If the project is using a Rolling Wave Planning framework).

If you know when a decision gate is approaching, you can plan for it. You can anticipate what decisions need to be made. This means you can consider who needs to be involved and what data will be required to make those decisions.

In practice, a decision gate usually involves a review meeting or a report where the Project Manager presents the progress to date, challenges, and plans, and the governing body decides on the way forward. Based on the information presented, key stakeholders (such as the Project Owner, Project Board members, or funder) review the project's status and plans and decide whether to continue with the project design or plan, make changes, or even stop the project altogether.

Identify the Project Closure Framework

The Project Charter should also answer the question, *"How will the project end?"* When a project ends, it generally follows one of the following project closure frameworks.

Closure	The project is formally ended and all project closure activities completed
Handover	Another group or entity takes on the products or services of the project
Extension	Negotiation of added time to finish the project (could be at additional cost or 'no' cost)

Project Management Principles
ADAPTIVE

The link between decision gates and adaptive management is strong. These gates create a formal space for reflection and course correction, beyond the continuous day-to-day monitoring. It's like a pit stop in a long race – a chance to refuel, fix issues, and decide if it's safe to keep racing. A well-designed project will identify in advance where these gates are. Sometimes they align with funding requirements (e.g., annual funding approvals).

Expansion	Replication of the project outputs and outcomes (all or some of them) with a new target area or population
Redesign	Continuation via a new phase with modified interventions or activities

Table 23: Identify the Project Closure Framework

The way in which the project is anticipated to be closed should be identified from the earliest phases of the project and communicated with stakeholders as early as possible. If you don't know how the project ends, you will miss critical elements of project planning.

3.3 The Risk Register

No project is without uncertainties. That's why a core part of the Setup phase is establishing the foundation of the project's risk management system. You likely started thinking about major risks during the Identification and Definition phase, when you scoped out the project concept and identified the assumptions in the logical framework (remember – and assumption is a risk that is stated in a positive way). However, that level of risk analysis was not comprehensive nor detail. Now is the time to get specific and proactive about them.

Risk - An uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, can have either a positive or negative effect on a project's outcomes, outputs, or activities.

In plain terms, risk management means figuring out:

- What unexpected event/condition could disrupt your project design and/or plan?
- How likely is it to happen?
- How bad could it be if it happened, and
- What are you going to do about it?

When identifying potential risks, most projects focus on negative risks that have the potential to impede project success. These risks escalate into issues that lead to increased costs, delayed schedules, budget overruns, reduced quality, or failure to meet project objectives.

However, it is important to recognize that risks can have positive outcomes. Positive risks, referred to as opportunities, are uncertain events that could positively impact a project. These risks may lead to benefits such as cost savings, early completion, or improved performance.

Step 1: Identify and list the risks

Start by brainstorming and reviewing potential risks with your team and stakeholders. What could prevent the project from achieving the outputs and outcomes within the time, budget, scope, and quality outlined? Survey the context of your project and look for risks that fall into a wide variety of categories.

Category	Examples
Strategic/commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Failure of suppliers to meet contractual commitments ● Fraud/theft
Economic/financial/market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest rate instability ● Inflation ● Inability to access funding
Legal and regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New or changed legislation/regulations ● Poorly written contractual arrangements
Organizational/management/human factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poor leadership ● Weak staffing procedures / high turnover ● Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change of government ● Adverse public opinion
Technical/ operational/ infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poor design ● Unclear expectations
Project Management Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scope creep ● Inadequate tracking and control response ● Unrealistic schedules ● Poorly managed logistics

Table 24: Identify and list the risks

Project Management Principles PARTICIPATION

It can be challenging to comprehensively identify risk if you are working in a silo. The process of brainstorming potential risks is much stronger if you use a participatory approach. For example, project participants may identify risks the project team would not consider; the supply chain or MEAL teams may provide insight on risks that only they are able to identify; and staff working directly with communities have a different perspective than team members working office positions.

Step 2: Assess Probability and Impact

Not all risks are equal. That's why each risk on the brainstorm list should be assessed in terms of:

Risk Probability - How likely is it that the event/condition will occur?

Risk Impact - How much would the event/condition affect the project if it did occur?

Many project teams use a rating scale for this process. For example, a ranking of 1(low) to 5(high) is used to quantify the estimated probability and impact for each risk.

Probability Ranking	Impact Ranking
1 – RARE: Highly unlikely to occur	1 – INSIGNIFICANT: Minimal impact on project
2 – UNLIKELY: Possible but not anticipated	2 – MINOR: Small impact, easily manageable
3 – MODERATE: Fairly likely to occur	3 – MODERATE: Noticeable Impact, requires attention
4 – LIKELY: Expected to happen	4 – MAJOR: Significant effect on project success
5 – ALMOST CERTAIN: Highly likely to occur	5 – SEVERE: Critical threat to project viability

Table 25: Probability and Impact - rating scale

For each identified risk, team members assign a rating for probability and impact using the defined scales. Then they calculate the risk score by multiplying the probability and impact ratings.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Formula	Score
Delays in the availability of the renovation team.	2	3	2x3	6
Community opposition to drop-in center.	3	4	3x3	12
Lack of access to funding prevents a sustainable transition of the project to ongoing operations.	3	5	3x5	15
Building material costs could rise.	4	4	4x4	16

Table 26: Probability and Impact - risk probability and impact

Next, the team uses the risk scores to prioritize the project risks. Some projects are risk-averse (they want to actively manage even low-level risks), while others are more risk-tolerant (they only choose to actively manage risks with high-risk scores). In the example above, the Youth Haven Project decides to actively manage the risks that exceed a risk score of 10, and decides to continue monitoring the other risks without actively managing them.

Step 3: Identify your Risk Response Strategy

Once risks are identified, assessed, and prioritized, the project team must identify a strategy to best respond to the risk they intend to actively manage. Common risk response strategies include:

Risk Avoidance - Change the plan to eliminate the risk entirely.

For example, if you are concerned that an element of the project is too risky, you can avoid the risk by removing the activity/outcome from the project entirely.

Risk Mitigation (Reduction) - Take action to reduce the probability of the risk happening or to lessen its impact if it does happen.

For example, if you are concerned about the risk of theft in a storage warehouse, you might consider two mitigation actions:

- **Reduce the probability** of theft by increasing the security systems for the building (guards, new doors, barred windows).
- **Reduce the impact** of theft by instituting a policy whereby no more than \$300 is kept in the petty cash box.

Risk Transference - Shift the impact of the risk to a third party.

For example, a project can transfer risk by buying insurance or outsourcing a project component to a partner that is better equipped to handle its associated risk.

Acceptance - Acknowledge the risk and decide to live with it without taking special action

This is a valid risk response strategy when justified by cost-benefit analysis or strategic considerations. Often this approach is taken because the risk is either unlikely to occur, has a low impact, or the cost of mitigation outweighs the potential damage.

Step 4: Create the Risk Register

Once steps 1 and 2 are complete, you'll create a Risk Register – a document listing each identified risk, its assessed level (probability and impact), what category it falls into, who the owner is, and what the response or contingency plan will be. The Risk Register is a living document that you'll refer to throughout the project. It ensures you don't forget about the risks you identified and the agreed responses. It can be as simple or detailed as needed, but it should be clear enough that anyone reading it can understand the game plan for each significant risk.

Description of the Risk	Impact (1-5)	Probability (1-5)	Total	Response(s)	Risk Owner
Funding prevents transition to ongoing operations	5	4	20	Mitigation: Add 1-month float to schedule; prepare indoor tasks for bad weather.	Operations Manager
Community opposition to drop-in center	3	4	12	Acceptance: No change to the plan.	n/a
Building material costs could rise	4	4	16	Mitigation/Transfer: Secure price-lock agreements with suppliers.	Admin Officer

Table 27: Risk Register

Finally, remember that risk management is not a one-time task. Set a schedule for regular risk reviews. New risks can emerge, and identified risks can change in severity. Maintaining a habit of checking in on risks allows you to catch issues early. Involving multiple stakeholders in the risk review is also valuable; different perspectives can highlight aspects the core team might miss.

As the saying goes, “expect the unexpected.” By establishing a solid foundation for risk management in the Setup phase, you won’t eliminate all uncertainty (that’s impossible!), but you will significantly enhance your ability to handle surprises without panic. You’ll have considered the “what ifs” and already devised some backup plans, which can be a project-saver when those rainy days (sometimes literally) arrive.

3.4 The Project Launch

Project setup isn’t complete until the project is formally authorized and announced. The signed Project Charter is the document that captures this approval. When the project governance body signs the Charter, it signifies that they authorize the project to proceed as described and commit the organization's support to the project.

This authorization is important for accountability; it’s a record that the project was officially approved, which can protect the Project Manager and team later if anyone questions whether they were allowed to perform certain activities or spend money. It’s also the moment when the Project Manager is formally entrusted with the authority to lead the project within the agreed parameters.

Once the charter is signed, your project becomes official! However, you're not done with the Setup phase just yet. It's important to communicate (and celebrate) the official start of the project through a project launch. This could be an email announcement, a community event, a press release, or any other relevant communication that fits your context.

Why is a project launch important? It ensures that everyone who needs to know that the project is underway. It also builds transparency, generates support, and creates goodwill and awareness. The purpose is to announce that the project has started, share the key details (the what/why/when/who from the charter in a digestible form), and signal that the team is now rolling up their sleeves to make this happen.

With the project authorized and launched, the Setup phase concludes. You have a clear charter, a unified team and stakeholder group, and the mandate to proceed. The stage is set for the next phases: detailed planning followed by implementation.

Section 4. PROJECT PLANNING

“If you don’t know where you are going. How can you expect to get there?”

– Basil S. Walsh

4.1 Getting Started

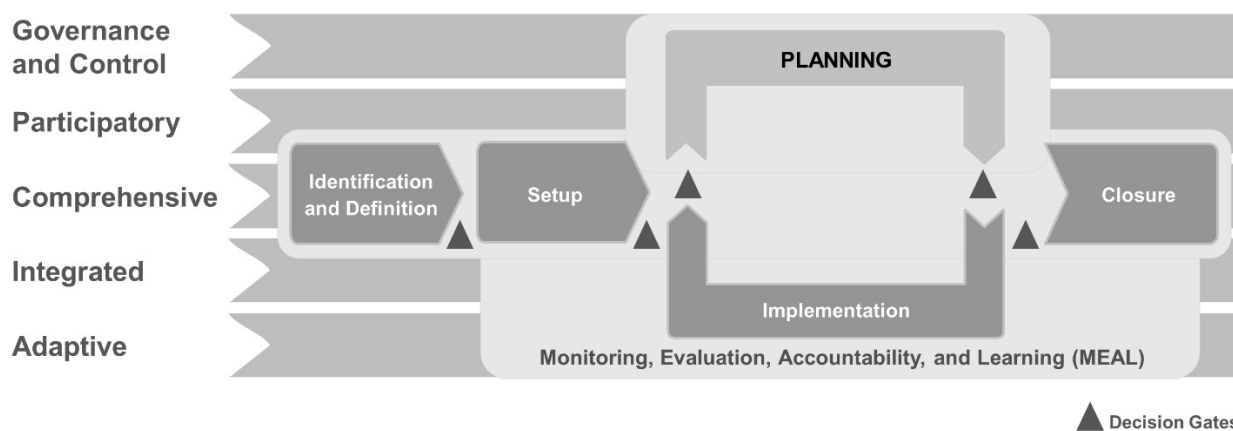


Figure 27: The Project Life Cycle - Planning

By the time a project officially enters the Planning phase, the project team has already developed a number of documents from the Identification and Definition and Setup phases (e.g. the project logical framework, the project proposal, the project charter, etc.) that contain an extensive level of detail related to the project.

You might ask, why you need a project plan if I have a project proposal that already includes estimates related to scope, budget, and calendar? While a project proposal usually includes high-level estimates, it rarely includes the comprehensive details needed to implement the day-to-day work of the project. This is because the main purpose of a project proposal is to obtain funding, whereas the purpose of a project plan is to provide the team with a detailed and comprehensive model for implementing a successful project.

The table below compares and contrasts project proposals and project plans using a number of criteria.

	Project Proposal	Project Plan
Purpose	To obtain approval and funding for the project. Emphasizes clear, concise communication of ideas that ‘sell’ the project to funding stakeholders.	To ensure that the project arrives on time, on scope and on budget, and according to established quality parameters; to emphasize comprehensive, logical planning and to model the project for review by the project team and other stakeholders.
Format	Format is often determined by funding requirements or agency stakeholders responsible for investment decisions.	Format is determined by the project team and key stakeholders.
Level of Detail	Often limited in the level of detail due to the purpose, format, anticipation, schedule, and timing of proposal.	Level of detail is developed by the project team and key stakeholders.
Participation	Often written by a small team as a result of time constraints that limit participation.	Often written by a small team as a result of time constraints that limit.
Audience	Focused on funders, funders and stakeholders who distribute resources.	Focused on the needs of the team implementing project activities.
Timing and Schedule	Often written under tight time constraints, sometimes months (or even years) prior to implementation.	The opportunity exists to revisit proposals to further develop/revise/update plans at the beginning of project implementation or at key benchmarks in the life cycle.

Table 28: Project proposals and project plans

Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs

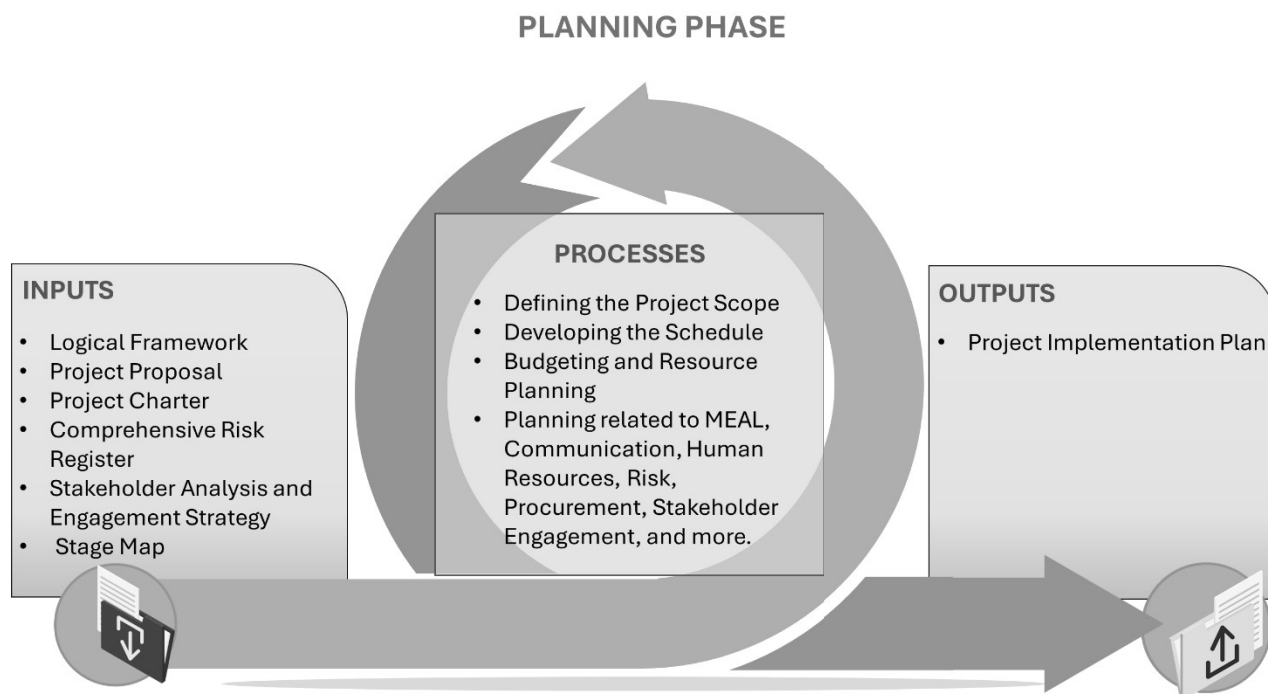


Figure 28: Inputs, Processes, and Outputs - Planning Phase

Inputs

When developing your Implementation Plan, you will use the documents developed during the Identification and Definition and Setup phases. Those inputs may include:

- Logical Framework
- Project Proposal
- Project Charter
- Comprehensive Risk Register
- Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Strategy
- Stage Map.

Outputs

Upon completion of the Project Setup phase, the following outputs will be created:

Output	Description
<i>Project Plan</i>	A detailed and comprehensive document (or collection of documents) that outlines how a project will be implemented, monitored, and closed. It details the project's objectives, scope, schedule, budget, resources, and all other areas of work required to achieve project success.

<p>Supplementary Plans OPTIONAL</p>	<p>When a project is particularly complex or involves significant risks, there may be a need to develop supplementary plans that add focus to specific areas.</p> <p>For example, a project might decide to create a standalone, supplementary Communication Plan to manage and coordinate all of the communications with volunteers, collaborating organizations, funders, and the general public. Other supplementary plans that a project might choose to develop may focus on supply chain, human resources, or Monitoring, depending on the project's specific needs.</p> <p>If supplementary plans are developed, they must be fully aligned and integrated with the core project plan.</p>
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Table 29: Project Setup outputs - Project Plan and Supplementary Plans

Processes

In order to complete the Project Implementation Plan (and Supplementary Plans if needed), the project will need to complete processes related to planning for the triple constraint. This includes:

- Defining the Project Scope
- Developing the Schedule
- Budgeting and Resource Planning
- Planning related to Communication, Human Resources, Risk, Procurement, Stakeholder Engagement, and more.

Effective project planning must also include processes related to project work that are not directly related to managing the triple constraint. This includes:

- Risk Planning – Revisiting and refining risks and response strategies established during the Setup phase.
- MEAL Planning – Allocating time and resources for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning throughout the project.
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Planning – Expanding on the stakeholder strategy from Setup to define how and when engagement and communication will happen.
- Supply Chain Planning – Detailing procurement, logistics, and asset management.
- Human Resource Planning – Outlining staffing needs, including internal staff, partners, and volunteers, and how they'll be supported.
- Sustainability and Closure Planning – This includes the administrative tasks, contractual requirements, and any work related to ensuring the project investments are sustainable or ready to handover following project closure (if applicable).

Your choice of project planning framework — Waterfall or Rolling Wave — will significantly shape the format and process of your plan. Regardless of which approach you use, most projects will still cover the core

planning components listed above—either in a single integrated document or across a core plan and supplementary plans.

In this section of the Guide, you'll explore the key components of a strong project plan, along with tools and processes to support planning, regardless of whether your plan is structured as a single integrated document or a core plan with supplementary elements. These approaches are designed to work with both Waterfall and Rolling Wave frameworks.

4.2 Planning for the Triple Constraint

Planning for the triple constraint is an iterative process involving a three-step process aimed at aligning and balancing the three sides of the project's triple constraint triangle (scope, calendar, and resources).

You might have noticed that the arrows between the three steps form a circular cycle. This is because the work of each of the three steps is interdependent. A project rarely aligns and balances the three constraints perfectly from the start. Thus, the three-step process must be revisited and refined multiple times as the project progresses.

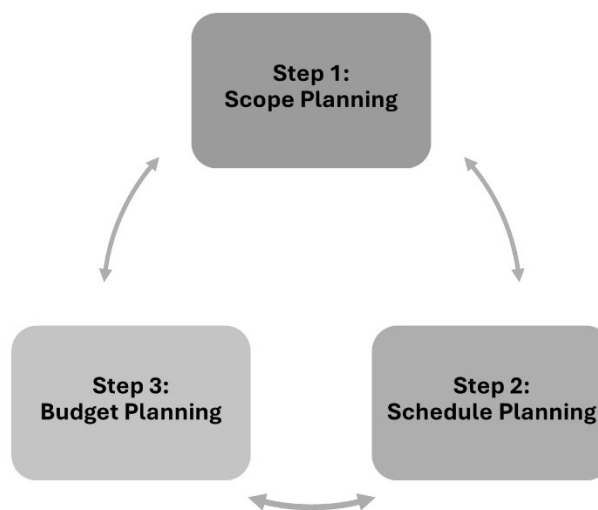


Figure 29: Planning for the Triple Constraint

Step 1: Scope Planning

The key to scope planning is identifying all the activities you must complete to deliver a successful project. This involves breaking down direct and indirect work required to achieve project goals. Without a clear, comprehensive, and detailed definition of activities, the project is at risk of unclear expectations and inaccurate estimates.

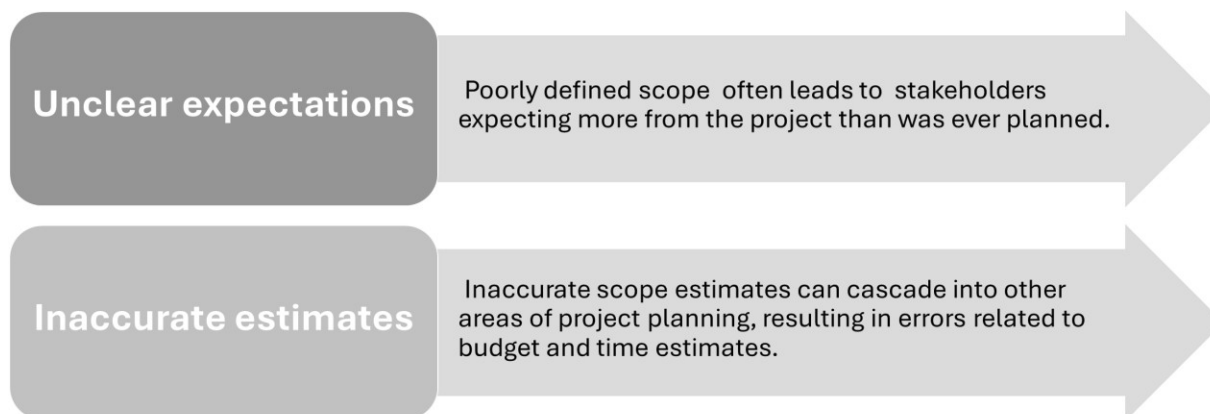


Figure 30: Unclear Expectations and Inaccurate estimates

The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is the main tool for identifying project activities. Using the WBS, the project team develops an activity list that comprehensively records all activities within the project scope.

Project scope – All the work (activities) required to deliver the project’s value (outputs and outcomes).

The Work Breakdown Structure is the primary tool project managers use to define project scope.

Work Breakdown Structure – A hierarchical decomposition of the work of a project.

Using the WBS, the project team develops an activity list that comprehensively identifies all of the activities – **direct** and **indirect** – within the project scope. Put simply, the WBS arranges the project scope in an outline, or hierarchy, of ‘work packages.’

Direct Work – Tasks and activities that directly contribute to the creation of specific project products and services. These activities contribute solely to the project’s objectives and can be traced to particular outcomes and outputs in the logframe.

Indirect Work – Tasks and activities that support the project but are not directly linked to creating specific deliverables.

The indirect work includes the tasks and activities necessary to support the implementation of a project but do not directly contribute to the creation of the project’s deliverables. These activities are essential for project coordination, administration, and control. Examples of indirect work might include (but not be limited to) activities like:

- **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement** – tasks might include developing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders (funder organizations, funders, communities, partners, others).
- **Purchasing, Logistics, and Asset Management** – tasks might include acquiring goods or services from external sources, typically involving selecting suppliers, negotiating contracts, arranging transport, and controlling materials and supplies.
- **Human Resources** – tasks related to hiring, training, and managing project staff and teams.

The example below illustrates a **partially developed** Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) for the Youth Haven Project. It features two top-level work packages, with subsequent levels outlining the activities necessary to accomplish those outputs. This WBS does not include all the details required for a complete WBS. Nevertheless, the graphic illustrates how a WBS offers a clear and organized list of activities, both direct and indirect, required to complete the work packages.

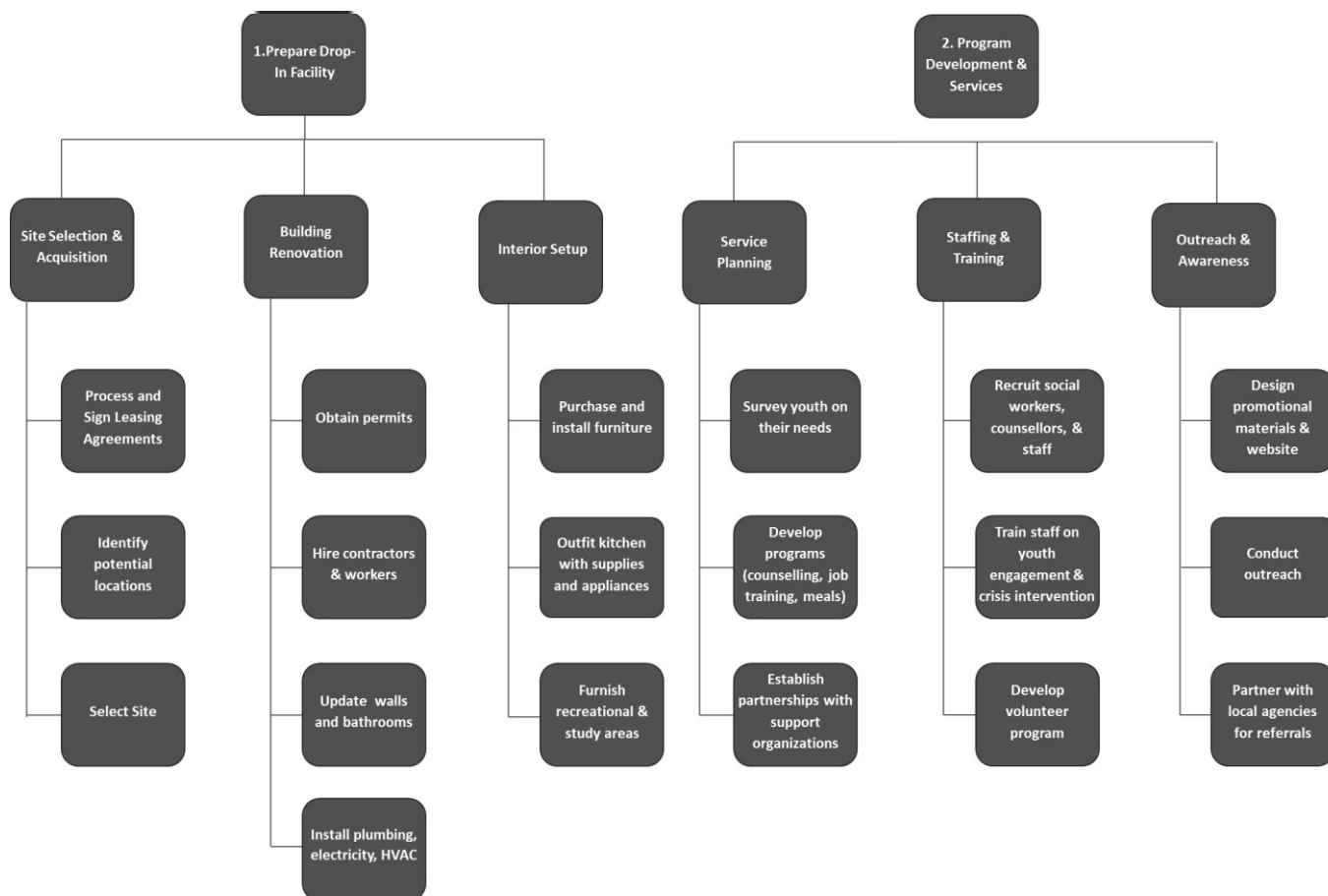


Figure 31: Youth Haven Project's WBS

The example above provides a WBS in graphical format. Teams can also choose to use an indented outline format. The figure on the side shows the same WBS information, presented in an outline format. It illustrates a work package from the Youth Haven Project and how activities are broken down into smaller sub-activities, although they are not yet sequenced.

Remember, the WBS is used only to plan project scope. However, the WBS's list of activities is a necessary input to the next two steps when planning for the triple constraint: Schedule Planning and Budget Planning.

Work Breakdown Structure Indented Format (partial buildout)

- 1 Prepare Drop-in Facility for Launch
 - 1.1 Site Selection and Acquisition
 - 1.1.1. Process and sign leasing agreements
 - 1.1.2. Identify potential locations
 - 1.1.3. Select site
 - 1.2 Building Renovation
 - 1.2.1. Obtain permits
 - 1.2.2. Etc.

Graphical Format or Indented Format?

There are advantages to each format. The graphical format is particularly well-suited for a participatory process, as everyone can contribute sticky notes to the tree and easily move them into groupings and pathways.

In contrast, the indented format is more convenient for users of project management software, even if it's just Microsoft Word since the work can be easily saved and uploaded to a document. However, generating a participatory process is significantly more challenging when using an indented format.

Step 2: Schedule Planning

Once the project's scope of activities is defined in the WBS, the team develops the schedule using a four-step process.

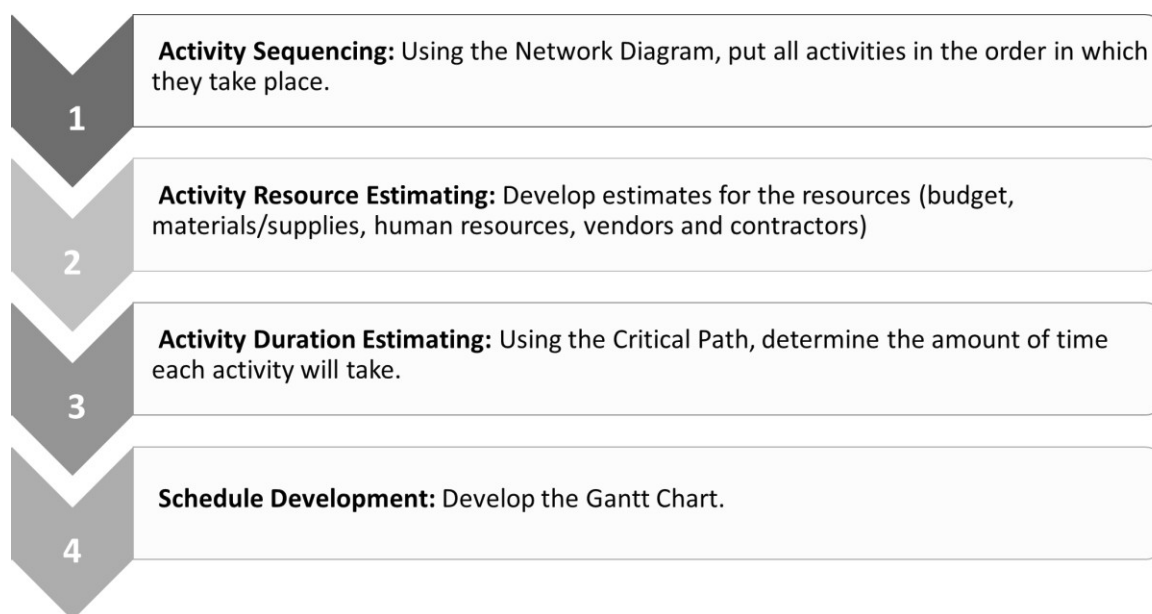


Figure 32: Schedule Planning

Activity Sequencing

The Network Diagram is a tool that helps project teams sequence the activities in the order they occur. It is also used to help with activity resource estimating and duration estimating, which comes in steps 3 and 4 of the schedule planning process.

Network Diagram – A visual representation of the sequence, relationships, and dependencies of the activities identified in the Work Breakdown Structure.

A Network Diagram is made up of several essential components:

- **Activities (Tasks)** – Represent the work to be done and are shown as boxes or nodes.

- **Dependencies** – Arrows (or lines) show the logical relationships between activities and define the sequence in which activities occur.
- **Paths** – A sequence of connected activities from start to finish.
 - **Linear path** (also called a **sequential path**) -- A sequence of activities where each task depends on the completion of the previous one before it can start.
 - **Parallel paths** occur when multiple activities can be carried out simultaneously because they do not depend on each other directly.

The graphic below illustrates an example of a Network Diagram for the Haven Youth Project. It outlines the sequence of activities required to deliver Work Package 2 (Program Development and Services).

Network Diagram to Sequence Program Development & Services

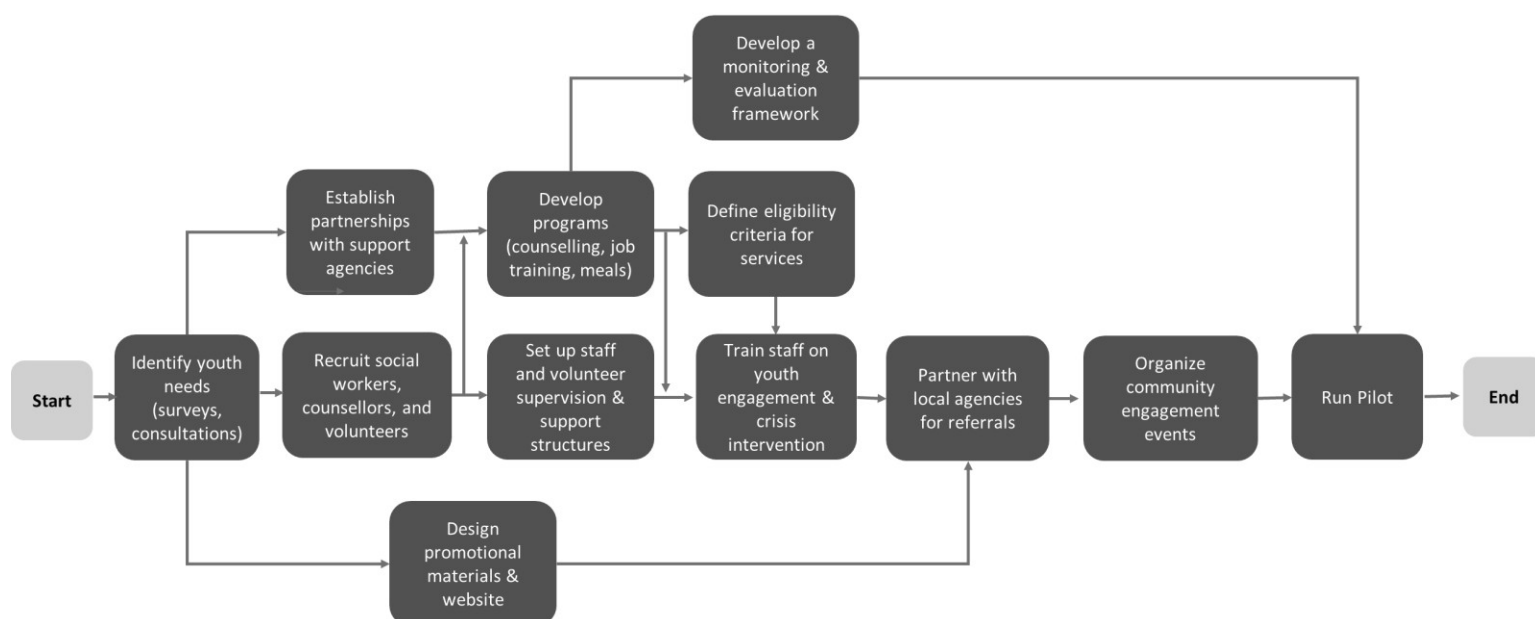


Figure 33: Network Diagram to Sequence Program Development & Services

As you can see from the example above, the Network Diagram helps the team clarify how the implementation will unfold by determining the order of activities. When developing the diagram, gaps may emerge — some activities not originally listed in the WBS may become apparent. In those cases, the scope plan will need to be revisited and updated.

Activity Resource Estimating

Once the sequence of activities is identified, it is tempting to move straight to estimating activity duration. However, you first must complete the important step of estimating resources.

There is a strong relationship between resource estimation and duration estimation. For example, if the Youth Haven Project needs to know how long it will take to reconfigure the walls and update the bathrooms of the

drop-in center, they first need to identify which resources they will dedicate to the activities. It generally takes one person longer to complete the work than it does for two. Furthermore, duration estimates vary considerably depending on whether the workers intend to share a single set of tools or have access to multiple tool sets.

For each activity in the Network Diagram, the project needs to consider what resources (staffing, equipment, and materials) will be dedicated to the task. Decisions relating to the number and quality of resources committed to an activity, in turn, are contingent on several factors, including (but not limited to) the following:

- **Time constraints**– Tight deadlines may require more staff, extended hours, or specialized contractors to speed up work. A flexible timeline allows for a gradual approach using fewer resources.
- **Budget constraints** – Funding constraints may compel the project to invest in a ‘low-cost’ resource mix. This could involve utilizing volunteers or part-time skilled labor, which may prolong project timelines.
- **Regulations and Policies** – Labor laws, staff policies, and health and safety regulations can restrict working hours or dictate project safeguarding requirements, thereby affecting resource planning.
- **Weather & Seasonal Factors** – Oncoming rain, snow, or cold weather might require that the project finish work by a certain date.
- **Material Availability** – Procurement challenges, material shortages, or logistical delays require that the project adjust its resource mix.
- **Human Resources Constraints** – Weak capacity might limit the productivity of staff or volunteers.

Were your Project Proposal Estimates Accurate?

As the team estimates resources, it’s also important to refer back to the original budget that was included in the project proposal. In many not-for-profit contexts, proposals are developed quickly – sometimes under pressure to meet funder deadlines or with limited data. As a result, once the team begins to estimate time and resource needs more thoroughly, they may discover that the proposal underestimated the true cost or duration of the work. If that happens, it’s essential to escalate the issue through the project’s governance structure. The triple constraint triangle reminds us that time, cost, and scope are interdependent, so adjustments may need to be made to one or more elements to keep the project viable and on track.

Activity Duration Estimating

Once you have identified the resources for your activities, you can use the Network Diagram to estimate activity durations. It is important that these time estimates are realistic! They should be based on available resources, known constraints, and lessons learned from past experience. Overly optimistic estimates can create stress, missed deadlines, and quality issues later in the project.

Returning to the Youth Haven Project, the team is now ready to include time estimates (in days) for the activities related to Work Package 2 (Program Development and Services), ensuring they reflect what is achievable within the current context.

Network Diagram (with duration estimates)

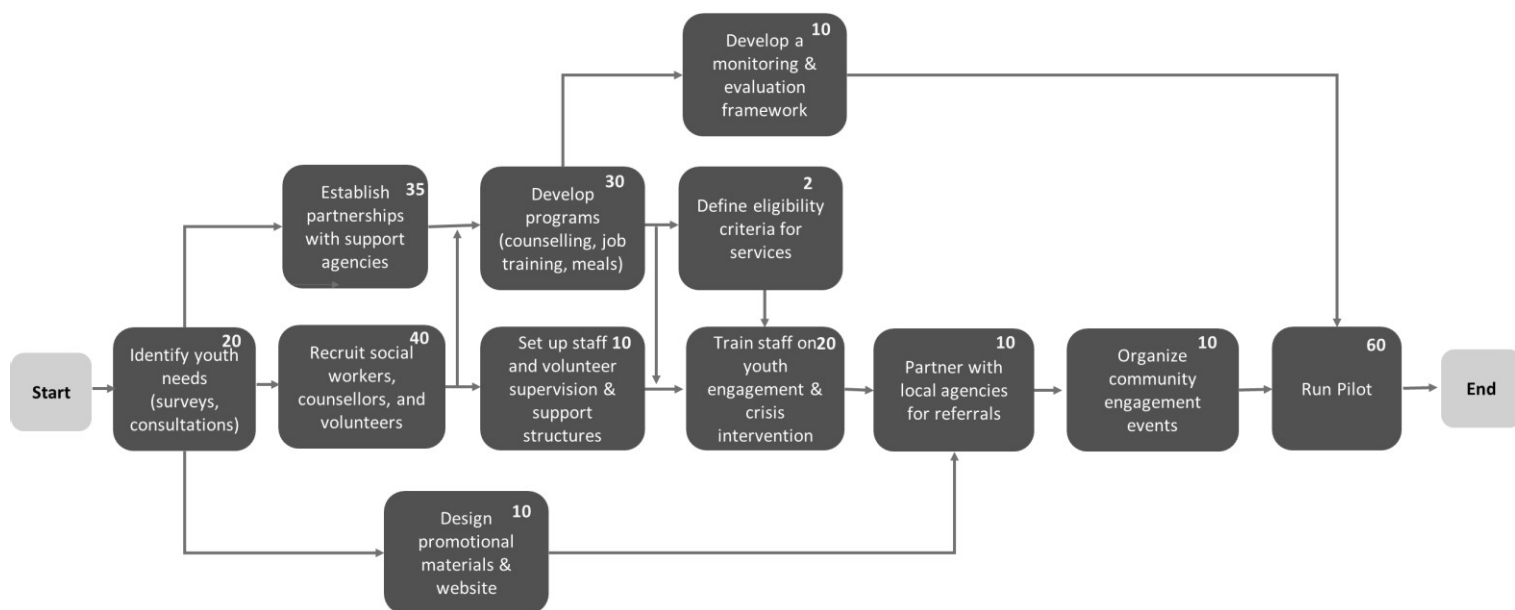


Figure 34: Network Diagram (with duration estimates)

Now that the Network Diagram includes duration estimates, the team can calculate the minimum amount of time needed to complete the work related to Work Package #2. They calculate this by identifying the Critical Path.

Critical Path - The series of tasks that determines the minimum amount of time required to complete project activities.

In the figure below, the Critical Path for Work Package #2 of the Youth Haven Project is represented by the activities in orange boxes. Why does the series of orange activities define the Critical Path? Because together they form the longest sequence of dependent activities in the Network Diagram.

Review the Critical Path and answer the following question: “What is the shortest amount of time we need to complete the activities for Work Package #2?”

Critical Path for Program Development & Services

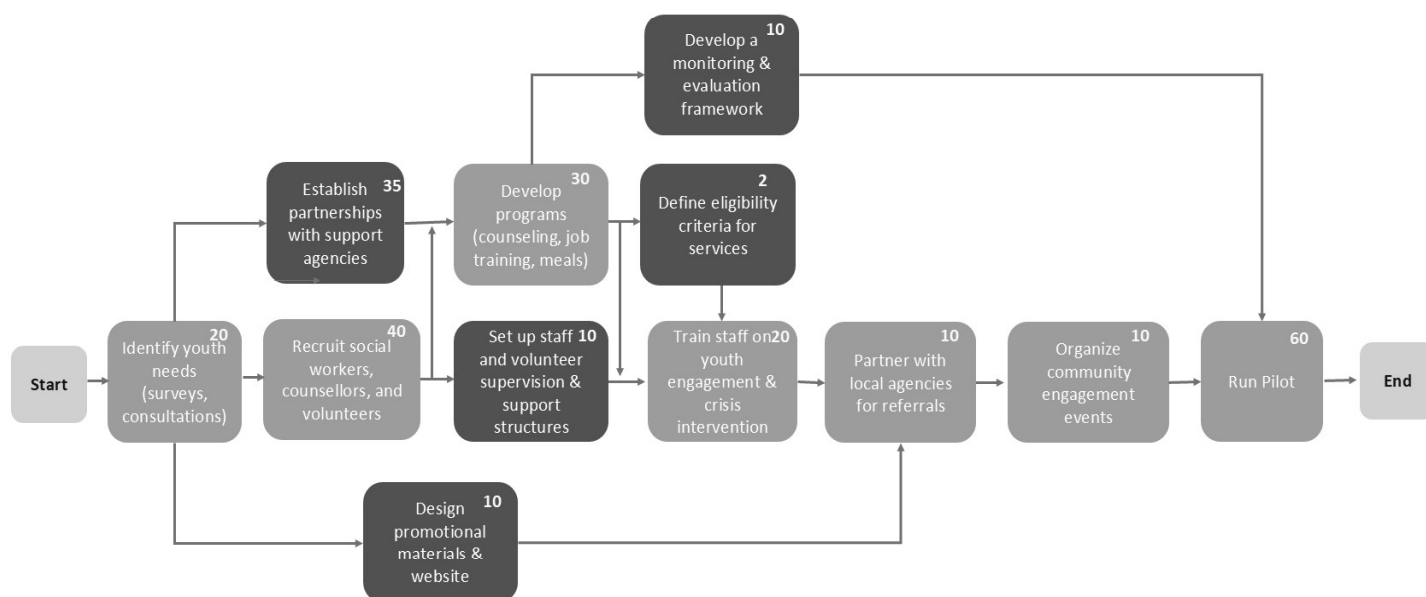


Figure 35: Critical Path

In this example, the Critical Path tells us that it is impossible to complete the Program Development & Services work in less than 190 days—unless other constraints in the project’s constraint triangle (time, cost/resources, or scope/quality) are adjusted.

The Critical Path also identifies areas where flexibility exists in managing the timing of calendar activities and where the timing is inflexible.

- **The timing of activities ON the Critical Path is inflexible** – These activities (orange boxes in the example above) cannot be delayed or extended without impacting the completion date.
- **The timing of activities OFF the Critical Path is flexible** – These activities (blue boxes) can be delayed or extended without necessarily impacting the completion date.

The extent to which a flexible activity can be extended or delayed is calculated by identifying its float.

Float - The amount of time an activity in a project network diagram can be delayed or extended without impacting the project completion date.

Let’s further explore the concept of float by examining two activities from the example above: “Train Staff on Youth Engagement” and “Develop Website and Promotional Materials”:

- “Train staff on youth engagement” is on the Critical Path, so that activity has zero float.
- “Develop Website and Promotional Materials” is not on the Critical Path, so it has float. How much float? The activity “Develop website and promotional materials” (10 days) takes place in parallel with “Train staff on youth engagement” (20 days). This means that the activity “Develop

website and promotional materials” has a float of 10 days and can be delayed or extended up to that amount of time before impacting the overall completion date.

Schedule Development

Once the work in the previous steps is complete, the project team is ready to develop the project schedule. One of the most commonly used tools for this purpose is the Gantt Chart.

Gantt Chart – A visual representation of the project schedule that uses horizontal bars to represent activity start dates, durations, and end dates.

One of the significant advantages of the Gantt Chart is its format. The Gantt Chart tool visually maps activities, dependencies, and timelines, making it easy to see how tasks relate to one another and identify where parallel processes exist. The graphic below provides a partially built out example of a Gantt Chart for the Haven Youth Project.

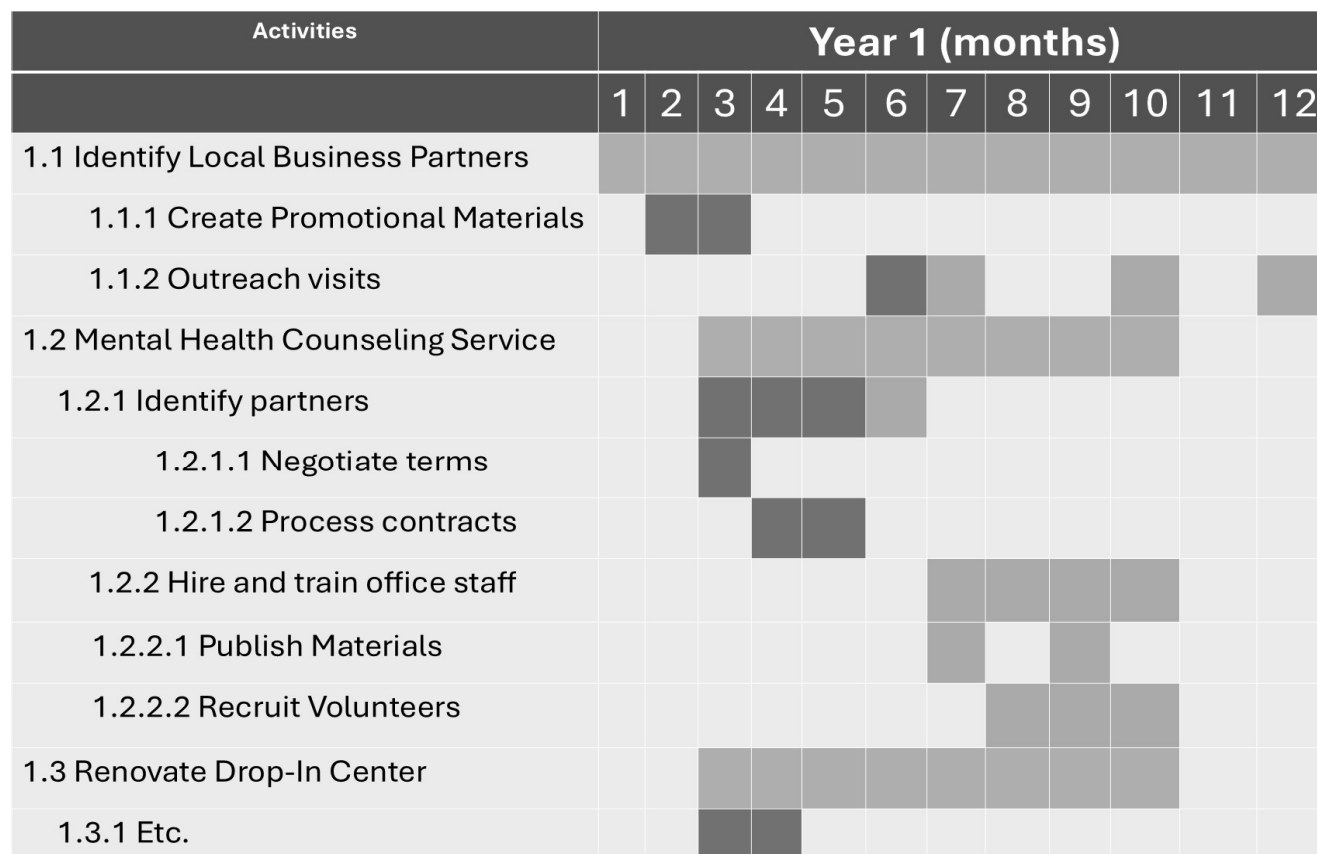


Figure 36: Gantt Chart

In the example, the work packages, tasks, and subtasks are on the y-axis (lines), and the timeline is on the x-axis (columns). The bars indicate when a task should start and when it will be finished. The outlined boxes provide the summary roll-up schedule for the work packages. Darker (blue) cells show tasks that have been completed. Light (blue) cells show work that still must be done. Orange cells represent groups of activities at the lower WBS level. Note that this Gantt Chart is designed to be updated, providing the project team with a

tool to indicate what activities are planned for which months and to offer a visual means to track which project activities are completed (and which are not).

One advantage of using a Gantt Chart is that it includes roll-up categories that are comprised of line items (tasks and activities). This can be helpful when using a Rolling-Wave Planning approach.

Roll-Up Categories Reflect the high-level calendar estimates of the Overall Implementation Plan

These categories represent the major deliverables of the project. They provide a bird's-eye view of the project timeline and are ideal for reporting to stakeholders and guiding strategic oversight.

Line item activities and tasks reflect the detailed calendar estimates of Stage Plans

Within each roll-up category, line activities and tasks provide a level of detail that is most often found in stage plans.

As you develop the Gantt Chart, always pause to perform sense checks to confirm the timeline is realistic. During these checks, explore questions like:

- *Does the timing of activities align with stakeholder availability?* If multiple activities rely on the participation of a single person or groups of people, factor in their schedules.
- *Does the Gantt Chart consider any schedule disruptions?* Will activity timing be affected by the upcoming holiday season? Are there conflicting priorities?
- *Does the Gantt Chart schedule adequate time for the project's indirect work?* For example, many projects assume that the direct work can commence on Day 1. This is seldom the case. It is impossible to begin the direct work without first completing critical indirect tasks such as hiring, purchasing, contracts, or permitting, which may not yet be complete.

Once finalized, the schedule serves as a baseline but is not static. Unexpected challenges, shifting priorities, new learning, or external factors may require the project to update the Gantt Chart. A good time to decide whether updates to the schedule are needed is during the Decision Gates (or during Stage Gates if you are using the Rolling Wave Planning approach). At each gate, you can conduct a structured review of the schedule where the team:

- Identifies whether schedule changes are needed.
- Analyzes any downstream implications of any proposed change
- Completes necessary change processes in accordance with funder agreements and/or the project charter
- Communicates schedule changes to relevant stakeholders.

Step 3: Budget Planning

Activity-Based Budgeting

Once you have a scope and schedule plan in place, you are ready to budget. Budgets come in many different formats, which is not surprising given their wide range of users and uses. However, when budgeting for projects, one of the most useful tools is the activity-based budget.

Activity-Based Budget - A budgeting method that estimates and allocates costs based on the specific activities required to complete a project or deliver a program.

Some of the advantages of using an Activity-based Budget for projects include:

- Costs are linked to what the project does (its activities), rather than just line items or departments.
- Budget forecasting is improved because the budget focuses on what resources each activity needs.
- Aligning the budget with the work plan is easier, improving the project's ability to:
 - Monitor the budget performance against work completed
 - Update the budget (if needed) to reflect changing estimates or project plans
 - Communicate with stakeholders.

Five steps need to be completed when developing an Activity-based budget:

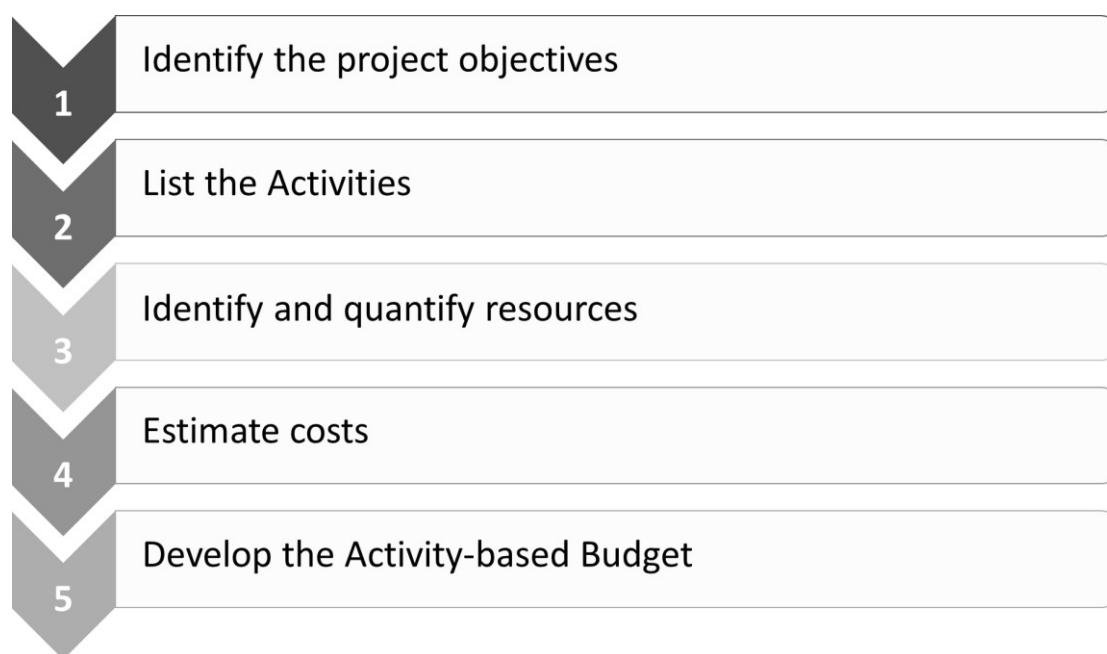


Figure 37: Steps to develop an Activity-based budget

The good news is that you have already completed most of the work related to steps 1-3. The project objectives were identified in the logframe, and the activities and resources were identified when developing the WBS and the Network Diagram.

So now let's focus on the last two steps in the budgeting process.

Estimating Costs

A project's budget is only as strong as its estimates... .. and cost estimating can be hard! Price fluctuations, regulations, and unforeseen challenges can adversely impact your planning. However, you can improve the accuracy of your estimates if you use a combination of three main techniques for estimating costs:

Top-Down Estimating – Estimates that are generated with the assistance of a relatively small group of people considered to be “experts.” They make their estimates based on their past experience and knowledge.

Bottom-Up Estimating—Estimates that are generated by stakeholders who know the project's operating context and challenges. These are often the same people who will be responsible for implementing project activities (including partners, suppliers, community members, etc.). Bottom-up estimating tends to involve a larger number of participants and requires more effort to manage.

Parametric Estimating – Estimates that are generated by using mathematical calculations based on historical data from other projects. For example, if you know laying one square meter of concrete historically costs \$80, then you can calculate a parametric estimate for laying 30 square meters of concrete. Parametric estimates tend to be used for projects and components that produce tangible outputs (for example, construction, translation services, etc.).

Using a combination of these approaches (triangulation) can result in more accurate, realistic estimates, ensuring financial sustainability and efficient resource allocation.

Another way to improve the accuracy of estimates is by using Three-Point Estimating.

Three-Point Estimating⁴ - A technique that accounts for uncertainty by considering a combination of optimistic, pessimistic, and likely scenarios.

Instead of relying on a single estimate, Three-Point Estimating calculates an **average cost projection** based on three estimates:

Optimistic Estimate (O) – Assumes everything goes smoothly, with minimal delays or extra costs.

Most Likely Estimate (M) – Based on the most realistic scenario, using standard assumptions.

Pessimistic Estimate (P) – Accounts for risks, delays, or cost overruns.

The **final estimate** is typically calculated using the **formula below**.

$$E = \frac{O + 4M + P}{6}$$

Three-Point Estimating reduces the risk of underestimating costs by providing a more realistic budget range that accounts for uncertainties. This method integrates risk management into cost estimation, making financial planning more adaptable to real-world challenges.

For the Youth Haven Project, the team used the following three-point estimating method to calculate the estimated costs of renovation activities.

⁴ Three-Point Estimating can be used for estimates of both costs and time.

Optimistic estimate (O) → If materials are donated and contractors work quickly → **\$40,000**

Most likely estimate (M) → If standard costs and timelines apply → **\$50,000**

Pessimistic estimate (P) → If delays, supply shortages, or unexpected issues arise → **\$65,000**



Based on the information above, the Havenford Cares teams make a 3-point estimate of \$50,833 (based on the calculation below).

$$E = \frac{40000 + (4 \times 50000) + 65000}{6} \text{ so } E = \frac{305000}{6} \text{ therefore } E = 50,833$$

The project team knows there is a lot of uncertainty associated with the renovation activities. So, instead of using the Most Likely Estimate of \$50,000, they choose to adjust the estimate to \$50,833 to account for potential risks and fluctuations.

Developing the Activity-Based Budget

The example below provides a partially built-out example of the Activity-based Budget for the Youth Haven Project. Familiarize yourself with the layout and contents, then refer to the table below the budget for an explanation of each column and how it works.

Activities	Costs per quarter				Total	Activity Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
1.1 Direct Project Costs						
OFFICE EQUIPMENT						
1. Computers	2,000	2,000			4,000	
2. Tablets	500				500	
3. Office Furniture	3,000				3,000	
					subtotal	7,500
TEAM RECRUITMENT						
1. Project Coordinator	800	800	800	800	3,200	
2. Office Staff	200	300	300	300	1,100	
					subtotal	11,800
1.2 Stakeholder Engagement						
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS						

Activities	Costs per quarter				Total	Activity Total	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
1. Prepare presentation materials		5,000			5,000		
2. Prepare video	1,000	1,000	4,000		6,000		
2. Stationery			200	200	400		
3. Refreshments			100	100	200		
					Subtotal	11,600	
TOTAL							30,900

Table 30: Activity-Based Budget

The table below describes the contents found in each column in a budget worksheet.

Column Heading	Description
<i>Description</i>	This column briefly describes each activity included in the budget and the resources needed to complete each activity. The description of the resource item should be specific and concise.
<i>Cost per quarter</i>	Breaking down costs by time period is useful when creating an activity-based budget because it allows for more accurate cash flow management, easier budget monitoring, and improved alignment between the project budget and the Gantt Chart.
<i>Total</i>	The total for each budget line is calculated by multiplying the two quantity columns and the unit price column: No. units x No. times x Unit cost = Total The costs of all activities can then be added together to create a sub-total. For example, row B shows that the workshop activity will cost \$46,780.
<i>Activity Total</i>	Cells in this column provide a roll-up category total of all costs related to line items within that activity or category.

Table 31: Budget worksheet content description

Finalizing the Scope, Schedule, and Budget Plans

Remember, it is unlikely that a project will get its scope, schedule, and budget planning right the first time. Once you complete the first round of planning, you will need to check whether the three plans are aligned and balanced. Do this by asking questions like, *“Is there enough budget to complete the scope of activities? Is the scope of activities too large for the calendar allotted? Do we need more money if we want to meet our deadlines?”*

Depending on the answer to these questions, you will need to revisit one or more plans. The process is iterative, and you will need to engage in a cycle of planning, reviewing, adjusting, and replanning until the sides of the triple constraint triangle are aligned and balanced.

Project Management Principles ITERATIVE

Planning for the triple constraint iterative by nature. The Project Manager, along with key stakeholders from inside and outside the organization – will need to repeatedly plan, review, adjust, and replan until the sides of the triple constraint triangle are aligned and balanced. As you navigate this process, remember to identify which constraints are fixed (inflexible) before you begin and which constraints are flexible.

4.3 Planning Beyond the Triple Constraints

In project management, "plans are comprehensive" means that all key aspects of the project, including both direct and indirect work, are addressed in the project plan. Furthermore, the Project Plan should provide a **detailed** description of the work. These guiding principles are essential because incomplete plans lead to confusion, delays, cost overruns, and project failure.

In this section, we will introduce several processes and tools that projects can use to help ensure that their plans are comprehensive and detailed in the areas of work that are critical to project success.

These areas of work include:

- MEAL planning
- Stakeholder Engagement planning
- Supply Chain Management Planning
- Communications planning
- Internal Controls planning
- Human Resources planning

Occasionally, projects, especially ones that are large, complex, and high-risk, might choose to break out one or more of these areas of planning into a supplementary stand-alone plan. If this is the case, the Project Manager

remains responsible for ensuring consistency and alignment between the supplementary plan(s) and the overarching Project Plan.

MEAL Planning

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning are cornerstones of any successful project. A well-structured MEAL plan requires careful consideration to ensure that project performance is tracked accurately and that decisions are based on real data.

Monitoring

Monitoring focuses on the operational aspects of the project, answering key questions such as:

- Are activities being completed as planned?
- Are outputs being produced as anticipated?
- Is the project progressing as projected?
- Where are the gaps between what was planned and what is actually happening?

Establishing a transparent monitoring process, even in resource-constrained environments, can help the project team ensure continuous, ongoing oversight, timely decision-making, and greater accountability.

Monitoring gives the Project Manager insights into project performance across key areas, including budget, schedule, risk, quality, and deliverables. It is primarily conducted at the activity and output levels, ensuring that day-to-day operations align with the broader project objectives.

What	A continuous review of project progress at the activity and output levels Identify necessary corrective action Analyze the current situation Identify issues and find solutions
Why	Discover trends and patterns Keep project activities on schedule Measure progress against outputs Make decisions about human, financial and material resources
When	Continuous
How	Field visits Records Reports

Table 32: MEAL Planning - Monitoring

The primary tool used to plan your project monitoring activities is the project's Performance Management Plan (PMP). While this plan will vary in format, regardless of the template you use, your PMP should answer the following questions:

- What are the indicators?
- How are the indicators defined?
- Who is responsible for collecting data on the indicators?
- When will data collection activities take place?

- How will data be analyzed?
- How will data be used?

The format of the project’s Performance Management Plan should be simple and clear. It is most often a table into which relevant information is first inserted, pulled directly from the project Logframe, and then completed as the team plans its work in detail.

The graphic below provides an example of a partially filled Performance Management Plan. Notice that the table contains the Objective Statements and Indicators found in the logframe, but it provides additional information **not** included in the logframe. This includes information related to data collection, analysis, and the use of the data.

Performance Management Plan							
Objectives statements	Indicators (with definitions as needed)	Data collection				Means of analysis	Use of information
		Method	How often	Who Collects	Who Responds		
1. Unhoused youth have access to a comfortable, welcoming, and safe place that provides facilities and services during daytime hours	80% of unhoused youth report feeling safer as a result of access to the drop-in center in Y3	Survey	semi-yearly	PM	General unhoused youth population	% (broken down by gender)	Funder Reports Monthly newsletters
1.1 Center opened with facilities for bathroom, shower, laundry facilities, computer, phone, wi-fi, and meals	25 youth/day use the drop-in center facilities by Y3	Visitor log	daily	Front Desk	Drop-in Center Clients	Average (broken down by gender)	Funder Reports Monthly newsletters City Census
2. Unhoused youth have the financial resources to obtain stable housing	60% of employed youth have resources to obtain stable housing by Y3	Self-reported status	quarterly	Jobs Lead	Jobs Program Clients	%	Funder Reports
2.1 Increased access to employment that pays a living wage	2.1 5 youth/month matched with stable employment via the job training and job placement programs	Survey		Jobs Lead	Jobs Program Clients	average	Funder Reports
Etc.							

Table 33: Performance Management Plan

As you review the PMP example, notice the following:

- The document does not include information related to the goal or activity statements, because it is unlikely your project will track that level of progress.
- The indicators column includes a parenthetical statement that reads “(with definitions as needed)” Indicator definitions are critical to ensuring that you write SMART indicators. If an indicator is unclear, it is not SPECIFIC; therefore, the indicator is not SMART.

For example, the indicator for Outcome 1 intends to measure whether unhoused youth “feel safer.” This is a subjective term that can be interpreted in many ways. A strong definition of that indicator will help to ensure that the data collector and the respondents clearly understand what “feeling safer” means.

Evaluation

Project evaluation focuses on assessing progress at the higher levels of the logical framework, particularly at the outcome level. Rather than tracking day-to-day activities, evaluations aim to answer broader questions such as:

- Is the project successfully achieving its intended outcomes?
- Is the project contributing to its overarching goal?

Unlike monitoring, which is continuous and operational, evaluation occurs less frequently and often necessitates a more formal approach. Evaluation activities typically involve in-depth data collection and analysis, sometimes led by technical advisors or external evaluators, to provide objective insights into project effectiveness and impact. The higher we go up the logframe, the harder it becomes to measure progress. This is why it is important to be clear about what we are trying to evaluate, why, when, and how.

What	Gathering and analyzing information to determine: Progress toward delivery of activities/outputs, and contributing to achievement of outcomes/goals.
Why	To measure project effectiveness To determine whether outcomes have been achieved To learn how well things are being done To learn lessons for future improvement
When	Periodically (the frequency depends on the resources the project is willing to invest)
How	Internal Evaluations External Evaluations

Table 34: MEAL Planning - Evaluation

The project can adopt several approaches if an evaluation is planned for the project. Each type of evaluation serves a specific purpose and is conducted at a particular stage of the project cycle:

Mid-term evaluations occur approximately midway through a project’s implementation and serve as a structured checkpoint to:

- Assess progress toward objectives and determine if the project is on track
- Identify challenges and bottlenecks that may require corrective action
- Evaluate the effectiveness of project strategies and make recommendations for improvement
- Reassess assumptions in the logical framework and adjust plans as needed

Mid-term evaluations are particularly useful for longer-term or complex projects, as they provide an opportunity to correct course and refine implementation while the project is still in progress.

Final evaluations are conducted toward the end of the project and typically seek to answer:

- Did the project achieve its intended outcomes and impact?
- Was the project relevant, effective, and efficient?
- Does the project have potential for long-term sustainability?
- Did the logical framework’s assumptions hold true?

These evaluations help assess overall project success, providing valuable insights for future initiatives.

Ex-post evaluations assess project impact after completion, often one or more years after the project ends. Sometimes referred to as sustainability impact evaluations, they measure:

- To what extent have project outcomes been sustained?
- Have communities or stakeholders taken ownership of the results?

These evaluations provide valuable evidence for improving development approaches. For example, an ex-post evaluation of a project to support unhoused youth found that establishing partnerships between local hospitals and social service providers improved the long-term impact of the project investments.

Regardless of the evaluation approach, it is important to understand any evaluation requirements from funders. The approach to the evaluation, its evaluation questions, and possibly even the staffing structure may all be mandated. It is critical that the team and any MEAL specialists are aware of these requirements right from the beginning of the project.

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle

THE SUMMARY EVALUATION TABLE

In many ways, an evaluation is a project in itself. Like all projects, the first question to answer should be, “What is the purpose of the evaluation? What information do we need? And what resources are available to support evaluation activities?” The following Summary Evaluation Table may be helpful in answering these questions.

Evaluation purpose (performance, impact, etc.)	Priority evaluation questions	Timing (midterm, final, etc.)	Anticipated evaluation start and completion		Evaluation budget
			Start	End	

Accountability

Accountability is not just about writing reports — it is about actively listening, engaging, and responding to the needs and feedback of those impacted by the project. Accountable projects are more relevant, more likely to be supported by stakeholders, and ultimately will have a greater impact.

Projects embrace accountability by promoting:

- **Transparent communications:** Sharing monitoring and evaluation information and results with communities, partners, funders, and other stakeholders.
- **Alignment with standards:** Demonstrating that project work has complied with agreed funder requirements, sector standards, and MEAL best practices.
- **Responsiveness:** Establishing channels through which stakeholders can voice feedback, ideas, suggestions, and complaints and commit to providing an appropriate response on how their input is informing project decisions.
- **Participation:** Encouraging varying degrees of contributions from different types of stakeholders in initiating, defining the parameters for, and conducting MEAL.

Learning

Learning is not a one-time event—it should be integrated throughout the life of the project. Establishing dedicated reflection points allows the team and stakeholders to regularly assess progress using monitoring data, stakeholder feedback, and implementation updates. Decision Gates can provide structured opportunities to use the latest learning to inform project plan updates iteratively and responsively.

A culture of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote an environment that encourages open, honest relationships and a commitment to continual learning and improvement. ● Create a safe space to challenge assumptions constructively. ● Identify and support critical thinkers and encourage their active participation in MEAL processes. ● Identify the specific learning attitudes, skills and knowledge that your project needs to promote continual learning.
Embedded learning processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include “learning and reflection” as an agenda item for all MEAL team and project-related meetings. Your MEAL tools, such as the IPTT, are a good starting point for these discussions. ● Include learning prompts in regular monitoring tools designed as part of your MEAL data gathering system. ● Incorporate after-action reviews, learning-to-action discussions and other learning events as part of key implementation activities.⁵
The capacity of staff and partners to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify specific training activities for staff, partners, and other stakeholders on the basic principles and practices of learning and adaptive management. ● Ensure that staff are trained in facilitating intentional group learning processes.

⁵ For more information on after action reviews, see USAID. 2013. [After-action review guidance](#).

Sharing learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate sharing activities with wider communications planning so that learning is included in meetings or conferences, published reports, or information-sharing tools appropriate to your context.
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Table 35: Practical examples of how to plan for and invest in learning

Documenting your learning plans is critical to making sure learning happens. Documentation helps you turn good intentions into practical action. As with many of the tools described above, the tool you use to document your learning planning varies depending on your context (resources, requirements, etc.). No matter what tool you use, your learning plan should include:

- **Activity or process:** A concise description of the specific activity or process.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** The roles and responsibilities of the office or staff member responsible for leading the activity or process.
- **Expected outcomes:** The intended outcome for each action item describing the anticipated changes resulting from implementing the identified activity or process.
- **Timeline:** The key milestones and deadlines for the activity or process. This timeline should be linked to project implementation calendars.
- **Resources:** The resources (including staff time, mechanisms, implementing partners, funding, etc.) needed to implement the action item. This planning should be completed in coordination with overall project planning to make sure these resources are made available.

Activity or process	Responsible	Expected outcomes	Timeline	Resources
Improving the learning culture				
Embedding learning processes				
Investing in the capacity to learn				
Encouraging the sharing of learning				

Table 36: Learning plan template

Internal Controls

An important responsibility of a Project Manager is ensuring that project resources are protected, decisions are accountable, and operations are compliant and efficient.

Internal controls - Policies, procedures, and processes that help ensure the integrity of financial and operational information, safeguard assets, prevent fraud, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

Areas that benefit from internal controls include:

- **Human Resources Capacity and Systems**
 - Are Human Resources policies documented and in compliance with local laws and organizational regulations?
 - Do systems exist for timesheets, performance reviews, and employee separation?
- **Procurement**
 - Do systems exist to select suppliers?
 - Do supplier selection criteria exist?
 - Do systems exist to manage suppliers?
 - Do similar systems exist for consultants?
- **Financial**
 - Do systems exist for cash management? Expense management? Financial reporting?
 - Is there a segregation of duties for financial roles?
- **Inventory**
 - Do systems exist for the identification and tracking of inventory?
 - Do systems exist for equipment use/transfer/disposal following project closure?
- **Safeguarding**
 - Do systems exist to identify and manage safeguarding risks (especially for children and vulnerable adults)?
 - Are staff trained in safeguarding policies and reporting procedures?
 - Do systems exist to report, document, and respond to safeguarding concerns or incidents?
- **Protection and Privacy**
 - Are data protection policies in place that align with national laws?
 - Are systems in place to ensure the secure collection, storage, and sharing of personal data?
 - Do staff receive training on data privacy and responsible data handling?
 - Are there procedures for obtaining informed consent when collecting personal or sensitive data?
- **Information Management**
 - Is there a record-keeping system (paper/electronic) in place?
 - Do policies and standards exist for information management?
 - Are documents, contracts, and receipts accessible to meet the audit requirements of the project?
- **Regulations and Compliance**
 - Do procedures and policies exist to ensure the project follows relevant laws, regulations, and standards?

As a project begins, the Project Manager must be aware of existing internal control processes required by their organization or funder and ensure they are effectively integrated into the project plan. Where gaps exist, additional controls may need to be developed to meet compliance, efficiency, and risk management standards. Ensure that the project Gantt Chart and Budget reflect any activities and resources required to implement these internal control processes and activities.

While internal controls provide critical safeguards, they must be balanced with operational efficiency. Overly rigid or excessive controls can slow down processes, increase complexity, and reduce productivity without adding real value. The goal is to establish strong yet practical controls that protect the project while allowing it to function effectively.

Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Plans

In project management, we often focus on tools, timelines, budgets, and deliverables. But behind every milestone reached and every risk mitigated is one central factor: people. Without the right people — and effective leadership, management, and collaboration — even the most technically sound project plan can fail. That is why planning for communication and stakeholder engagement is a key to project success.

Communication and stakeholder engagement don't happen automatically. Specific plans need to be in place that outline how we intend to communicate with stakeholders and how they will be engaged in the project's work.

Communication Planning

Projects communicate with many audiences, through many channels. These include:

- Narrative and Financial Reports
- Regular Meetings
- Press Releases and External Publications
- And more.

These communications are critical to project success and should not be left to chance. The Project Plan needs to include information that answers the following questions:

- Who needs information? (Stakeholder or stakeholder group)
- What information do they need? (Reports, updates, meetings, etc.)
- How often do they need it? (Weekly, monthly, quarterly, on an ad-hoc basis)
- In what format should it be shared? (Emails, reports, social media, presentations, newsletters, verbal briefings, etc.)
- Who is responsible for delivering the communication? (Project Manager, Communications Officer, Senior Leadership, etc.)

Returning to the Youth Haven Project example, the team developed the following Communication Plan example.

Stakeholder	Method	Rationale	Information Needs	Frequency	Responsible Team Member
Public Awareness & Community Engagement					
Media	Kick-off event & press release	Announcing the opening of the drop-in center	Background and key data	NA	Communications Officer
Community	Social Media	Info. sharing	Regular updates on services available.	Monthly	Communications Officer
Community	Community Meetings	Engage local residents, service users, and partner organizations	Updates on services, Feedback on issues raised	Quarterly	Project Manager
Funder/Funder Communication					
Funders	Email updates	Inform funders on successes and progress	Info. on progress, successes, and challenges	Biweekly	Communications Officer
Major funders and funding organizations	Financial and narrative reports	- Grant requirement - Highlight longer-term successes	- Finance info. - MEAL data	Every Six Months	Project Manager
Government & Stakeholder Engagement					
City Council	Mid/End-Year Presentation	Advocacy and maintain support	MEAL data Testimonials Images	Six Months	Project Manager
Local Shelters and Support Orgs.	Coordination Meetings	Ensure referrals and service alignment.	Progress Updates and Challenges	Monthly	Project Manager
Internal Communications					
Staff	Team meetings	Discuss operational issues and risks and service delivery improvements	Meeting Agenda Risk Register Issues Log	Weekly	Project Manager

Volunteers	Online Community	Information on opportunities	NA	Ongoing	HR
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Table 37: Communication Planning

As you see in the example, the Project Plan needs to include comprehensive information related to how the project will ensure that audiences receive the right information at the right time. This includes communications with both external stakeholders (media, funders, community members, other agencies, etc.) and internal stakeholders (staff, volunteers). The plan should also identify various communication methods best suited to the messages and audiences (reports, presentations, social media, online communities, etc.).

Stakeholder Engagement

The project plan should also consider how it plans to engage stakeholders actively as the project progresses. Some stakeholders, particularly project participants, will be engaged directly through project activities (e.g., youth attending the drop-in center are engaged simply by accessing services). However, other stakeholders may require dedicated engagement strategies. For example, if a delivery partner is responsible for a project component, scheduling monthly coordination meetings can help maintain alignment and collaboration. If local government buy-in is crucial, engagement efforts might include inviting officials to visit the project site or involving them in an advisory committee.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan below can help to structure our engagement with different stakeholders. Once the engagement activities are identified, be sure to dedicate time and budget for them in the project schedule and budget.



Stakeholder	Role in Activity	Interest in Activity	Engagement	Follow-up
Mayor of Havenford	Provide an opening speech for the project launch.	Participation will provide exposure for the community and demonstrate the city's commitment to the drop-in center.	Coordinate and communicate about the project purpose through an official letter, followed by a meeting to request buy-in and participation in the launch.	Send an official thank-you letter and include their role in the activity in the official press release. Have a follow-up meeting with official(s) to answer any questions and request their engagement in future activities.

Table 38: Stakeholder Engagement

When identifying who needs to be actively engaged by the project, don't forget to refer back to the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix and the Interest/Influence Grid introduced earlier in the Stakeholder Analysis section of the Project Identification and Definition phase.

Supply Chain Planning

While there are many definitions of Supply Chain, this Guide adheres to a relatively simple definition.

Supply Chain - An integrated system that manages the procurement of goods and services, the logistics of transporting and delivering materials, and the tracking and utilization of assets needed to complete a project.

However, failing to plan for the supply chain can lead to serious issues. Depending on the project, the value of these assets can amount to a significant percentage of the total project value. In projects like those, it is easy to imagine the problems that arise from inadequate procurement and logistics planning.

To help avoid these problems, plan for procurement and logistics in a participatory manner. Ensure that you involve stakeholders with knowledge and experience in these areas (finance staff, purchasing staff, suppliers, etc.).

Procurement Planning

Procurement is the process of sourcing and acquiring the supplies, equipment, and services a project needs to succeed.

Supplies - Consumable items used in the daily operations of a business, but not part of the final product (e.g., office paper, cleaning products).

Equipment - Long-term assets used to carry out operations or production, typically with a higher cost and longer lifespan (e.g., machinery, computers, vehicles).

Services - The work carried out by external vendors or consultants to support the project (e.g., training, legal advice, tradesmen).

Procurement aims to secure the best value, not just price, when acquiring project supplies, materials, equipment, and services, while ensuring quality, timeliness, and risk management.

It is advisable to create a Procurement Plan whenever the project requires that items be purchased from suppliers. A good Procurement Plan will go one step further by describing the process you will go through to appoint those suppliers contractually. The steps in procurement planning include:

- Defining the items you need to procure
- Defining the process for acquiring those items
- Scheduling the timeframes for delivery

Keep in mind that procurement often involves long lead times, especially for large purchases or contracted services. This reality is often overlooked in the Project Plan, so it is extremely important that the procurement

calendar be aligned with the overall project Gantt Chart. This helps avoid situations where the project's work is delayed due to the procurement process taking longer than expected.

Logistics Planning

Once project assets are procured, the work isn't over. Next, the project needs to plan and manage the logistics process.

In its most limited sense, logistics planning involves:

Transport planning helps ensure that all project materials and supplies are delivered accurately, efficiently, and on schedule to the intended destination and recipient.

Storage planning helps ensure the secure and stable storage of materials and supplies until needed.

Asset Management Planning

All project equipment, supplies, and other property financed or provided by the project should be considered a project asset. As such, the project should identify a policy of asset management whereby materials of value to the project are monitored, maintained, and disposed of in a manner consistent with the requirements of the organization and/or the project funder(s).

Project Management Principles PARTICIPATORY

Engage a variety of internal stakeholders when developing the project plan. This is especially true when planning work related to procurement, logistics, human resources, Information Technology, and Communication.

Internal departments bring critical technical knowledge and operational insights. For example:

- Finance can validate budgets, flag funding restrictions, and ensure cost estimates are realistic.
- Procurement can advise on lead times, vendor processes, and compliance requirements.
- Human Resources can provide information on recruitment timelines and staff availability.

Without their input, plans may include unrealistic assumptions or overlook key constraints, increasing the risk of delays or failure.

Human Resource Planning

As we observed previously, people drive project success, making Human Resource (HR) planning essential. The Project Manager must ensure the right people with the right skills are hired, onboarded, and supported at the right time.

A comprehensive Project Plan will consider and reflect all of the work related to recruiting, training, and managing project staff.

- Who is needed? (Full-time, part-time, consultants, volunteers?)
- When are they needed? (At the start, midway, or later in implementation?)
- How will they be recruited? (Internal hiring, external recruitment, secondment?)
- What will their responsibilities be? (Key tasks and decision-making authority?)
- Remember, just like procurement activities, hiring staff takes time and involves many activities:
- Placing Job advertisements, application deadlines
- Interviewing candidates
- Selecting finalists
- Approving final hires and processing contracts
- Providing time for candidates to transition to the new job.

The time required and resources to complete all these activities must be aligned with the overall project Gantt Chart and Budget. Too often, projects assume that the direct work of the project can start immediately after the project is approved, when it is impossible to start activities if the project staff are not yet on board.

Closure Planning

During the Setup phase, the project decides what the project closure strategy will be:

- Will the project be completely closed?
- Will project products and services transition into ongoing operations? Who will take over those operations?
- Will the project be extended? Expanded? Redesigned?

Regardless of the end-of-project strategy chosen, the project plan needs to identify the activities, time, and budget required to support the work related to the end of the project.

You might ask yourself why you need to plan for closure now. Because many Project Managers mistakenly assume that end-of-project activities only begin during the final weeks of the project. That is not the case. In many cases, the end-of-project activities begin very early in the life of the project.

Planning for Sustainability

For example, if the project is being handed over to someone else to run (an organization or a community group) after the project ends, a number of activities need to take place to prepare for that transition. You can't just pass the project over during the last months of its life. Early on, you need to start implementing activities that help ensure that the project outputs and services are sustainable in the long run.

For example, Havenford Cares intends to transition the products and services related to the Youth Haven Project into a long-term service delivery model. This means their project plan must include activities and resources focused on preparing the center to operate independently after the project ends. Some of the activities they include in the plan are:

Developing a financial sustainability strategy

Throughout the life of the project, activities will be planned and resources allocated for fundraising. This includes tasks and time related to applying for grants, raising donations (both individual and corporate), and negotiating government awards.

Planning for workforce transition

Workshops are scheduled to identify roles (e.g., the Center Administrator, outreach workers, social workers) that need to be maintained following project closure, determine whether new positions (such as a fundraising officer) are required, and assess how to balance staff with volunteers to control costs.

Creating and training a long-term governance structure

Strong governance is essential for maintaining service delivery after the project concludes. Havenford Cares must plan and allocate resources for activities related to establishing a new Board and developing internal policies to guide decision-making.

Planning for Financial and Administrative Closure

The Project Plan should also include the activities, budget, and time needed to complete all of the work the project inevitably needs to complete in its final weeks. These categories of work include:

- **Reporting** – List the reports that need to be delivered at project end. This could include the final funder report (narrative and financial), any government-required reports, and an internal closing report for your organization capturing key learnings. By identifying these now, you can help ensure that your data collection during the project will feed into them, and that time is carved out to write the reports.
- **Administrative Closure**—Identify the activities, time, and resources needed for administrative tasks that must be completed at the end of the project. For example, you might need to address any audit requirements, close out contracts with vendors, and plan for staff termination or rollover.
- **Financial Closure** – Plan for the final reconciliation of financial accounts and identify how you will deal with any remaining balances.
- **Communication** – Plan how you will communicate the project’s closure to different stakeholders. Service users should know well in advance when and how services will conclude or continue under new management. Funders should receive a thank-you and a summary of achievements. The general public or wider community might be informed via an event or press release highlighting the project’s accomplishments and formally marking its closure.
- **Documentation and Knowledge Management** – Plan to compile and archive important documents and data: final datasets, a compendium of project materials (training manuals, curricula, outreach materials, etc.), and a lessons-learned document. It’s wise to schedule a final lessons-learned workshop with the project team and other key stakeholders towards the end. Planning for this now means you won’t forget to do it in the rush of closing out.
- **Resource Disposition** – Decide what happens to project assets at the end. If you’re transferring assets to a partner, this could be part of the handover, or it could involve returning equipment to your organization’s inventory or donating/selling items.

By addressing these elements in a Closure Plan, you essentially create a to-do list for the final phase of the project. During implementation, you might refine the plan (especially if things change or an extension occurs), but at least you have a roadmap for closing from the beginning.

Importantly, include key closure activities and milestones in your project schedule from the beginning. If you know that the project closing workshop should occur three months before the end of the project, mark it in the schedule. If a final inventory check takes a week, reserve that time as well. This ensures that the team and stakeholders view closure as a planned part of the project rather than an afterthought. If your project utilizes a Rolling Wave Planning approach, consider designating the last weeks of the project as a stage focused on closure.

Project Management Principles ADAPTIVE

The Iterative Dynamic of Planning and Implementation

Did you notice that the Project Life Cycle represents Project Planning as one half of a circular loop process? That is because the Project Planning and Project Implementation phases are iterative.

Projects change, and your project plans need to adapt to those changes. As a Project Manager, you will need to monitor new risks, issues, opportunities, and learning. As you collect this information, you might need to revisit the plans to reflect the new reality. In practice, project planning is an ongoing process that requires continuous refinement as conditions change.

Section 5. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

“Management is, above all, a practice where art, science, and craft meet.”

– Henry Mintzberg

5.1 Getting Started

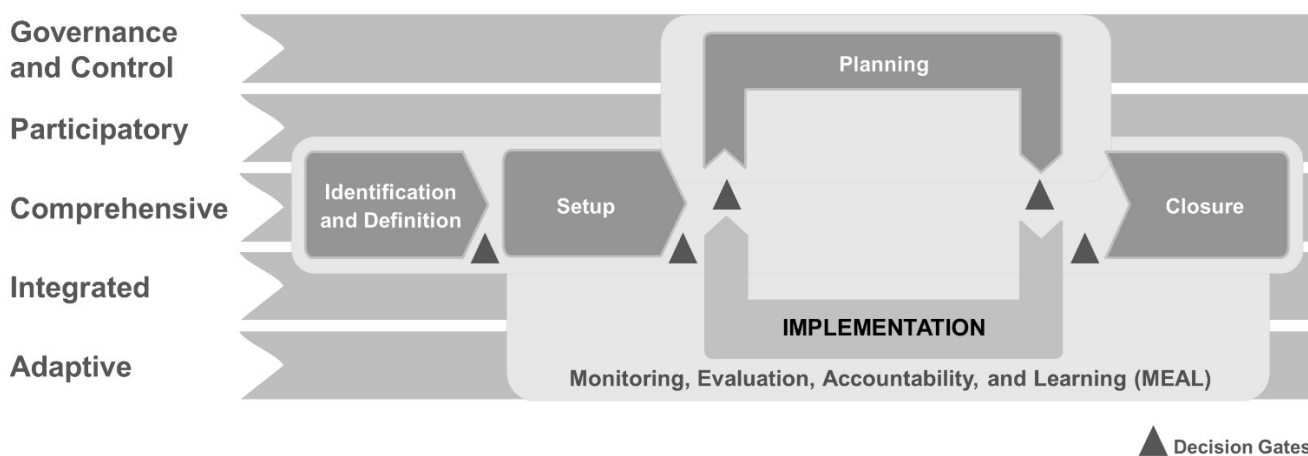


Figure 38: The Project Life Cycle - Identification and Definition - Implementation

The Implementation phase is where the project plan is put into action, and much of the work at this stage revolves around managing people, managing the plan, and managing risks and issues — each of which is critical for achieving the desired results.

Managing People: Projects are delivered by people, not just processes. During implementation, team members actively carry out tasks, and success depends on their motivation, communication, coordination, and productivity. The project manager must assign responsibilities, resolve conflicts, monitor performance, and keep the team aligned with project goals. Strong leadership and stakeholder engagement are essential to maintain momentum and morale.

Managing the Project Plan: Even the most detailed project plan will need active oversight once execution begins. Activities need to be tracked against the schedule, budgets must be managed, results must be monitored, and reports written.

Managing Risks, Issues, and Change: No project goes exactly as planned. Previously identified risks may materialize, and new, unforeseen issues can arise. The Implementation phase demands vigilant monitoring of these risks and a swift response to any issues that could impact timelines, costs, or

deliverables. Necessary adjustments may need to be made to address new risks, opportunities, issues, and emerging insights.

Managing all these responsibilities is rarely easy, but successful projects demand focused attention to all these tasks (and more) throughout the Implementation phase.

Phase Inputs, Outputs, and Processes

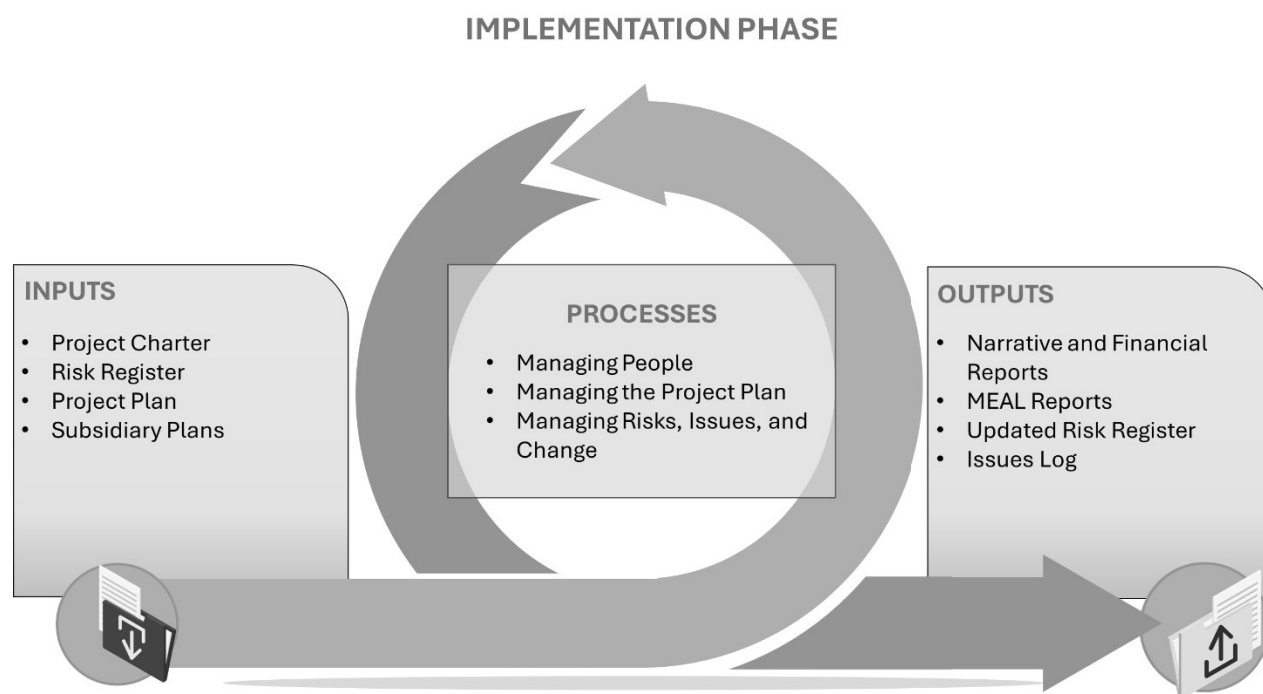


Figure 39: Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs - Implementation Phase

Inputs

The primary document needed during the Implementation phase is the **Project Implementation Plan**. However, there are other inputs the project team will need to implement the plan well. These include:

- The Risk Register
- Any supplementary plans that were created during the Project Planning Phase. For example:
 - MEAL Plan
 - Human Resource and Management Plan
 - Procurement Plan
 - Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan

Outputs

Upon completion of the Project Implementation phase, the following outputs will be created.

Output	Purpose
<i>Narrative and Financial Reports</i>	<p>Reporting will be a part of the project's implementation, depending on the funder, organizational, or other regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Narrative reports normally outline the project's progress, describe any issues that have occurred, and communicate the progress against the targets. Depending on the audience, additional components may be required for narrative reporting, so it is always good to check funder compliance.</p>
<i>Updated Risk Plan</i>	<p>In Planning, the risk plan and register should be reviewed and updated, possibly multiple times, depending on the length and complexity of the process.</p>
<i>Monitoring Reports</i>	<p>Monitoring reports are one of the most useful tools the project manager will have during the Implementation phase. These reports provide the project manager with essential information on whether the project is on track to achieve its targets by the end of the project.</p>
<i>Updated Risk Register</i>	<p>A Risk Register is a living document that should be revisited during the Implementation phase. Keeping it updated ensures that new risks are documented, existing risks are monitored, and mitigation strategies are actively managed throughout the project.</p>
<i>Issues Log</i>	<p>The Issue Log is a tool for tracking all project issues. It alerts the project manager to unresolved decisions, situations, or problems that could prevent the project from being delivered on time, on budget, within scope, and of a high quality.</p>

Table 39: Project Implementation phase outputs

Processes

During the Implementation phase a number of processes will need to be conducted related to:

- Managing people

- Managing the project plan
- Managing risks, issues, and change.

Project managers must lead teams, track progress, manage budgets, and ensure that everyone stays aligned with project goals. They must also monitor risks, respond to issues, and adjust the plan as necessary to keep the project on track.

5.2 Managing People

People make projects. Project managers work in teams, and they can only achieve their goals due to the commitment, cooperation, and contributions of the people on the project team. As a result, managing people can become the project manager's most important, and most difficult, job.

When we think of project managers who excel at managing people, we tend to focus on their mastery of the “art” of people management. These project managers are effective at motivating team members, communicating vision, empowering staff, recognizing achievements, listening, leading by example, resolving conflicts, and building trust.

This does not mean that no “science” skills are involved in people management. A project manager's success in team management depends on balancing the art and science of people management.

Here are some examples of the “science-related skills” of people management:

- **Managing the Project Team** – Effective team development involves using structured tools such as competency assessments, skills gap analyses, and targeted training plans. Project Managers should apply these tools systematically to strengthen team capacity, improve performance, and align people's development with project needs.
- **Conducting Performance Assessments** – This process helps ensure that individual contributions align with project objectives and that the team is working effectively and efficiently. It's not just about monitoring — it's about enabling growth, accountability, and success.
- **Maintaining Team Communication Norms** – At the project's outset, the team must establish and adhere to clear communication norms throughout the project.
- **Coordinating the Team's Work** – Your stakeholder engagement plan and communication strategy (created earlier) serve as your guide for whom to involve, when, and how.

Another science-based people management skill involves clarifying stakeholders' roles and responsibilities. One tool that is especially helpful in this area is the RACI Matrix.

The RACI Matrix

One of the challenges in managing a network of stakeholders is ensuring clarity about the roles, responsibilities, authority, and communications of different project actors. One tool that helps with this challenge is the RACI chart – a matrix typically created with a vertical axis (left-hand column) representing tasks or deliverables and a horizontal axis (top row) of roles, which derives its name from an acronym of the four key roles most commonly identified in the matrix:

Responsible - Those who do the work to achieve the task. For each task, there is typically one Responsible person who is the lead in completing the work, although others can be delegated to assist.

Accountable - Those who must approve (sign off) the work that the Responsible person(s) provide. There must be only one Accountable person specified for each task or deliverable.

Consulted - Those whose opinions are sought, and with whom there is two-way communication.

Informed - Those who are kept up-to-date on progress, often only upon completion of a task or deliverable, and with whom there is just one-way communication.

The following chart provides an example of a simplified RACI for activities related to the Youth Haven Project:

Activity	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Obtain blueprints for the center renovation	General Contractor	Project Manager	City Permitting	Counselors
Hire Mental Health Counselors	Havenford Human Resources	Havenford Director	Project Manager	Project Team
Prepare project progress report	Project Manager	Program manager	Project Team Contractor	Key Stakeholders
Prepare project financial report	Finance Manager	Project manager	Project Team	Key Stakeholders
Project Monitoring	Project manager	Program Manager	Project Team	Key Stakeholders

Table 40: The Youth Haven Project RACI Matrix

The RACI matrix is a highly flexible tool that can be used at both strategic and tactical levels. At the strategic level, it helps clarify high-level responsibilities and accountabilities across different stakeholder groups, which is especially useful when multiple organizations are involved. At the tactical level, it becomes a practical implementation tool. Tasks from the project plan can be used to populate the RACI, making it directly relevant to day-to-day delivery. When used this way, it can easily be kept up to date by integrating it into regular team processes such as risk or issue management. For example, during a project team meeting, when discussing upcoming tasks or new issues, the RACI can be reviewed and updated in real time to confirm “who does what.” This keeps responsibilities transparent, ensures accountability, and promotes effective coordination.”

The RACI should be developed collaboratively, gaining consensus and buy-in from team members and stakeholders on the tasks and roles for each task.

5.3 Managing the Plan

Reporting

During implementation, reporting becomes a tool for communicating progress, challenges, and results to stakeholders. Good reporting ensures that everyone, from the project team to funders and community members, stays informed and engaged with the project's status.

What makes a good report? It should include all required information, be clearly written and easy to understand, meet the agreed-upon requirements (deadlines, contents, word limits), and include any necessary supporting documents. Common types of reports include:

- **Narrative Reports:** These reports describe the progress that the project has made during a given period. They typically highlight achievements, explain any issues or delays, and compare progress against the targets. A narrative report serves as a storytelling tool – it should provide the reader with a clear picture of what has happened in the project, including any notable successes or setbacks.
- **Financial Reports:** These reports detail the project's expenditures and overall financial status. They typically include information on the comparison between budgeted and actual spending, as well as comparisons of spending versus earned value, and budget forecasts for upcoming periods. A financial report should also highlight any budget-related risks so that they can be managed promptly if action is needed.

The Project Manager should confirm that all reports - narrative and financial – meet applicable requirements. For example, a funding organization may require a specific format or categorization of expenses. All financial reporting tasks (including, but not limited to, preparing receipts, invoices, and expense documentation) should be incorporated into the project's scope of activities and schedule plans to avoid surprises during implementation.

Reporting is one way to practice transparency and promote accountability. You build trust by sharing honest updates about how the project is going, good or bad. For example, promptly reporting an issue (like a construction delay or a spending overrun) allows stakeholders to understand the challenge and potentially help address it, rather than being caught by surprise later. In summary, reporting during implementation isn't just paperwork – it's a communication lifeline that connects the project's work to its stakeholders' expectations and needs.

Managing the Project Schedule

Project managers should regularly monitor their schedules to ensure the project remains on track. In the best of worlds, your Gantt Chart would be perfect and the implementation flawless, resulting in a schedule that moves forward without a hitch. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case. Time estimating is extremely difficult, and even if you initially plan your calendar perfectly, there will always be issues that interfere with the schedule.

When a project schedule begins to fall behind, the Project Manager must take action to get the project back on track. Here are three techniques the project managers can use to accelerate the progress of a project that is falling behind schedule: fast-tracking and crashing.

Scope Adjustment - Formally reducing or modifying project deliverables as a means to bring the schedule (or budget) back on track.

Fast-tracking - Completing activities that would normally be completed in sequence in parallel as a means to accelerate progress. To make the most of fast-tracking, project teams should target the tasks on the critical path first, as these activities have the greatest potential to accelerate the overall project schedule.

Crashing - Adding additional resources to the critical path to accelerate progress, but without necessarily achieving the highest level of efficiency.

Let's return to the Youth Haven Project to understand these techniques better. The team is renovating the bathrooms, which must be completed before the drop-in center can open its doors. The original Network Diagram for the bathroom renovation is below and the critical path for those activities (the least amount of time that the activities will take) was calculated at 26 days.

Network Diagram Bathroom Renovation (Critical Path = 26 days)

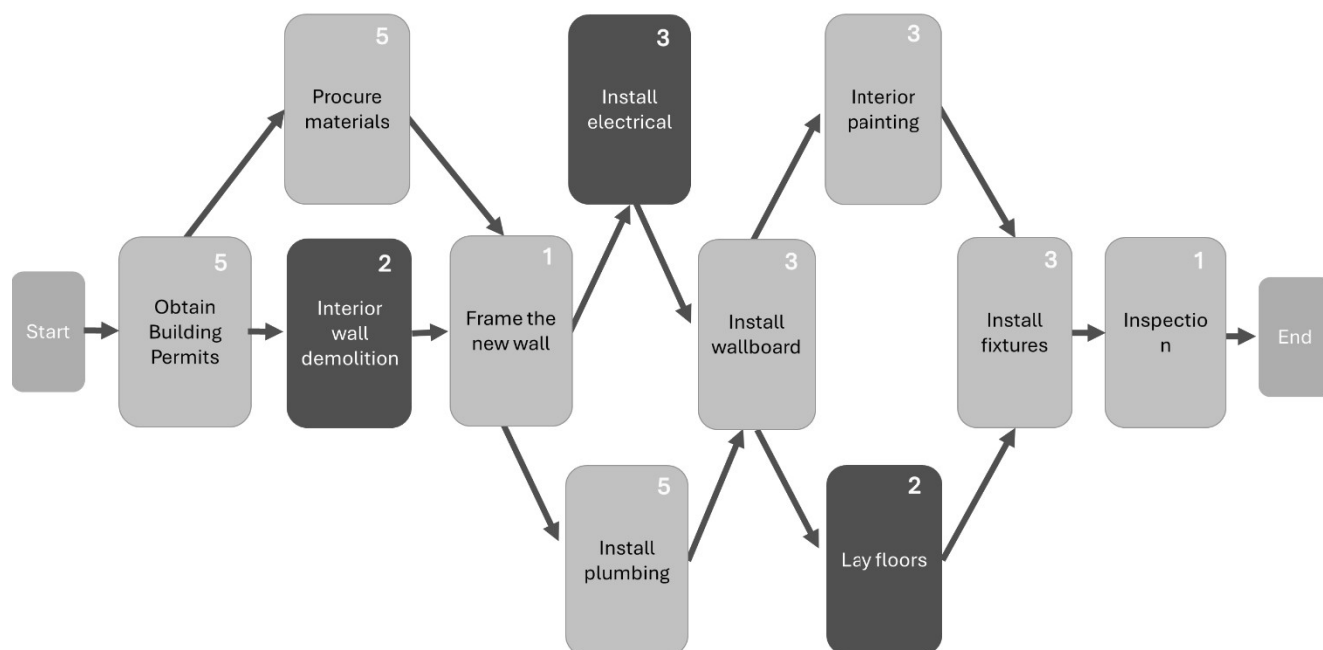


Figure 40: Network Diagram Bathroom Renovation

Unfortunately, the bathroom renovation activities are off to a slow start due to a delay in obtaining the building permits. The duration estimate for obtaining permits was originally 5 days and is now 7.

The team reviews the Network Diagram and concludes that scope adjustment is not an option in this situation. However, they identify two scenarios to get the project schedule back on track.

Scenario 1: Fast-Tracking the Schedule

In this scenario, the team reviews the Network Diagram and decides to have two activities take place in parallel rather than sequentially.

While the original network diagram planned to procure materials after the building permits were obtained, the updated Network Diagram will fast track that process by procuring materials at the same time that the building permits are being approved. By completing the activities in parallel, the project has reduced the updated critical path so that it is now only 23 days!

Fast Tracking the Schedule

(Critical Path = 23 days)

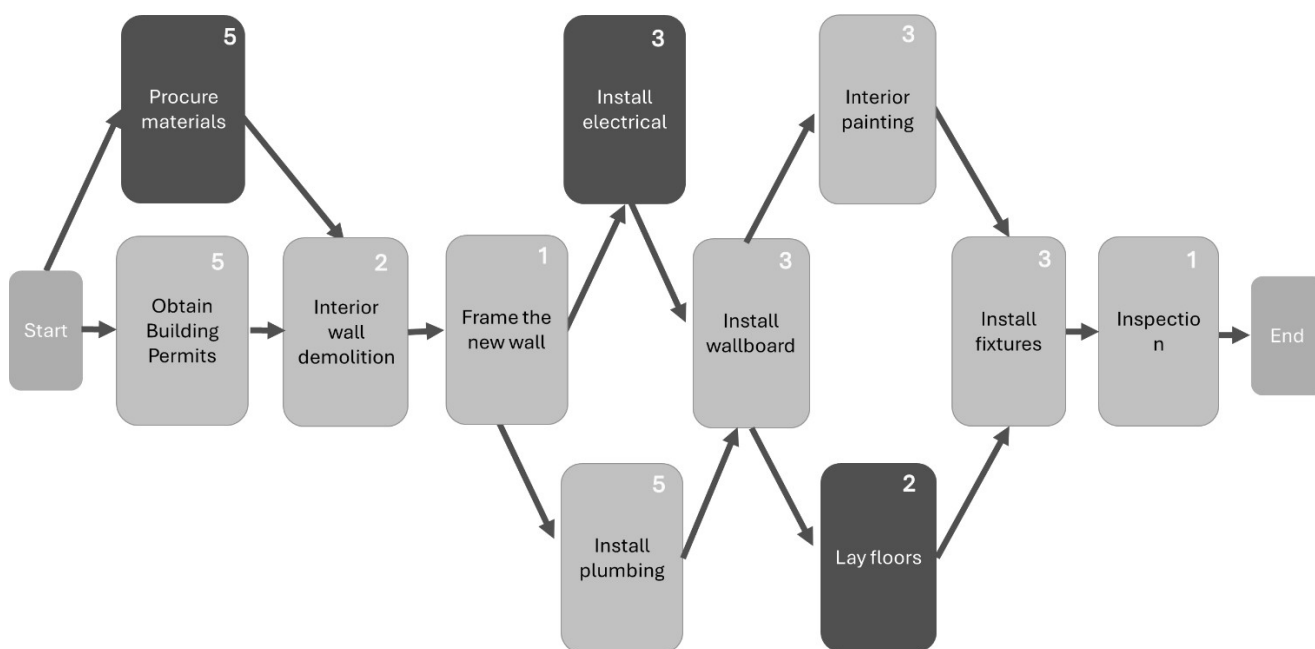


Figure 41: Network Diagram - Fast Tracking the Schedule

Scenario 2: Crashing the schedule

In this scenario, the project adds more resources to the bathroom renovation so the activities take less time.

While the original Network Diagram included one person working three days to install the wallboard, the updated Network Diagram has expanded the wallboard installation team to three people. The additional workers have reduced the time spent on the activity from three days to one day. Consequently, due to project crashing, the updated critical path is now only twenty-four days.

Crashing the Schedule

(Critical Path = 24 days)

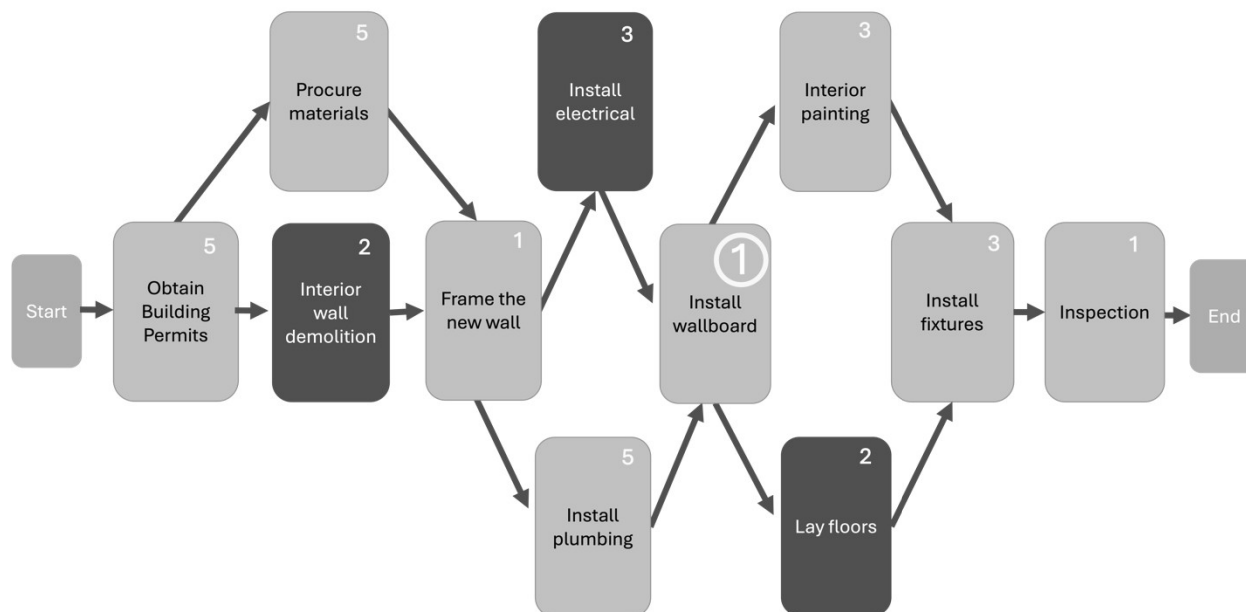


Figure 42: Network Diagram – Crashing the Schedule

Financial Monitoring

Project Managers will need to conduct a number of activities to effectively manage the project budget during the Implementation phase. These activities include:

- Compiling project expenditure information
- Gathering information and understanding budget variances
- Managing payments
- Authorizing expenditures
- Managing cash flow, spending, forecasting, and expenditures.

Budget Variance

While all of these activities are important, when monitoring project financial performance, the first question asked is usually, “Is the project over budget, under budget, or on budget?” In other words, you are being asked to calculate the budget’s cost variance.

Budget Variance – The difference between the budget *planned* to be spent versus what was *actually* spent at a given point in time.

To answer this question, the Project Manager (often working with the finance team) gathers the most recent budget data and conducts a relatively simple calculation.

$$\text{Budget Variance} = \text{Budgeted Amount} - \text{Actual Amount Spent}$$



To better understand how a cost variance is calculated, let's review a Budget Comparison Report generated by Havenford Cares's accountant. The accountant informs the Project Manager that "at the end of Month 3, the project has a budget variance of—\$200, and the budget is overspent.

$$-\$200 = \$1100 - \$1300$$

Task	Planned Cost	Month One	Month Two	Month Three	Month Four	Month Five	Month Six
A	100	100					
B	200		200				
C	100		100				
D	400			400			
E	100			100			
F	200			200			
G	200				200		
H	100				100		
I	300					300	
J	100						100
Planned total cost per month		100	300	700	300	300	100
Planned cumulative cost		100	400	1,100	1,400	1,700	1,800
Actual total cost per month		150	350	800			
Actual cumulative cost		150	500	1,300			

Table 41: Budget Comparison Report

So, what does this cost variance of -\$200 tell us? To be honest, there might be two sides to this story.

Scenario 1: The project is on schedule and over budget.

In this scenario, the budget variance is a problem. The cost of project activities is higher than initially estimated in the original budget. If this is the case, then the trend of overspending the budget will likely continue, and corrective action is needed.

Scenario 2: The project is ahead of schedule and over budget.

In this scenario, the budget variance is not necessarily a problem. Because the project is ahead of schedule, it is spending money that wasn't earmarked for the first three months of the project. This means the budget overspend could be temporary and is not an indicator of future problems.

To better understand whether the budget overspend is an issue, the project needs to gather additional information. However, note that in both scenarios, the project must ensure it has sufficient cash on hand (cash flow) to continue operations since it is spending more money per month than originally anticipated.

Earned Value Management

The example above underscores a significant weakness in relying solely on budget variance to monitor your spending. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the project's financial status, you need to adopt an approach that considers all three aspects of the project constraint triangle (Time, Budget, and Scope). This is where Earned Value Management can play a crucial role.

Earned Value Management (EVM) – Compares the **planned work**, the **actual work completed**, and the **actual cost incurred** to determine whether a project's budget is on track.

EVM is a way to track the status of project finances by comparing three variables: what the project planned to do, what it actually did, and at what cost.

Planned Value – What did the project planned to do during the time period?

Earned Value – How much work was actually finished during the time period?

Actual Cost – How much money was spent during the time period?

Let's explore EVM by analyzing a project with a negative budget variance of \$5,000. The budget had anticipated spending \$50,000 at this point in the project, but it has already spent \$55,000.

The two scenarios below provide two very different interpretations of the negative cost variance.

Scenario 1: The project had planned to complete 50% of the project work by now. Only 40% has been completed.

- **Budget** = US\$100,000
- **Actual Cost** = \$55,000 (the project has spent \$55,000)
- **Planned Value** = \$50,000 (this is the \$ value of 50% of the work planned)
- **Earned Value** = \$40,000 (this is the \$ value of 40% of the work completed)

Now let's use the information above to compare the project's progress against its calendar and budget.

- **Behind schedule** → Earned Value (\$40K) < Planned Value (\$50K)
- **Over budget** → Earned Value (\$40K) < Actual Cost (\$55K)

Scenario 2: The project had planned to complete 50% of the project work by now. 60% has been completed.

- **Budget**= US\$100,000
- **Actual Cost** = \$55,000 (this is the amount spent to date)
- **Planned Value** = \$50,000 (this is the \$ value of 50% of the work planned)
- **Earned Value** = \$60,000 (this is the \$ value of 60% of the work completed)

Now let's use the information above to compare the project's progress against its calendar and budget.

- **Ahead of schedule** → Earned Value (\$60K) > Planned Value (\$50K)
- **Under budget** → Earned Value (\$60K) > Actual Cost (\$55K)

In both scenarios, the project is experiencing a negative budget variance. However, that calculation doesn't provide enough information to determine whether the overspending is a problem. You can only make that determination if you compare the budget variance against the work completed to date. This is because the Earned Value Analysis helps underscore that not all overspending scenarios are "bad." Conversely, not all underspending scenarios are "good."

The table below categorizes the combinations of results that can occur when conducting Earned Value Analysis and identifies the implications of the different scenarios. Note that the cells of the table provide some budget/schedule combinations that are "good," others that are "bad", and some that require more data to understand the project status.

	<i>Behind Schedule</i>	<i>On Schedule</i>	<i>Ahead of Schedule</i>
<i>Under Budget</i>	Need more data	Good	Good
<i>On Budget</i>	Bad	Good	Good
<i>Over Budget</i>	Bad	Bad	Need more data

Table 42: Earned Value Analysis - Combinations of results

As we wrap up the discussion on financial monitoring, there's one important point about Earned Value Analysis (EVA). EVA depends on a solid accounting system that tracks the status of project activities and can link that progress with cost and schedule data.

To use EVA effectively, you need:

- A clear and detailed activity-based work breakdown structure
- Up-to-date cost information

Unfortunately, many organizations don't have these systems in place, which makes it hard to use EVA in those settings.

Implementing MEAL

Managing MEAL is critical across all project phases, but it takes on special importance during the Implementation phase. Let's examine each of the areas of work associated with managing MEAL.

Monitoring Project Progress

As we have already learned, monitoring is the continuous or regular (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly) data collection and analysis used to track project progress. Monitoring is especially important during implementation because this is when the project's activities are in full swing, and we need to ensure the activities, outputs, and outcomes are on track.

In practical terms, monitoring means checking the project's performance indicators (as defined in your logframe and further elaborated in the Performance Monitoring Plan) against their baselines and targets. By comparing actual values with planned targets at regular intervals, the Project Manager can confirm the project is on track or identify variances.

A common tool used is the **Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)**. An IPTT is essentially a matrix listing each indicator, its baseline value, periodic targets (e.g., quarterly or milestones), and actual values achieved at each interval, up to the final target and final actual values.

The Table below provides an example of a partially built-out IPTT for the Haven Youth Project. This example provides monitoring data focusing on two periods of the project's work (Year 1 and Year 2). Pay close attention to the following components in the table:

- The two indicators used in this example are taken directly from the Project Logframe and the PMP. It is important that all three tools be aligned and consistent.
- Each indicator has a baseline and a target.
- Periodic targets are established for the end of each project year. This helps the project team assess whether they are on track to meet their ultimate objectives.

Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Indicator	Overall Target	Baseline Value	Target Y1	Actual Y1	Target Y2	Actual Y2	Target Y3	Actual Y3
Indicator 3.a: Average wait time for unhoused youth to access mental health counseling is 14 days	14 days	42 days	n/a	n/a	24 days	28 days	14 days	

Indicator 3.1c: 5 mental health counseling sessions provided per week	360 (40% female, 60% male)	0	n/a	n/ a	2.5 (40% female, 60% male)	3 (20% female, 80% male)	240 (40% female, 60% male)	
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Table 43: Indicator Performance Tracking Table

Interpreting the IPTT -- Using an IPTT helps organize monitoring data and visually highlight gaps between targets and actuals. For example, when the Youth Haven Project team reviews the IPTT data above, it quickly notices that the following:

- Their efforts to reduce the wait time for counseling services in year 2 are not meeting their targets.
- The indicator tracking the number of counseling visits is providing mixed results.
 - The number of visits is surpassing the Year 2 target
 - However, their disaggregated data indicates that % of male session participants is much higher than was targeted for that indicator.
- No data was collected at the end of Year 1. This is because the activities related to the indicators were not initiated until Year 2 (Year 1 focused on preparing the center for launch).

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle DISAGGREGATING DATA

Disaggregation of indicators involves breaking them into categories for a more robust analysis. Some examples of how indicators can be disaggregated include gender, geographic location, socio-economic status, and age group.

In the example above, one of the indicators at the outcome level is “5 mental health counseling sessions provided per week.” While the overall information from the indicator will be useful, the project is especially interested in confirming that the needs of female project participants are being addressed. Disaggregating the indicator targets and monitoring data by gender helps them to assess their progress in this area.

Real-time Evaluation

During the Project Planning phase, the project will decide whether it will carry out an evaluation. In most cases, these evaluations are conducted at the end of the project. However, there is one type of evaluation that is conducted during the Implementation phase. – real-time evaluations.

Real-time Evaluations are designed to inform decision-making as a project unfolds, especially in dynamic or high-stakes contexts.

The purpose and scope of real-time evaluations are typically focused on learning and course correction, often targeting urgent or high-priority areas. They begin early in the Implementation phase—sometimes within the first few weeks—and are conducted rapidly, usually lasting 1 to 6 weeks. Depending on the project’s needs, they may be repeated or carried out in cycles throughout the project’s life.

Real-time evaluations use mixed methods such as quick surveys, interviews, and direct observations, employing lightweight data collection tools that minimize the burden on staff. In many cases, remote tools like phone or video interviews and online data collection are used when in-person work isn't feasible. Reporting is designed to be fast and focused. Findings are shared through short briefs, presentations, or live debriefs, emphasizing actionable insights rather than lengthy analysis. These insights are often discussed immediately with the team to enable quick adaptation and improved implementation.

Learning

During the Planning phase, you ideally included learning activities as part of your MEAL planning. These might include meetings to review monitoring data, project learning workshops, or decision-gate meetings that include a learning component. Those activities will be executed during the Implementation phase.

A tool that can be used when facilitating these learning activities is the After-Action Review. This simple, quick, and versatile learning activity can identify and record lessons and knowledge arising from a project by involving various stakeholders in brainstorming and discussion.

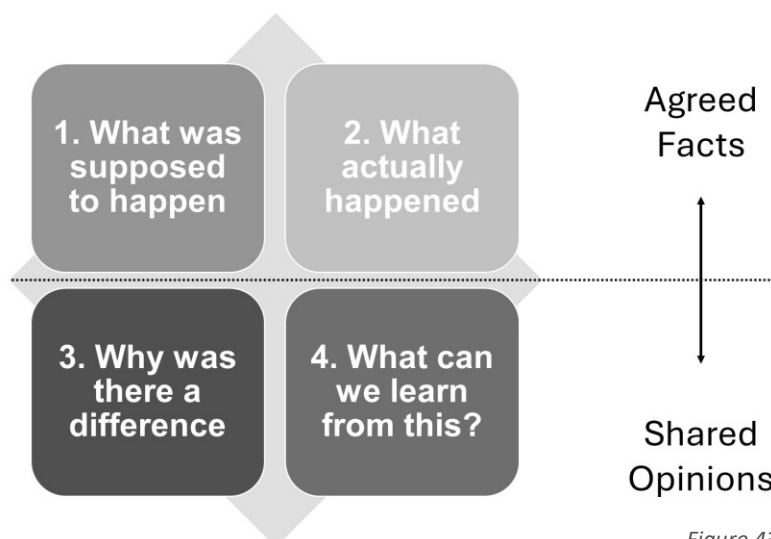


Figure 43: After Action Review

After-Action reviews are relatively straightforward to organize and implement. This tool can be used at the end of a stage, upon submission of a deliverable, or even after a particularly challenging event. Questions are asked that help participants understand what was planned versus what actually happened:

- What did we set out to do?
- What did we achieve? Focus more on facts than opinions.
- Why was there a difference? Try to explain any shortfalls or exceeded expectations. Why did it go well? What could have gone better? What prevented us from doing more?
- What can we learn from this?

The advantage of an After-Action Learning exercise is that it can collect useful information relatively quickly and without expending extensive resources. The facilitation of the review is intended to be quick, open, and not focused on deep thinking and discussion. The primary intent is to inform operations, policy, or strategy decisions related to ongoing or future interventions.

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle Promoting accountability during Project Implementation

While there is no specific tool that is used to manage accountability during the Implementation phase, the project team must continue to prioritize being accountable to project stakeholders.

One way to promote accountability is by ensuring that the project team adheres to the following core standards as it implements its work:

- **Transparency:** Being open and honest about the project's progress and decisions. As mentioned, regular reporting is one mechanism of transparency – sharing both successes and challenges with stakeholders. For example, publishing a quarterly update for community members or an open newsletter can let people know what the project has achieved and what difficulties it faced.
- **Standardization:** Adhering to established rules, regulations, and standards. This is about compliance and quality assurance. The project should comply with funding organization requirements, legal regulations, and sector best practices.
- **Responsiveness:** Listening and responding to feedback from stakeholders, especially those the project is meant to serve. By the Implementation phase, any feedback mechanisms that were planned (suggestion boxes, community meetings, hotlines, surveys, etc.) should be up and running. The project team needs to gather feedback regularly and have a process to review and act on it.
- **Participation:** Involving stakeholders in the project's processes and decisions wherever appropriate. We've emphasized participation as a core principle throughout the project life cycle, and it remains important in implementation. This could mean including community representatives in implementation review meetings, or volunteers and project participants helping to monitor activities (participatory monitoring). By keeping participation going in MEAL activities, you promote local ownership and empowerment.

Managing the Supply Chain

It is important to be clear that ultimate responsibility for project finance, supply chain and human resource management rests with the project manager. This is true even though the project manager may not have direct line management responsibility for supply chain team members. It is the project manager's job to make sure that project finances are well managed; that goods, services and materials are managed effectively and efficiently; and that project staff have all the skills necessary to achieve success.

Procurement Management

Procurement includes the complete process of obtaining goods and services from preparing and processing a requisition to receiving and approving the invoice for payment. The Project Manager may be responsible for the actual procurement of the services or products needed to develop and implement the project or may be directing these activities through someone else. Regardless of the precise role and responsibility of the Project Manager, these procurement activities may have a significant impact on the project budget and schedule and should have been accounted for and included in the implementation plan.

There are four steps in procurement management:

Step 1: Procurement Planning

This step should have already been completed during the Planning Phase. However, during the Implementation phase, you confirm what needs to be procured and ensure all specifications and requirements are clear. This could mean finalizing a Statement of Work or Terms of Reference for a consultant, or technical specs for equipment. It also means reviewing any funder or organizational rules you must follow – for instance, thresholds for getting multiple quotes, or requirements to post a tender publicly.

Step 2: Identification of Providers:

This is the solicitation step – finding who can supply the item or service. It may involve sending out a public announcement of solicitation or procurement. These are documents used to communicate needs to external vendors, contractors, consultants, or service providers – who provide information, pricing, or proposals in response.

Here's a breakdown of some of the channels a project can use when identifying providers:

- **RFP (Request for Proposal):** Used when you're looking for a vendor to propose a solution to a problem or need. It often includes technical and financial proposals.
- **RFQ (Request for Quotation):** Used when you know exactly what you need and are seeking pricing details from vendors.
- **RFE (Request for Estimate):** Used to solicit a preliminary cost estimate for a project or service, often used as a first step to get a rough idea of the cost of a project before committing to a formal procurement process.
- **REI (Request for Expression of Interest):** Used to gauge interest or identify potential vendors before sending out a formal RFP or RFQ.

Step 3: Selection, Negotiation, and Award:

Finally, you evaluate the offers based on criteria like cost, quality, experience, timeline, etc. Based on this review, the project selects the best provider, negotiates terms if needed, and formalizes the agreement (purchase order, contract, etc.). After this, the procurement moves into contract management (ensuring the vendor delivers as agreed and processing their payments).

Step 4: Contract Management

Once a provider is selected and contracted, procurement management continues with contract management. This is where the Project Manager or a delegate maintains communication with the vendor, monitors progress, manages issues, and ensures the provider delivers on time, to the specified quality.

Logistics Management

During the Implementation phase, the project team needs to establish a logistics management process that ensures that materials are available to meet the project's needs as and when required.

To this end, the project manager must coordinate with the team members directly responsible for inventory management, continually connecting the inventory requirements to the evolving needs and priorities of the project. As part of this challenge, the project must establish a balance between the supply and demand of project supplies and equipment.

As the project team establishes this balance, the project manager must ensure that appropriate policies are in place to establish the standards and controls for:

- Moving supplies and equipment in a reliable and safe manner, on time, cost effectively and efficiently to its destination.
- Storing equipment safely and in a controlled manner.

Asset Management

The project manager needs to ensure that there is an effective process for managing assets during the Implementation phase so that these assets can be returned, reallocated, or disposed of once the project is closed. Key aspects of asset management include:

- **Recording Assets:** Keep a register of all fixed assets acquired for the project. This typically means any non-expendable item above a certain value (your organization might set a dollar value threshold, e.g., any item over \$500 is recorded). The register would have details like description, serial number, purchase date, cost, location, and assigned user if applicable.
- **Labeling Assets:** Tag each asset with an ID or label to easily identify it as project property. Many organizations use asset tags (stickers with a unique number or barcode). This deters theft and helps when tracking assets. For example, if someone sees a projector with the tag "Project X #003", it clearly belongs to Project X.
- **Monitoring and Updating Records:** Regularly verify the asset inventory. This could mean doing physical counts quarterly or annually to ensure all assets are still where they should be and their condition is noted. Any discrepancies (missing or damaged items) should be investigated and recorded

in the issue log or asset log. For instance, if a camera is missing, note when it was last seen and what happened (was it stolen, lost, or sent for repair?).

- **Safeguarding Assets:** Implement controls to protect assets from loss, damage, or misuse. Appropriate measures vary by asset. For electronics like laptops, a policy might require them to be locked up when not in use or equipped with security cables. Vehicles might have GPS trackers and strict usage logs. Keys to storage rooms might be controlled.

Promoting Sustainability

During implementation, it's important not to lose sight of the project's sustainability objectives. In earlier phases (Identification and Setup, Planning), you likely developed a sustainability or exit strategy and plan outlining what will happen in the long term. Implementation is the time to continually revisit and validate that plan with real data and adjust if needed.

At each major decision gate, include a check on sustainability. During those meetings, ask questions like:

- ***Is the project closure framework and sustainability strategy still appropriate?***
Perhaps you planned to hand over the project to a local government agency after two years. Midway through, you should assess whether that agency is truly prepared and willing to take over. If not, perhaps the plan needs revision, such as extending the project or finding an alternative partner.
- ***Are we providing sufficient capacity and support to whoever will continue the work?***
If a community committee is supposed to maintain a facility, are they involved now, and have they been trained? If an NGO partner will continue providing the project services, have you gradually transferred knowledge and responsibility to them during implementation?
- ***Has anything changed in the context that affects sustainability?***
For instance, a policy change might provide government funding for your project area, boosting sustainability (if you link your project to that funding) or reducing the need for some aspects. Or perhaps economic changes mean the community can't afford to maintain something that you expected them to.

A focus on sustainability during implementation ensures that you're not just delivering short-term outputs but also nurturing the long-term value of your investments. It's easy to become consumed by immediate tasks and milestones but taking the time to connect what you're doing now with what happens after project funding ends is what separates a completed project, from a truly successful, enduring project.

5.4 Managing Risks, Issues, and Change

Risk Management

Risk management doesn't stop once implementation starts – in fact, the majority of risk management activities take place during the Implementation phase. The project team should revisit the Risk Register continuously during the Implementation phase, including risk review as an ongoing agenda item during project

management meetings. The goal of these reviews is to monitor known risks and identify any new risks as the project progresses. Each risk's status may change - some risks might decrease in probability as you successfully navigate early challenges. In contrast, others might increase, or new ones might emerge due to changes in context.

Any time a risk's likelihood or impact changes significantly, you need to update the Risk Register and take appropriate action. For example, if you had a risk identified as "Potential delays in city permit approval," and mid-project, the city indeed changed its permitting process, that risk may have materialized into an actual issue causing a delay. At that point, it moves from being just a risk on paper to an active issue that must be managed (through the issue management process).

Issue Management

Even when a comprehensive and detailed plan is in place, there will be issues that challenge the project during its implementation. Project Managers must learn how to manage the issues, navigate the complexity, and adapt the plan to reflect the most recent reality.

Issue -- An unresolved decision, situation, or problem that will significantly impact the project and that the project team cannot immediately resolve.

In other words, a *risk* is something that *might* happen, whereas an *issue* is something that *is* happening and could impede the project if not addressed. Issue management is the process of identifying, tracking, and resolving these issues before they derail the project.

Issues can come in many forms: a delay caused by bad weather, a conflict between project stakeholders, a vendor failing to meet the terms of an agreement, an unexpected budget shortfall, or a change in community needs.

Without effective issue resolution, projects can suffer serious consequences, such as:

- **Schedule delays and cost overruns** – inability to meet timeline or budget due to unresolved problems and issues.
- **Quality problems** – outputs or outcomes that don't meet standards because issues weren't addressed.
- **Reputation damage** – stakeholders lose confidence, if problems fester, potentially harming the nonprofit's credibility with the community, funders, or funding organizations.
- **Post-implementation disputes** – unresolved issues during the project can lead to conflicts or complaints after project closure, for example, a community unhappy that promised benefits weren't delivered.

The issue management process usually involves several components:

- **Issue Identification and Tracking:** Recognize and document issues as soon as they arise before they adversely affect the project. Team members should be encouraged and trained to flag issues early. Each issue is logged with important details (date identified, description, who reported it) so nothing is forgotten. This step is closely related to risk monitoring and routine project monitoring – often, an issue is discovered because a monitoring indicator was off-target.
- **Issue Analysis:** Once an issue is identified, the team analyzes it to understand its root cause and potential consequences. This might involve assessing how the issue impacts different aspects of the project (scope, schedule, cost, quality, etc.) and what feasible solutions are.
- **Issue Communication:** Communicate the issue to the appropriate level of the organization to resolve it. Minor issues can be communicated within the project team or to a functional manager, while major issues might need to be escalated to the Project Owner, funding organization, or governance committee. Clear communication also means updating stakeholders on the status of the issue and how it's being handled.
- **Issue Control:** The project team must systematically track, manage, and resolve issues that arise during a project. It ensures that problems don't escalate, deadlines aren't disrupted, and project objectives remain on track.

Project Management Principles GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

Not every risk and issue can be addressed solely by the project manager. At times, potential solutions—like modifying the scope, extending the timeline, or reallocating funds—may surpass the project manager's authority or not fit within the established tolerances. In these situations, it is crucial to escalate the issue to the project's governance framework. The project board or steering group is vital in evaluating escalated risks and concerns, understanding their implications, and making decisions that ensure the project stays on track with its overarching goals. Proactive escalation should not be viewed as a failure; rather, it demonstrates effective project management and robust accountability.

Most projects use an Issue Log to record, track and manage issues.

Issue Log - A tool used to **record, track, and manage issues that** arise during a project's lifecycle.

The table below provides an example of how the Youth Haven Project used an Issues Log template to help manage an issue related to delays in the renovation of the bathrooms in the drop-in center.

Issue	Reported by	Description	Date Reported	Assigned to	Date Assigned	Status	Actions Taken / Next Steps
O01 Renovation blueprints delayed	Site Supervisor	The blueprints for the renovation are arriving two weeks late.	21 March	Site Supervisor	23 March	closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of days delayed is above the tolerance level of the site supervisor (5 days) so the issue has been escalated to the project manager • Additional staff contracted for wallboard installation • Procurement of materials fast tracked . .

Table 44: Youth Haven Project's Issues Log

Documentation and follow-through are vital throughout the issue management process. Every significant issue should be documented in the issues log, including what was decided and when. This helps keep everyone accountable and provides valuable information during post-project evaluation and lessons learned. A resolved issue might yield a lesson on how to prevent it in future projects or stages.

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle USING ISSUES LOGS AS LEARNING TOOLS

While normally thought of as a control tool, the Issues Log is also a great tool for project learning.

The contents of the Issue Log often reveal the gaps between what was planned and what actually happened, offering valuable insights that success alone may not uncover. When a project is challenged —whether due to missed deadlines, budget overruns, stakeholder dissatisfaction, or unmet objectives— it forces the team to analyze the root causes, challenge assumptions, and identify areas for improvement. These lessons can strengthen future planning, risk assessment, communication, and decision-making practices.

Project teams that reflect honestly on setbacks are better equipped to adapt, innovate, and prevent similar mistakes in the future. In essence, while failure may feel costly in the short term, it can lead to long-term gains by building more capable, thoughtful, and responsive project teams.

Managing Change

In project management, *change* refers to any deviation from the original project plan, whether it involves the scope, schedule, budget, resources, or objectives. Changes can be triggered by new information, emerging risks or opportunities, stakeholder feedback, or external shifts such as policy updates or market dynamics.

It's important to recognize that not all changes require a formal process. Many small adjustments can (and should) be managed informally using the project's issue management process, as long as they fall within the predefined tolerances set out in the Project Charter.

However, when a proposed change exceeds those tolerances, it must be escalated and managed through a formal change control process. Project plans are not meant to be rigid or unyielding, but change must be handled in a structured way to ensure alignment, accountability, and informed decision-making.

If this doesn't happen, several pitfalls can arise:

- Teams might stubbornly stick to a plan that isn't working because "that's what we agreed on," even when evidence suggests a need for change.
- A fear of admitting to funders or senior management that the plan needs to change might lead teams to hide problems or avoid needed changes, making things worse.
- An unwillingness to revisit and update project documents.
- Lack of clarity on the process of implementing changes.

To avoid these pitfalls, the Project Manager needs to strike a balance: remain flexible and adaptive, while maintaining control through a rigorous change control process. In other words, be open to altering the plan when necessary, but do it in a structured way so that changes are evaluated and approved properly.

Because changes can impact timelines, costs, and quality, they are typically managed through a change control process, which ensures that each proposed change is:

- **Formally requested and logged:** Changes should be captured, often using a Change Request Form or at least an email/request that is documented. This might come from a team member, stakeholder, or the Project Manager themselves upon identifying a need for change.
- **Analyzed for impact:** The team should evaluate how the change affects all aspects of the project – not just the immediate area. This includes looking at implications for schedule, resources, costs, quality, risks, and any other interconnected elements. For instance, a change to add a new activity will likely require more time and money; switching to different software might introduce new training needs and risks.
- **Documented thoroughly:** The results of the impact analysis and the details of the change should be written down. This documentation typically becomes part of the project records and if the change is approved, the project plan documents are updated accordingly.

- Reviewed by the appropriate decision makers:** Your Project Charter (or governance plan) should define what level of change can be approved by the Project Manager and what needs higher approval. This threshold is important so you can route the change request appropriately.

Be sure to confirm that the proposed change is allowed under any funder agreement rules. If not, the change may not be possible without renegotiating the terms of the agreement.

Many organizations find it helpful to have a flowchart that maps out the change request and approval process. The figure below provides an illustrative Change Request Flowchart.

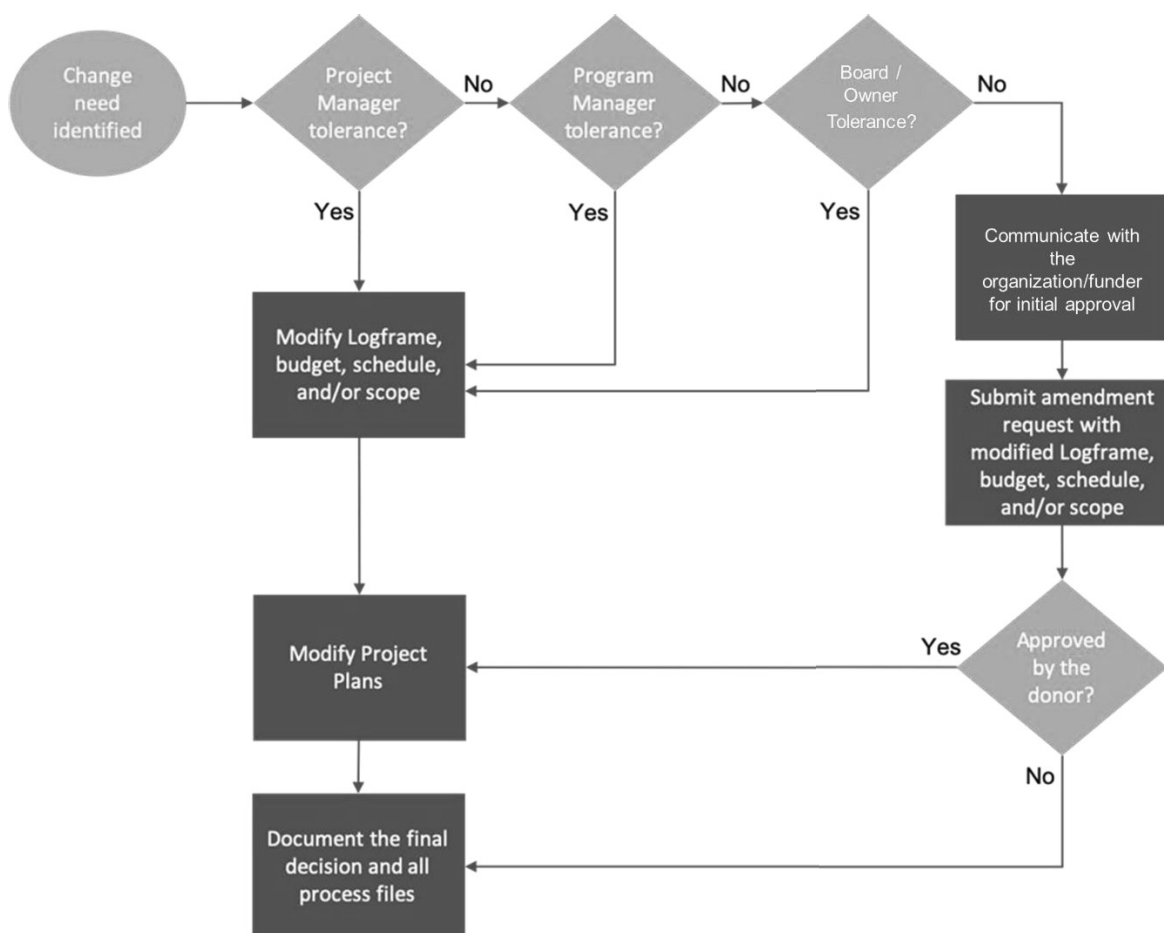


Figure 44: Illustrative Change Request Flowchart

If a proposed change is approved, the Project Manager should complete the following tasks:

- Communicate the change:** The entire project team and other relevant stakeholders should be informed of approved changes. No one should be left unaware that something has changed. For instance, if the funding organization needs to approve budget adjustments, they should be part of the

communication chain early; if a new deliverable is added, the responsible team members need to know as soon as possible.

- **Revise the project plan** - Integrated change control means you always consider the project holistically. If a change is approved, update all affected parts of the project plan. If new tasks are added, make sure the schedule is revised, assignments made, and the budget adjusted. If a deliverable is removed, ensure the requirement is formally dropped and stakeholders are notified.
- **Update the Change Log:** This document records all change requests, their disposition (approved or not), and a summary of what changed. This will be useful for tracking how the project evolved and for any audits or evaluations later.

Project Management Principles INTEGRATED

Change control is a key mechanism through which project governance is enforced and operationalized.

Project governance establishes the overall framework for decision-making, accountability, and oversight in a project. Within this framework, change control provides the structured process for reviewing, approving, and documenting any proposed changes to the project's scope, schedule, budget, or objectives.

By requiring that all changes go through a formal review and approval process, change control ensures that decisions are made transparently, risks are evaluated, and changes are aligned with organizational procedures and any funder requirements.

Section 6. PROJECT CLOSURE

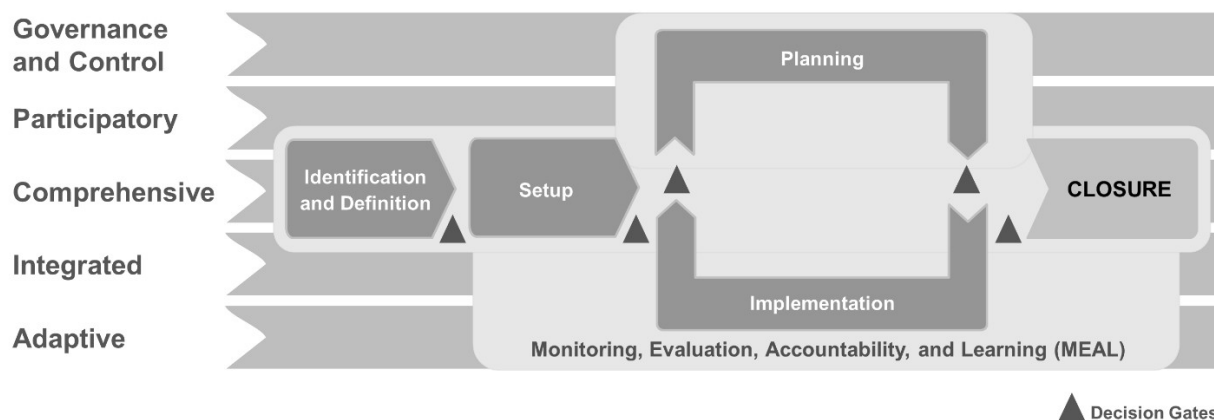


Figure 45: The Project Life Cycle - Closure

6.1 Getting Started

Project closure is a critical phase of the project life cycle, not an afterthought to rush or ignore. Teams are often tempted to finish the last activity and immediately shift focus to new projects or the next pressing need. However, a proper project close-out is essential to consolidate hard work, fulfill all obligations, and set your stakeholders and organization up for continued success. Closing a project means systematically completing all remaining activities and formalities so that nothing falls through the cracks.

One key to effective closure is to begin with the end in mind. As the saying goes, *“start planning your project’s exit on the day you enter”*. Preparing for project closure should start during the Identification and Definition phase and continue through Project Setup, Planning, and Implementation. By revisiting your project closure strategy and plans at each stage, you won’t be scrambling at the last minute.

Phase Inputs, Outputs, and Processes

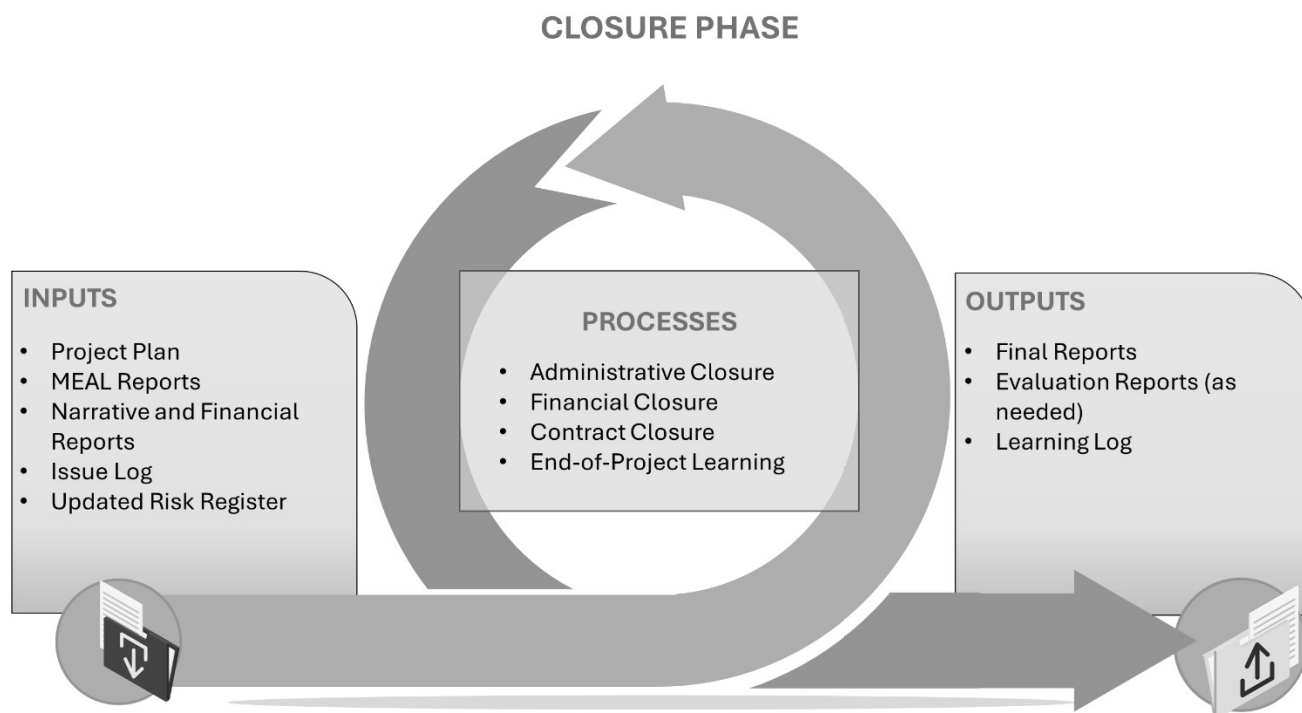


Figure 46: Phase Inputs, Processes, and Outputs - Closure phase

Inputs

The primary inputs to the Project Closure phase include:

- The Project Plan
- MEAL Reports
- Narrative and Financial Reports
- The Issue Log
- The updated Risk Register

Outputs

The following outputs will be created upon completion of the Project Closure phase.

Output	Description
<i>Final Reports</i>	Closure reports include the narrative reports, financial reports, and possibly MEAL reports, that are required to meet funder, organization, and/or regulatory requirements.
<i>Evaluation Reports</i>	If an evaluation is planned for the project, an evaluation report will be required to communicate major findings.
<i>Lessons Learned Logs</i>	This is a structured tool used to capture lessons, insights, and reflections throughout the life of a project. It helps teams document what worked well, what didn't, and why. This creates a record that can inform future projects and improve organizational practices.

Table 45: Project Closure phase outputs

Processes

During the Closure phase, a number of processes will need to be conducted related to:

- Administrative Closure
- Financial Closure
- Contract Closure
- End of Project Learning

Project managers must ensure that all project obligations are completed, documentation is finalized, contracts are closed, and lessons are captured to support future initiatives.

Reporting

When it comes to everyone's favorite thing about project management, rarely do you find anyone who will say reporting. Reporting elicits a collective *groan* from most project managers and teams, done only because the funder or partner requires it. However, something to remember when it comes to the importance of reporting is: if it isn't reported, it didn't happen.

Reporting at the end of a project can be intense, with tight deadlines and a lot of requirements. This is part of the indirect work of a project; time and resources should have been allocated to completing the reporting requirements.

Final Narrative Report

Throughout the project, several progress reports will likely have been submitted to stakeholders and/or funders. The final narrative report will be more robust, usually containing a detailed summary of what took place during the project. The contents of a final narrative report often include the following, but depending on the organization or funder, they can have more or fewer requirements.

- Project Summary
- Project Results (Targets Achieved, Indicators, Outputs, and Outcomes)
- Challenges and Issues
- Lessons Learned
- Assets and Inventory Summary/Return/Disposal

Final Financial Report

Ideally, all project funds will have been received by the time you're preparing to close things out. That said, it's not unusual for a final payment to be held back until the last reports are submitted and approved. Throughout the project, you'll likely have been submitting regular financial reports to keep things on track. The final financial report pulls it all together—it should show exactly how the money was spent and link that back to what was originally agreed in the contract. If anything changed along the way, those changes should have been approved in advance, and that documentation, and all other supporting documentation, needs to be submitted too.

Final MEAL Report

Often, the team will complete a final MEAL report, which compares endline data against the baseline data to determine to what extent the targets and indicators were met. This report is frequently included in the final narrative report and provides valuable information for the final project evaluation.

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle ACCOUNTABILITY

Don't forget to communicate with all stakeholders during the Closure phase. While much of the work of reporting will focus on sharing information with funders and your organization, it's important to make sure that accomplishments, lessons learned, and general information on the project are also communicated with project participants and the community at large.

This might include summarizing the findings of a final evaluation, reporting the accomplishments of the project, or a hosting closing meeting where the public is made aware of what has been accomplished as a result of the project.

6.2 Project Closure Procedures

If the project were to be audited two years following closure, would you be ready? Do systems exist to ensure that the administrative, financial, and contractual elements of project closure are complete?

Think of the project closure procedures as a system for closing the books on the project – literally (the financial accounts) and figuratively (all the administrative tasks and contractual elements). By diligently managing contractual, financial, and administrative closure, you protect your organization from future complications. This helps avoid problems with project audits and also reduces the risk that there will be disputes with suppliers, employees, and funders regarding the status of accounts.

Contractual and Legal Closure

Working with the relevant project support teams (HR, Procurement, Finance), all contracts need to be officially closed before the project can close.

- *Are contracts closed with suppliers? Subcontractors? Funders? Others? Implementing organizations?*
- *Have the funder(s) reviewed and accepted project deliverables.*

Financial Closure

The Project Manager should work closely with the finance staff to make sure that all compliance requirements have been met in the project. This includes any supporting documentation as well as reports.

Some questions to consider include:

- *Has all permitted funding been received from the funder?*
- *Have all expenses been processed?*
- *Have all receivables (project advances, travel advances, and advances to suppliers) been liquidated or transferred to another project number or accounting code?*
- *Have all payables (outstanding bills settled with vendors and contractors) been paid?*
- *Have staff expense reimbursements and travel advances been settled?*
- *Are the petty cash fund and any operational advances reconciled?*

Administrative Closure

Administrative closure includes activities related to Human Resources, Supply Chain, and Documentation and Records.

- *Have project personnel been released or reassigned?*
- *Have the project equipment, vehicles, and offices been reallocated? Sold? Transferred?*
- *Are project archives and/or files up to date?*

Human Resources Closure

Have project personnel been released or reassigned?

As the project ends, determine what happens to the staff and volunteers who were dedicated to it. In many cases, team members will be reassigned to new projects or back to a staff pool. If staff positions were funded solely by the project, ensure HR provides proper notice of contract end dates or discusses extensions if some staff will stay on for post-project work. For instance, Youth Haven Project had a full-time project coordinator and two outreach workers on one-year contracts; during closure, HR either transitioned those staff into other funded youth programs or ended their contracts with appropriate notice and exit interviews. Taking care of your people during closure is important for morale and fairness – no one should be left uncertain about their job status as the project winds down.

Supply Chain Closure

Have the project equipment, vehicles, and offices been reallocated? Sold? Transferred?

Many projects acquire assets (computers, furniture, vehicles, supplies) or produce materials (training manuals, curricula). You need a plan for each of these at closure. Check your organization’s asset management policy and any funder requirements regarding asset disposition. Often, if an asset over a specified value was purchased with funder organization resources, the funder expects a report on it or may require approval to transfer or sell it. Common approaches include transferring assets to another organization or government (to help sustain the project’s impact), redeploying them within your organization, donating, or selling them for charitable use, or if needed, responsibly disposing of them. For example, Havenford Cares kept the laptops and furniture it purchased so they could continue to be used at the drop-in center after the project (with funder approval), and redeployed or donated leftover supplies through its other programs. In this way, nothing is wasted, the project’s benefits continue, and funder rules are respected.

Documentation and Records

Are project archives and/or files up to date?

Over the course of the project, you’ve likely generated a wide range of documents – progress reports, contracts, MEAL data, safeguarding records, and other materials. Now is the time to ensure all files are complete, properly labeled, and stored in a secure and accessible way for future use.

Organize digital files in the appropriate folders (with backups as needed) and file physical paperwork according to your organization’s policy and with any data protection regulations. This includes securely storing, transferring, or disposing of files in ways that protect individuals’ privacy and respect their rights.

6.3 Project Evaluations

If an evaluation is planned for the project, it will need to be approached systematically.

The evaluator will need to work closely with the project team to develop a methodology, work plan, and tools for the evaluation. The team should provide project documents and monitoring plans, and the evaluator and team will likely need to coordinate through the MEAL and project teams to conduct data collection with stakeholders. Once the evaluation is complete, the results must be shared with the relevant stakeholders.

6.4 Capturing Lessons Learned

Capturing lessons learned is a critical step for continuous improvement in any organization. It turns the project's journey – both the successes and the challenges – into actionable wisdom for the future. The Closure phase is the prime time to gather and reflect on these lessons because everything is fresh in people's minds, and you have the entire project to look back on.

Think of lessons learned as your organization's knowledge bank. Over the course of the project, you may have encountered surprises, innovations, or obstacles that yielded valuable insights. Perhaps you found an outreach method that was incredibly effective in engaging youth or discovered that a certain assumption in your plan was off track and had to be corrected mid-project. It's important to document these observations so they can benefit future efforts.

MEAL in the Project Life Cycle LEARNING

Lessons Learned and Sector Collaboration

Without a doubt there is hesitance to share information between organizations. This is usually due to competition for funding and fears surrounding sharing challenges and shortcomings publicly. However, our projects (and our organizations) cannot make a substantial impact alone; this requires that we work and collaborate with many others in our sector.

Sharing lessons learned with a variety of stakeholders, including organizations working in similar thematic areas, provides a strong foundation for ensuring that all projects working toward the social good are benefiting from our learning.

Set up a system to share lessons from this project with other teams. Some organizations hold periodic knowledge-sharing meetings or maintain a central repository for lessons learned. Many projects create learning logs or learning reports to ensure the lessons learned aren't lost.

To make sure lessons actually inform future work, incorporate relevant lessons into new project planning or kick-off meetings. When your organization designs its next project, revisit the lessons from this one to guide the new design (e.g., *"We learned that offering evening hours was key, and that we need to train volunteers more thoroughly at the start."*). This is how an organization becomes more effective – by consciously learning and adapting based on experience.

In summary, don't let a project end without taking stock of the learning it generated. It's easy to let our busy schedules get in the way of this step, but failing to capture lessons means you may repeat avoidable mistakes or miss out on improvements next time.

6.5 Engaging Stakeholders at Project Closure

The way you close a project leaves a lasting impression on stakeholders. Closure is a critical time to engage funders, service users, partners, and internal leadership—not something to do quietly behind the scenes. It should be open and inclusive, so stakeholders feel informed, involved, and appreciated.

Key stakeholder engagement activities during closure include:



- **Final Meeting or Celebration:** Host a closing event or meeting to share accomplishments, express gratitude, and discuss the next steps. This could range from a formal presentation to funders to an informal celebration with the community.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Closure should involve both listening and sharing. Gather feedback through surveys, informal reflections, or report reviews. The Havenford Project used a feedback form at its final community event and shared insights with leadership—highlighting community voices and supporting organizational learning.
- **Recognition and Thanks:** Express appreciation to staff, volunteers, partners, and funders. Thank-you notes, small gatherings, or public acknowledgments help maintain goodwill. For instance, Havenford Cares' Director personally called funders, while the project manager thanked the Project Board. Both these actions helped reinforce the value of the collaboration and set a strong foundation for future collaboration.

Use accessible, inclusive communication channels so all stakeholders know the project is closing, what was achieved, and what comes next. A thoughtful, transparent closure reinforces your organization's credibility and relationships.

6.6 The Project Closure Checklist

This Project Closure Checklist summarizes the key actions that should be completed during the final phase of your project. It is not a substitute for thoughtful planning, but rather a practical tool to help ensure that no critical steps are missed, from financial reconciliation to stakeholder appreciation. You can use this checklist as a guide for closure planning, delegate responsibilities across your team, and monitor progress as you move through the close-out process. It's also a helpful reference during final team meetings and after-action reviews.

Closure Area	Key Actions
Financial Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconcile all finances • Ensure all funds are received and payments are made • Close any accounts or petty cash funds • Complete financial statements and audits
Administrative Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete HR procedures for staff/volunteers • Decide on asset disposition (transfer/reallocate/dispose) • Archive all documents and data properly
Contractual and Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close or update agreements and contracts • End leases, rentals, and cancel unused services • Fulfill legal and compliance obligations
Reporting and MEAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit final narrative and financial reports • Complete final After Action Review, evaluation or MEAL report
Sustainability/Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute exit/transition plan • Handover responsibilities and knowledge • Provide post-closure support or referrals
Stakeholder Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify all stakeholders of closure/transition • Explain changes and share final outcomes • Use appropriate communication channels
Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank funders, partners, staff, and volunteers • Send notes/emails or host appreciation events • Recognize contributions publicly where possible
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a lessons learned session/After Action Review • Document successes and challenges • Share learnings across the organization
Safeguarding and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met • Support vulnerable participants' transition • Use inclusive communication methods
Post-Project Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule any follow-up or ex-post evaluation • Assign responsibilities for check-ins • Assess long-term impact where appropriate

Table 46: The Project Closure Checklist

A thorough closure process ensures you meet all obligations, preserve the project's outcomes, keep stakeholders satisfied, and prepare your organization for future success. When you end a project well, you get to celebrate what was achieved, learn from the challenges, and move forward stronger into your next initiative.

Section 7. FINAL THOUGHTS

Adapting the Guide

There is no single roadmap for effectively managing projects. Each project is unique, with its own specific objectives. Simply applying tools and techniques without considering context, resources, relationships, and challenges will, at best, lead to a robotic and “template-driven” project. At worst, it could lead to being overwhelmed by the project management process.

Whenever possible, Project Managers should identify whether the tools, processes and approaches introduced in the Guide can be adapted to address the unique needs and context of your project. Ask the following questions:

- What is the added value of using a new tool?
- Do we need to make changes to existing processes as a result of integrating a new tool or technique?

There will be circumstances where a tool or technique could be used, but for any number of reasons, might NOT be the appropriate choice for your context. Project Managers must learn to thoughtfully analyze their project before selecting and adopting the tools and techniques that serve their needs.

Conclusion

We hope this guide has helped you understand that project management isn't just about plans, tools, or checklists — it's about transforming ambition into action, and action into impact. Whether you're managing a small, local initiative or a multi-year program with multiple stakeholders, the same principles apply: be clear about your goals, involve the right people, think ahead, stay flexible, and always learn as you go.

We've walked through every phase of the project life cycle — from defining your idea to closing things down and capturing lessons. Along the way, you've encountered frameworks like MEAL, learned to balance time, cost, and scope, and seen how real-world challenges are navigated through the Horizons Homeless Youth Project. Most importantly, we've demonstrated that project management is for everyone — not just specialists. It's something any committed, thoughtful person can learn and excel at, especially those passionate about promoting social good.

So, what's next?

Now, it's your turn. Whether you're launching your first project or refining your tenth, take what you've learned and make it your own. Tailor the tools, trust your judgment, and don't hesitate to ask questions. Use this guide as a starting point — a reference, a companion, a confidence boost — as you lead work that matters.

You already have the motivation. Now you've got the method. Go make something good happen!

Let's make the world better, managing change for social good.

Annex I: Glossary of Terms

Activities	The work required to deliver the project outputs.
Activity-based budget	A budgeting method that estimates and allocates costs based on the specific activities required to complete a project or deliver a program.
Adaptive management	An iterative approach to project management that allows for adjusting plans, strategies, and activities in response to new information, stakeholder feedback, learning, or changing conditions.
Assumptions	The necessary conditions that must remain in place for the project's if-then logic to hold true.
Bias	A systematic error or distortion in data collection, analysis, interpretation, or communication that leads to inaccurate or misleading results
Bottom-up estimating	Estimates that are generated by stakeholders who know the project's operating context and challenges.
Budget Variance	The difference between the budget planned to be spent versus what was actually spent at a given point in time
Cost Variance	Compares what the budget planned to spend versus what was actually spent.
Crashing	Adding additional resources to the critical path to accelerate progress, but without necessarily achieving the highest level of efficiency.
Critical Path	The series of tasks that determines the minimum amount of time required to complete project activities.
Comparative needs	Needs that are apparent by identifying differences, gaps, and inequalities between groups. For example, who has resources or services and who doesn't.
Decision Gate	A checkpoint where key stakeholders review the project's status and plans and decide whether to continue, adapt, or stop the project.
Direct Work	Tasks and activities that directly contribute to the creation of specific project products and services.
Earned Value Management	Compares the planned work, the actual work completed, and the actual cost incurred to determine whether a project's budget is on track.
Equipment	Long-term assets used to carry out operations or production, typically with a higher cost and longer lifespan (e.g., machinery, computers, vehicles).
Evaluation	The user-focused, systematic assessment of the design, implementation, and results of an ongoing or completed project.

Expressed needs	Needs that are apparent based on people’s actions.
Fast Tracking	Completing activities that would normally be completed in sequence in parallel as a means to accelerate progress.
Felt needs	Needs that are identified by what people say they need or want.
Fixed Constraints	The sides of the triangle that are non-negotiable and must remain constant, regardless of other changes in the project. External factors typically impose these fixed constraints, such as clients, funding agencies, regulatory bodies, or an organization’s strategy.
Flexible Constraints	The sides of the Triple Constraint Triangle which can be adjusted to accommodate changes in other areas, such as shifting deadlines, limited budgets, or evolving project requirements.
Float	The amount of time an activity in a project network diagram can be delayed or extended without impacting the project completion date.
Gantt Chart	A visual representation of the project schedule that uses horizontal bars to represent activity start dates, durations, and end dates.
Goal	The highest-level end result or impact (transformation, sustainability, livelihood, well-being, etc.) to which the project contributes in the long term.
Indicator	A quantitative or qualitative measure used to track progress, reflect change, or assess project performance.
Indirect Work	Tasks and activities that support the project but are not directly linked to creating specific deliverables.
Influence	A stakeholder's capacity to affect the project's execution and outcomes.
Interest	The degree to which stakeholders are concerned about a project's outcomes.
Internal Controls	Policies, procedures, and processes that help ensure the integrity of financial and operational information, safeguard assets, prevent fraud, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.
Issue	An unresolved decision, situation, or problem that will significantly impact on the project and that the project team cannot immediately resolve.
Issue Log	A tool used to record, track, and manage issues that arise during a project’s lifecycle.
Logical Framework (Logframe)	A high-level logic model that outlines the project’s Goal, Outcomes, Outputs, and Activities and how they relate in an “if-then” sequence. The logframe also identifies assumptions (external conditions that need to hold true if the project is to succeed) and indicators to measure success.
Logic Model	A visual and systematic representation of how a project or program is intended to work.
Mean of Verification	The sources from which we obtain information to measure the project’s indicators.

Network Diagram	A visual representation of the sequence, relationships, and dependencies of the activities identified in the Work Breakdown Structure.
Normative needs	Needs that are defined by what experts say people should have, based on rules, research, or professional standards.
Ongoing Services	The regular, continuous, and sustained activities or programs that an organization delivers to its target population as part of its core mission.
Outcomes	What the project expects to accomplish at the project participant level in the medium term. Outcomes contribute to population-level changes at the goal level.
Outputs	The immediate project deliverables (both tangible and intangible) resulting from project activities. Outputs include products, goods, services, and changes.
Overall Implementation Plan	A high-level roadmap that provides global direction and estimates for the project plan. It ensures strategic direction while allowing for agile, adaptive execution as the project evolves.
Parametric estimating	Estimates that are generated by using mathematical calculations based on historical data from other projects.
Portfolio	A collection of projects and programs that align with an organization's strategic objectives.
Problem Analysis	Documentation of the core problem your project will address, along with evidence and data that confirm the problem is real and significant.
Program	A group of related projects managed together to achieve broader benefits or strategic outcomes.
Project	A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. with a specific set of objectives, timeline, and budget ⁶ .
Project Board	A governance body that is responsible for overseeing a project and providing strategic direction and support to ensure the project's success.
Project Charter	A high-level, strategic document that formally authorizes the project and provides the Project Manager with the mandate to begin work. It summarizes key management information—such as the project's purpose, scope, stakeholders, timeline, budget overview, and governance structure.
Project Governance	The framework that identifies who has the authority to make project decisions and defines the process to make them.
Project Owner	An individual who governs a project, providing oversight, strategic direction, and support to ensure the project's success.
Project Plan	A detailed and comprehensive document (or collection of documents) that outlines how a project will be implemented, monitored, and closed. It details the project's objectives,

⁶ 2 A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide), Third Edition, Project Management Institute.

	scope, schedule, budget, resources, and all other areas of work required to achieve project success.
Project Proposal	A document that outlines a planned project's purpose, scope, approach, and resource requirements. It is typically used to seek approval or funding internal decision-makers or external funders.
Project Scope	All of the work (activities) required to deliver the project's value (outputs and outcomes).
Risk	An uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, can have either a positive or negative effect on a project's outcomes, outputs, or activities.
Rolling Wave Planning	A progressive planning approach where an overall implementation plan for the long-term objectives are planned at a higher level – then near-term plans fleshed out as the project progresses and more information becomes available.
Scope Adjustment	Formally reducing or modifying project deliverables as a means to bring the schedule (or budget) back on track.
Services	Work carried out by external vendors or consultants to support the project (e.g., training, legal advice, tradesmen).
Stage Plan	A detailed plan that covers a specific increment (stage) of the life of the project.
Stakeholders	The individuals or groups that have an interest in or are affected by a project.
Subjectivity	When personal opinions, feelings, values, or perspectives influence how data is collected, analyzed, interpreted, or communicated.
Supplies	Consumable items used in the daily operations of a business, but not part of the final product (e.g., office paper, cleaning products).
Three-point Estimating	A technique that accounts for uncertainty by considering a combination of optimistic, pessimistic, and likely scenarios.
Tolerances	The acceptable range of variation in key project parameters—such as time, cost, scope, quality, risk, or benefits—within which the Project Manager can operate without needing to escalate issues to a higher authority.
Top-down Estimating	Estimates that are generated with the assistance of a relatively small group of people considered to be “experts.”
Triangulation	Involves looking at a question from several perspectives or using multiple methods to see if you get the same answer.
Waterfall Planning	A detailed plan for the entire project that is developed before implementation starts.
Work Breakdown Structure	A hierarchical decomposition of the work of a project.

Annex II: Reference List

The Social Good DPro Reference List combines the references from both the Project DPro and MEAL DPro Guides, as the Social Good DPro is built on the solid foundations of these two methodologies.

PM4NGOs chose to publish the reference list online instead of including it in the printed guide for two key reasons:

1. Many users prefer to print the guide for use during the exam or as a practical reference. Including the full list of references would significantly increase the number of pages.
2. By keeping the references online, PM4NGOs can continue to update the list after the guide's release, helping practitioners discover new and relevant supplemental materials over time.



The full list of references is available online at www.pm4ngos.org/social-good-dpro-references.

Annex III: Syllabus Areas and Learning Outcomes

Syllabus Area Code SG		Syllabus Area: Projects in the Social Good Sector	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
SG	01	Explain how the culture of projects in the social good sector differs from that in other sectors.	1.1	SG-01
SG	02	Define and identify the differences between projects, programs, portfolios, and ongoing services	1.2	SG-02
SG	03	Explain the relationship between the sides of a triple constraint triangle	1.2	SG-03
SG	04	Define fixed constraints and flexible constraints	1.2	SG-04
SG	05	Recall terms, facts, and concepts related to the five phases of the project life cycle in the social good sector	1.3	SG-05
SG	06	Define each component of the MEAL acronym	1.3	SG-06
SG	07	Explain the benefits of managing decision gates in the context of project management, including the difference between internal, external, and emergency gates	1.3	SG-07
SG	08	Define Adaptive Management	1.4	SG-08
SG	09	Recall the competencies of project managers in the social good sector (art and science)	1.5, 1.6	SG-09

Syllabus Area Code ID		Syllabus Area: Project Identification and Definition	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
ID	1	Recall concepts and processes related to the Project Identification and Definition Phase	2.1	ID-01
ID	2	Identify the key outputs of the Identification and Definition Phase	2.1	ID-02
ID	3	Identify the key inputs of the Identification and Definition Phase	2.1	ID-03

Data Collection				
ID	4	Identify and understand methodologies, approaches and tools for data collection	2.2	ID-04
ID	5	Identify differences between primary data (qualitative and quantitative) and secondary data.	2.2	ID-05
ID	6	Identify differences between the four categories of social needs in Bradshaw's Model of Social Need	2.2	ID-06
ID	7	Explain the importance of triangulation in the Project Identification and Definition Phase	2.2	ID-07
Stakeholder Assessment				
ID	8	Understand the six categories of stakeholders	2.3	ID-08
ID	9	Explain the purpose and construct of stakeholder analysis tools, including the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix	2.3	ID-09
ID	10	Explain how the Influence/Interest Grid helps establish a foundation for the stakeholder engagement strategy	2.3	ID-10
Current and Future State Analysis				
ID	11	Identify and explain the structure and contents of the problem tree	2.4	ID-11
ID	12	Identify and explain the structure and contents of the objective tree	2.4	ID-12
ID	13	Explain the categories of criteria that determine what is included in the scope of project interventions	2.4	ID-13
Logic Models				
ID	14	Identify the purpose and structure of the Logical Framework	2.5	ID-14
ID	15	Identify and define the components of the Logical Framework, including the objective statements (activities, outputs, outcomes, goal), indicators, means of verification, and assumptions	2.5	ID-15
ID	16	Understand the vertical and horizontal logic of the Project Logframe	2.5	ID-16
ID	17	Define the 5 characteristics of a SMART indicator	2.5	ID-17

ID	18	Understand the design and purpose of indicators at the different levels of the logframe	2.5	ID-18
ID	19	Understand the purpose and importance of Project Proposals	2.6	ID-19

Syllabus Area Code SU		Syllabus Area: Project Set Up	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
SU	1	Recall concepts and processes related to the Project Setup Phase	3.1	SU-01
SU	2	Identify the key outputs of the Set Up Phase	3.1	SU-02
SU	3	Identify the key inputs of the Set Up Phase	3.1	SU-03
The Project Charter				
SU	4	Understand the purpose and contents of the Project Charter	3.2	SU-04
SU	5	Explain the responsibilities of a project governance body and the two configurations it can take	3.2	SU-05
SU	6	Explain the 6 types of project tolerances and their relationship to project governance	3.2	SU-06
SU	7	Understand the purpose of the Project Planning Framework, including the concepts and process of Rolling Wave Planning and Waterfall Planning.	3.2	SU-07
SU	8	Understand the purpose of the Project Closure Framework, including the five scenarios for project closure	3.2	SU-08
Risk Register				
SU	9	Define project risk management	3.3	SU-09
SU	10	Identify and understand the five-step risk management process	3.3	SU-10
SU	11	Identify and understand the four risk response strategies.	3.3	SU-11

SU	12	Understand the content and structure of a risk register	3.3	SU-12
SU	13	Understand the purpose and importance of Project Launch	3.4	SU-13

Syllabus Area Code PP		Syllabus Area: Project Planning	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
PP	1	Recall concepts and processes related to the Project Planning phase	4.1	PP-01
PP	2	Compare and contrast project logframes, proposals and implementation plans.	2.6, 4.1	PP-02
PP	3	Identify the key outputs of the Project Planning Phase	4.1	PP-03
PP	4	Identify the inputs of the Project Planning Phase	4.1	PP-04
Planning for the Triple Constraint				
PP	5	Know the 3 steps in planning for the triple constraint	4.2	PP-05
PP	6	Recall the facts, terms and concepts related to activity definition, including project scope and WBS	4.2	PP-06
PP	7	Explain the steps in the schedule development process	4.2	PP-07
PP	8	Define the terms related to budget planning, including activity-based budget, direct, and indirect work costs.	4.2	PP-08
PP	9	Understand the advantages and disadvantages of the three estimation techniques	4.2	PP-09
PP	10	Understand the purpose, structure, and content of a network diagram	4.2	PP-10
PP	11	Understand the concept and purpose of the Critical Path	4.2	PP-11
PP	12	Understand the purpose, structure, and content of a Gantt Chart	4.2	PP-12
Planning Beyond the triple Constraint				

MEAL Planning				
PP	13	Identify and understand the components of the Performance Management Plan	4.3	PP-13
PP	14	Identify and understand the different types of evaluation	4.3	PP-14
PP	15	Understand the concepts and importance of Accountability and Learning	4.3	PP-15
Internal Controls, Communication, and Stakeholder Engagement Planning				
PP	16	Identify and understand the components and the benefits of well-managed internal control systems	4.3	PP-19
PP	17	Understand the importance and process of Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Planning	4.3	PP-17
PP	18	Understand the components of a Communication Plan.	4.3	PP-18
PP	19	Explain the purpose and construct of the stakeholder engagement strategy	4.3	PP-19
Supply Chain Planning				
PP	20	Identify and understand the 3 components of supply chain management	4.3	PP-20
PP	21	Compare and contrast supplies, equipment, and services managed through procurement planning	4.3	PP-21
PP	22	Identify and understand the 2 elements of logistics management:	4.3	PP-22
PP	23	Understand the concept, characteristics, and categories of assets	4.3	PP-23
Human Resources Planning				
PP	24	Recall the concepts and purpose of Human Resources Planning	4.3	PP-24
Sustainability and Closure Planning				
PP	25	Understand the definitions, importance, and process related to sustainability and Closure Planning	4.3	PP-25

Syllabus Area Code PI		Syllabus Area: Project Implementation	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
PI	1	Recall concepts and processes related to the Project Implementation phase	5.1	PI-01
PI	2	Identify the key outputs of the Implementation Phase	5.1	PI-02
PI	3	Identify the inputs of the Implementation Phase	5.1	PI-03
MANAGING PEOPLE				
PI	4	Identify the activities conducted to manage people during project implementation	5.2	PI-04
PI	5	Know the components of a RACI chart	5.2	PI-05
MANAGING THE PLAN				
MANAGING THE PROJECT SCHEDULE				
PI	6	Define processes used to manage schedule, including critical paths, project float, fast tracking and crashing.	5.3	PI-06
MANAGING THE BUDGET				
PI	7	Define the terms related to manage budgets, including budget variance and Earned Value Analysis	5.3	PI-07
MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND LEARNING (MEAL)				
PI	8	Recall the concept and use of indicators to measure the progress-performance tracking	5.3	PI-08
PI	9	Understand how project teams can promote accountability by ensuring that their work adheres to 4 core standards (transparency, Standardization, Responsiveness, and participation)	5.3	PI-09
PI	10	Explain the purpose and process of After Action Reviews and Real-time Evaluations	5.3	PI-10
PI	11	Understand the contents and process of the Indicator Performance Tracking Table	5.3	PI-11
MANAGING THE SUPPLY CHAIN				

PI	12	Identify alternatives for identifying providers in the procurement process	5.3	PI-12
PI	13	Explain the 4 elements of asset management.	5.3	PI-13
MANAGING RISKS				
PI	14	Understand the need to review and update the Risk Register	5.4	PI-14
MANAGING ISSUES				
PI	15	Understand the importance of issue management in the implementation of social good projects.	5.4	PI-15
PI	16	Identify and understand the four basic processes in the issue management process	5.4	PI-16
MANAGING CHANGE				
PI	17	Understand the project change control process	5.4	PI-17

Syllabus Area Code PC		Syllabus Area: Project Closure	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
PC	1	Recall concepts and processes related to the Project Closure phase	6.1	PC-01
PC	2	Identify the key outputs of the Closure Phase	6.1	PC-02
PC	3	Identify the inputs of the Closure Phase	6.1	PC-03
Reporting				
PC	4	Explain the 3 formats of project reporting	6.1	PC-04
Project Closure Procedures				
PC	5	Recall activities related to the administrative, contract, and financial closure of projects	6.2	PC-05
Lessons Learned and Stakeholder Engagement				
PC	6	Identify and understand the importance of learning and stakeholder engagement at the end of the project	6.3, 6.4, 6.5	PC-06

Project Closure Checklist				
PC	7	Identify and understand the purpose and contents of the Project Closure Checklist	6.6	PC-07

Syllabus Area Code GP		Syllabus Area: Guiding Principles	Reference	Syllabus full code
Topic	Subtopic			
Getting Started				
GP	1	Identify the 5 guiding principles of project management	1.4, *	GP-01
GP	2	Explain the benefits of the guiding principles of project management	1.4, *	GP-02
GP	3	Understand the GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL principle and why it matters during different phases of the project life cycle	*	GP-03
GP	4	Understand the PARTICIPATORY principle and why it matters during the different phases of the project life cycle	*	GP-04
GP	5	Understand the COMPREHENSIVE principle and why it matters during the different phases of the project life cycle	*	GP-05
GP	6	Understand the INTEGRATED principle and why it matters during the different phases of the project life cycle	*	GP-06
GP	7	Understand the ADAPTIVE principle and why it matters during the different phases of the project life cycle	*	GP-07

* Note: Guiding Principles are integrated throughout the guide and appear within each phase, process, and tool. To fully meet the learning objectives, a thorough and comprehensive reading of the entire guide is strongly recommended.