

PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT



Tower Hamlets CVS
www.thcvs.org.uk
info@thcvs.org.uk
Registered Charity No.1137143

The success of a project lies in the planning stage. It is time for you to set out why you want to deliver the project and plan what you want to deliver.

Think about:

The aims of your project - What is the goal you're trying to solve and how does it fit with your organisation's mission and values? Why your organisation is the right one to be doing this work.

The resources of your project - What resources do you have and how best should you use them, e.g. staff, volunteers, premises, networks, partners.

Your outputs and outcomes - What you want to do and what impact you expect this to have.

Timeline and milestones - When you need to have achieved certain milestones in order to know that your project is on track, e.g. recruitment of project staff, set up of project working group.

Who is involved in your project - Who are your stakeholders and how should they be involved?

How you are going to demonstrate, record and measure your impact

Managing risk – What risks could affect the delivery of the project or the safety of people taking part. What will you do to mitigate or reduce these risks.

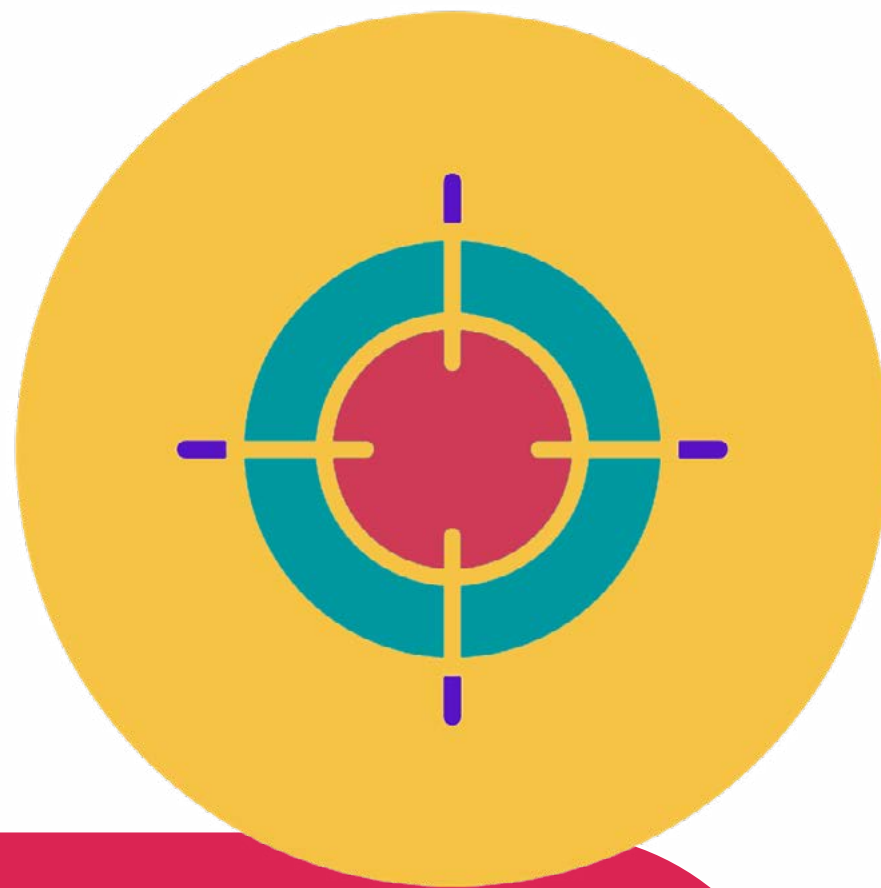


It would be useful to read this alongside the [Business Planning resource](#).

Define your project's aims

Start by knowing what you want to achieve with your project. This involves answering a number of questions including:

- What is the issue are you addressing? This could be a broad societal problem or a more specific issue faced by your beneficiaries.
- How does this align with your organisation's values or charitable objectives?
- Who will benefit from your project?
- What is the need and demand for your project? Include evidence to support this. [This page](#) includes some helpful data related to Tower Hamlets.
- Where did the idea for your project come from? What is the need for your project, and how does it provide a solution?
- Is your organisation the right one to be delivering this work? Why? Can you work with partners to better deliver your aims.



Example:

You are a small grass roots charity with a mission to support local young people. You want to address the issue of a lack of opportunity for young people in your local area which your engagement work with this group has told you is a big issue for them. Your project will need to ensure that it benefits local young people and is focused upon providing opportunity for them.

You decide to run a digital skills programme for local young people to support their future employment opportunities.

Assess your resources

Think about the resources available to you, both resources you already have and those you will need. Project planning should happen before the fundraising stage.

Resources you already have could include:

- Volunteer support.
- The knowledge and connections in your community necessary in order to reach the people who can benefit from your work.
- Equipment.
- Existing staff knowledge and skills.
- Space.

Resources you may need could include:

- Funding.
- New staff to support delivery.
- New equipment or space.
- Create a budget for your project. Remember to think more widely than just the project costs. Include a percentage to support the core costs of your organisation and management costs.

Things to consider when creating a budget:

- Staffing costs – both direct delivery and management.
- Necessary equipment.
- Core costs – the costs associated with the day to day running of your organisation.
- Recurring and one-off costs.

Example:

To deliver your digital skills programme you already have:

- Premises to deliver the project
- Strong connections to young people in your community to recruit participants.

You will need:

- Funding to pay for staff to deliver the project/programme.
- New digital equipment for beneficiaries to use.





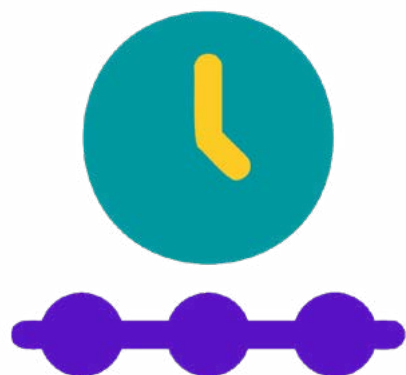
Clarify your outputs and outcomes

Outputs are the things that your project will do. They can usually be counted as a number.

Outcomes are the short to medium term changes for your beneficiaries that result directly from your outputs.

Example:

- For your digital skills project you decide you will deliver 12 training workshops over a 3 month period. This is your output.
- Young people attending these sessions will have increased confidence using digital tools. This is your outcome.
- We measured the increased confidence by using before and after surveys. This is your outcome.



Establish a timeline and milestones

A clear timeline helps keep your project on track. A milestone is like a marker that you are on track.

This can be helpful to ensure that you are able to:

- Deliver the project.
- Report upon your progress to funders and stakeholders.
- Ensure you are aware of delays and are able to think about the risks they pose to the project.

A timeline is sometimes expressed in the form of a Gantt chart – a horizontal bar chart which shows the timeline of a project, when tasks are due, and whether they have been completed.

Example:

Milestones that could be used to track the progress of your digital skills programme:

- Month 1 – recruit staff and beneficiaries.
- Month 3 – complete co-design of programme with beneficiaries.
- Month 6 – complete programme of 12 weekly training sessions.

Identify and engage stakeholders

People who are involved in your project are known as stakeholders. There are different kinds of stakeholders including:

- People internal to your organisation who are involved in some way in the delivery of the project.
- Beneficiaries of the project – the people or communities that the project exists to support.
- Partners – other organisations delivering similar or complementary services with which you could work in partnership.
- Statutory services – Local and central government, local health services, schools or government.

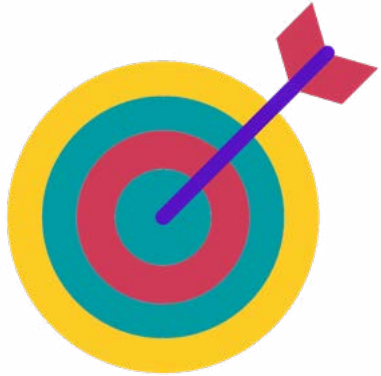
Map the relevant stakeholders to your project so you can ensure you are working with the right people and groups, and the right people know about what you are doing.

Example:

For your digital skills project you have:

- Internal stakeholders – staff members involved in the project, both directly delivering the project and managers who are indirectly involved.
- Beneficiaries – young people from your community.
- External stakeholders – local school and sixth form college, local organisations specialising in youth employment.





Demonstrate your impact

Impact is the long term and wider effect of what you do. It is the long term effect of the change that results from your outcomes.

Think backwards from the impact you want to have. What change will bring about that impact and what activities will bring about that change. This can be done through the development of an evaluation framework or theory of change. More information about this can be found in our Measuring Your Impact resource which can be found [here](#).

Example:

Your digital skills project will deliver 12 weekly training workshops to increase your beneficiaries' confidence in using digital skills. This change will have the long term impact of increasing their employment opportunities and therefore life chances.



Managing risk effectively

Think about what could go wrong. This is called risk. There are different kinds of risk in both project delivery and safety. It can be helpful to make a risk register when planning your project. Think about:

- All the different things that could go wrong.
- What would be the effect of these things going wrong.
- What can you do to mitigate the impact of the risk – make it less likely to happen or have less of an effect if it does.

Further guidance can be found here: Fuller guidance here: [Charities and risk management \(CC26\) - GOV.UK](#)

Example:

For your digital skills programme a risk could be that volunteers are left alone with vulnerable young people. A way of mitigating or reducing that risk could be to ensure that all volunteers are DBS checked and that there is always a member of staff present when volunteers are supporting young people.

Additional resources

Project planning tools

There are many tools available to support project planning.

Here is a simple project planning template which you can use to work through the aspects of project planning talked about in this document: [Word](#), [Pdf](#).

Further tools include:

- Microsoft Planner – a simple tool to allow you to assign tasks and milestones with deadlines. Part of Microsoft 365.
- [Miro](#) - online whiteboard tool which allows you to collaborate with colleagues to develop ideas.
- [ClickUp](#) - A free project management suite that allows you to develop collaborative documents, Gantt charts and resource management.



If you have any questions about any of the information in this resource, THCvs can give 1-1 support and advice. Please email us at info@thcvs.org.uk.