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CAPACITY
Building Project

Short guide to project development

1. Project idea
2. Target group
3. Objectives
4. Work plan
5. Partnership
6. Budget

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Define your project idea

The idea for a project should arise from an existing problem observed in the local surroundings, an unwanted situation that needs to be changed or from a need for improvement. A clear understanding of the problem is crucial for the good design of a project. If you look for solutions before you fully understand the problem, you could have trouble clarifying what and why you want to achieve. To define a problem, the current situation has to be carefully investigated and analysed.

Tips:

- Do a baseline study – analyse the current situation to identify problems to be addressed.
- Find out what others have done about this problem: what worked, what didn't, and why? Check if your project idea has not been covered by other projects.
- Collect data to support your point of view: e.g. do a literature search, check statistical information, read existing studies, check local newspapers, talk to potential stakeholders or target group of the project.



Identify your target group

You cannot define a problem properly without asking whom it touches and why. Having a clearly identified target group is necessary in a project development process. Consider towards whom can you address your efforts to do something about the problem?

Tips:

- Avoid broad, general terms to define the target group (i.e. “women in the South Baltic region”)
- Target group should be precisely defined in terms of aspects such as age, gender, culture, occupation, income group, geographical area, or membership of a particular social class
- Understanding the characteristics of your target group will help you define your objectives to be more specific and select the most appropriate method for achieving them.



Define your objectives

The next step is to define your project objectives properly. Objectives must relate to the problems which have been identified in the background analysis. A rough draft of objectives can often be obtained by simply re-formulating the description of the problem (e.g. problem: high rate of youth crime in the South Baltic region; objective: reduce the rate crime in the South Baltic region). You can identify the objectives of your project by answering the question: What do we want to achieve with the project?

Tips:

Your objectives should be SMART:

- Specific – be clear about what you want to achieve
- Measurable – you should be able to measure whether you are meeting the objectives or not
- Achievable – be realistic in setting your objective
- Relevant – make it adequate to the problem
- Time-bound – set a deadline for the achievement of the objective



Develop your work plan

Creating a work plan is the most important step in project planning process. First, you have to identify the activities. Ask yourself: What specific tasks or actions are necessary to achieve the objectives? Then sequence activities and develop a time frame. Ask yourself: how long is it going to take to carry out each activity? Do any activities have to be completed before you can proceed with the others? Then assign responsibilities for each activity among the partners.

Tips:

- While developing your activities keep the objectives in mind
- Make sure your work plan addresses the questions: who, what, when, where and how



Form your partnership

A good partnership is based on a common challenge – all project partners should be involved in solving a problem. All partners should be relevant for achieving of the objectives. The consortium should be Balanced – make sure that partners have complementary competences and skills. If possible, partners should cover broader geographical areas. All partners should be equally active and involved in the process of project development and its implementation.

Tips:

- If possible, use your already existing network of contacts
- attend match making events of the South Baltic Programme
- contact your nearest Contact Point (the list is available on the Programme website: www.southbaltic.eu) – they might help you search for partners



Double check if the organizations you want to work with fulfil the eligibility criteria defined in the Programme Manual

Create your budget

You cannot estimate the cost of a project until you know activities and their time-frame. Therefore, the work plan and project schedule are the key supporting documents for developing a project budget.

Here are some steps you should take in budget formulation:

1. Decide what you want to achieve with your project
2. Define the activities you will need to carry out to achieve your goals
3. Decide who will be involved in implementation
4. Estimate costs for each activity: consider how many working hours it is going to take to do it, what resources you will need, research prices for the materials or services you will buy. Define the realistic prices

Tips:

- Always build your budget on the activities
- Use real costs as far as possible while planning your budget
- Divide the planned budget between partners according to activities, not as an "equal split"



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