Project Outline and Feasibility

Project Outline

Think of a project outline as a blueprint for your project. It helps to summarise the key elements of your project and provides a way to keep your project on track.

All projects need to develop a project outline to ensure the goals of the project are clear and that the route to achieving those goals is achievable.

To support the development of a project outline, an initial round of feasibility work should be carried out.

The information gathered before and during the feasibility study will help to populate the project outline document.

Feasibility Study

All projects require an element of feasibility work beforehand to demonstrate and test the credibility of the proposed idea. The work carried out during a feasibility study should provide the basis for your project outline and help give confidence that the proposed project is viable.

Conducting feasibility work helps:

- Increase the probability of completing the project successfully
- Understand the factors critical to success
- Assess the practicality of a proposed project
- Foresee challenges and risks
- Assess affordability

Feasibility Checklist

Technical Feasibility

- Is the technology you want to use available and well understood?

- Is it the right technology? Have you reviewed a range of options?

- Do you have access to the right technical expertise to be able to implement the project?

- Do you have all the pieces in place required to deliver the project?

Operational Feasibility

- Will the project improve things or solve the identified problem?

- Is there a plan as to how this project will continue once the infrastructure has been installed?

Financial Feasibility

- Is the project budget realistic and well-planned?

- Are there sufficient funds available for the project? (*Note: you may have to pay for the work ahead of claiming the funding*)

- Is it worth spending this money to achieve the benefits? Will it provide value for money?

Market Feasibility

- Is there a demand for this project? Has the wider community been engaged?

- Does the project meet wider strategic goals? (e.g. addressing poverty, reducing carbon emissions, combatting loneliness, supporting young people etc)

Legal Feasibility

- Do you have the appropriate permissions to carry out this project?

    o Planning permission

    o Rights of way

    o Ownership of required facilities

    o Authority to deliver the project

- Do you have the appropriate procedures and policies in place?

    o Equal Opportunities, Welsh Language, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Data Protection, Environmental, Procurement etc

Schedule Feasibility

- Is there a clear timeline with realistic milestones?

- Do you have the resources and appropriately skilled people to meet deadlines?

- Can the project be completed within the desired timeframe?

Environmental/Social Feasibility

- Do you understand the project's environmental impact? Is it appropriate?

- Is the project socially responsible? Has this been tested with the community?

Risk Assessment

- Have potential risks been identified, and is there a mitigation plan?

    o Financial risks (cost overruns, financial loss, cash flow)

    o Technical failures (technology not appropriate/available)

    o Resource issues (key people leaving/unavailable)

- Do you have robust contingency plans in place in case of failure?

Resource Feasibility

- Do you have the necessary human resources and skills to successfully deliver the project?

- Are the required tools, equipment, or materials readily available (and affordable)?

- Can current organisational resources support the project?

You should be able to confidently answer "yes" to all the questions and have associated documents to support this assertion.

If you have any uncertainty or doubt about any of the information required, then you will need to conduct more work to develop the appropriate documentation, procedures, or mitigations.

Project Outline Template

It's good practice to develop a project outline to help summarise your project ahead of discussions with potential funders or stakeholders.

It is also a good way to review all the information you have and identify any gaps in knowledge.

If you have done the feasibility review you should have all the information you need to complete a project outline.

Project Objectives

Project objectives are what you plan to achieve by the end of your project – **why** are you doing this in the first place?

You can (and probably should!) have more than one objective, but if you find yourself with more than 4 or 5, perhaps the scope of your project is a little too broad?

Objectives need to be SMART; specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time constrained.

You need to be mindful that the end of the project is not necessarily when the 'infrastructure' you are paying for is installed.

Project Scope

A project scope is important for setting the boundaries of the project – it defines **what** the project will (and won't!) include.

A project scope should define what you need to do to achieve the project's objectives.

This will help avoid 'scope creep' where extra unplanned things can find their way into the project, and core essential items get forgotten or missed.

Scope can be broken down into core; desirable and optional elements, which can help focus on the key aspects.

Core: things that are core have to be included in the project otherwise it won't work.

Desirable: things that would add to the project and could be added if affordable

Optional: things that would slightly add to the project and may be added if affordable

Project Cost

Very simply this is how much is your project going to cost?

You need to think about the costs of developing the project further, the costs of the intervention (e.g. equipment or construction) **AND** the running costs required to help you deliver the projects objectives.

You should be able to provide estimations, which are based on previous similar examples, quotes from contractors and/or consultants or clearly articulated calculations.

It is important to include a financial breakdown of the lifetime of the project and ensure you have enough cashflow within your organisation.

Most grants will be paid in arrears and so you will need to have the ability to pay upfront and claim the funding back at a later date.

Project Benefits

Project benefits are the measurable improvements resulting from the project.

Project benefits should be directly linked to the objectives of the project. If you know what you want to achieve, the benefit should be the measurable result of that.

For example; if the objective of the project is to reduce carbon emissions then the benefit is that xxx less CO2 released into the atmosphere, contributing towards overall NetZero goals and targets.

When you are developing the benefits, you should also think about how you plan on tracking and measuring the benefits throughout the lifetime of the project, remembering that the benefits might not be realised immediately.

Project Timeline

It is important to clearly map out your project timeline. How long is it going to take?

When mapping out the project timeline, it is important to consider how long it will take for your benefits to be realised and ensure you have a plan in place to keep track of them.

You should also note what these time estimations are based on. How do you know how long things are going to take? Is it from previous experience, similar projects, or specialist input?

You should also try to include some time for over-runs in your project, perhaps rounding things up to give extra flexibility to the programme if there are delays.

One of the best ways to demonstrate and monitor project timelines is through Gantt Chart.

	Week/Month/Quarter 1	Week/Month/Quarter 2	Week/Month/Quarter 3	Week/Month/Quarter 4
Activity 1	███			
Activity 2		███	███	
Activity 3			███	
Activity 4				███

Project Risks

Identifying and monitoring risks is an essential element of all projects. It is important to think through the main risks to the project, even if they seem unlikely. By thinking of the key risks, projects can be pro-active about managing those risks, helping to reduce their likelihood or impact of them.

This is typically done through the development and continued monitoring of a risk register. A risk register usually captures the risk, the likelihood of the risk occurring, the impact the risk could have on the project and proposed mitigation actions to reduce either the likelihood or impact.

	Risk	Consequence	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Mitigation
# 1	Proposed equipment more expensive than initially budgeted for	Project cost increases and project becomes undeliverable	1-5	1-5	Likelihood multiplied by impact Graded: Red if total higher than 12 Amber if total been 5-12 Green if total below 5	Include a contingency budget and test the market as the budget is being delivered
# 2						
# 3						

Project Team & Governance

This section should cover **who** is involved in the project and what their specific roles are. It should also cover the skill sets of those involved, do they have relevant experience and importantly, if they have the time to take on their roles.

This section should also note if you have had any external support, what that was and who it was from as this can often strengthen a project, knowing that there has been external validation or support.

A final, but very important element of this section is to outline the governance and management processes in place, which will be used to manage the project.

This should include an outline of the organisation's structure, the decision-making processes, how regularly the board(s) meet, the policies and procedures in place to ensure legal compliance.

✓ Equal Opportunities Policy

✓ Welsh Language Policy

✓ Health and Safety Policy

✓ Safeguarding Policy

✓ Data Protection Policy

✓ Environmental Policy