

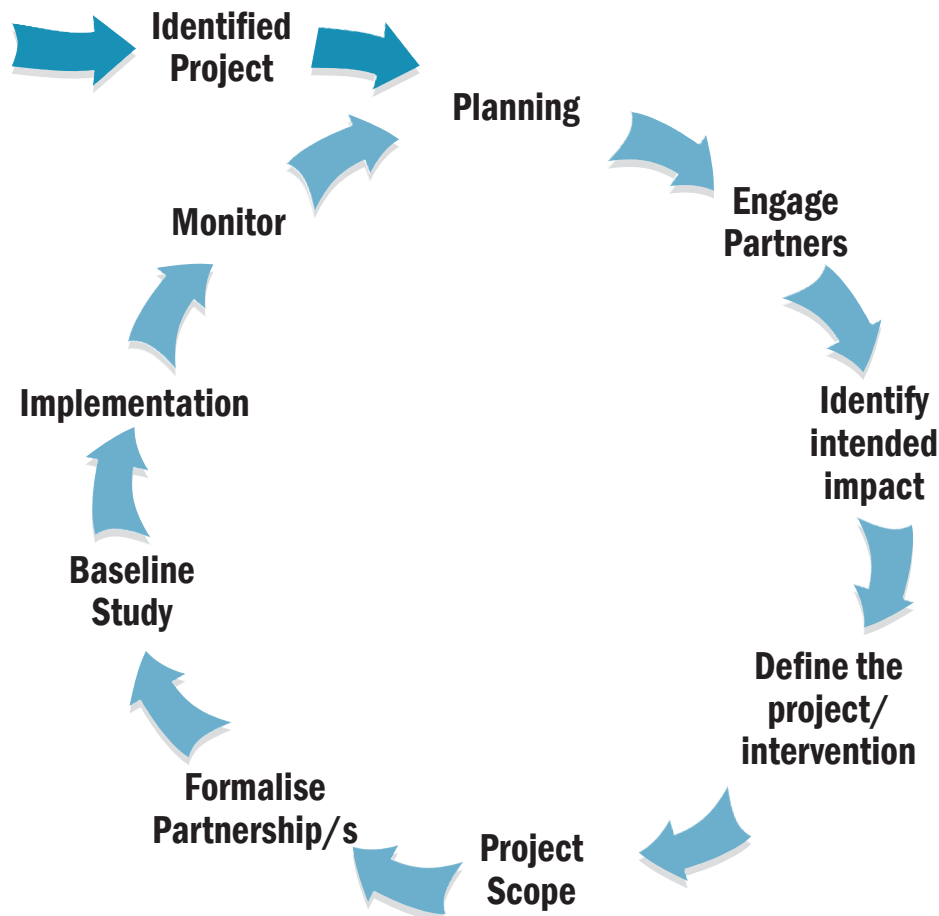
PLANNING A PROJECT

1. Introduction

Once you have identified a target for your involvement, the project needs effective planning before implementation can begin. In essence, you need to define:

- who should participate
- in what ways (how)
- at what stage of the project cycle (when).

This includes framework and action plans for successful execution. The importance of planning your implementation cannot be highlighted enough. You need to ensure that all the activities and responsibilities for the project are clearly outlined in order to have the greatest chance of achieving the project objectives.



2. The Need for Project Planning

Your planning process can take two forms:

- with an implementation partner (NGO)
- with an implementation partner and other active stakeholders i.e. a participatory approach (community groups, other NGOs).



Tips

- Take the time to plan; it will save you money, time, reputation and much frustration later on.
- It is vitally important to plan even though it is unlikely that the entire project will be in line with the defined plan.

If you have chosen to work through an NGO, which will engage with the community on your behalf, then you will not be involved directly in planning with all active stakeholders. You will, however, need to ensure that your NGO has included all stakeholders in the planning process.



Tip

- It is important and beneficial to have all key people involved from the beginning of the project. Involvement leads to agreement and ownership of the project, and empowerment, which is successful as it motivates the effort needed for effective implementation.

The planning process can be used when working with a community in identifying areas of involvement as well as with local municipalities in working towards their IDP (Integrated Development Plan).



Note

The planning phase should be conducted with implementation partners and identified stakeholders; this step is vital to ensure that roles, responsibilities and expectations are clarified up front.

A clear plan should:

- Define the intended impact of the project.
- Define the degree of sustainability that this project aims to achieve.
- Establish the outputs to be achieved and the steps that need to be taken to achieve them.
- Allocate roles and responsibilities.
- Clarify priorities and aid efficient decision-making.
- Identify the resources required and those you already have on hand.
- Be a clear and concise tool to introduce the goals of the project to all stakeholders.
- Act as a reference for the day-to-day roll-out of the project.
- Work towards achieving impact.

Planning is vital to the project process as it sets the way forward; clarifying exactly what is to be achieved, how and by whom it will be done. Defining a clear project plan plays a large part in ensuring the successful completion of the intervention, and ensures that an adaptable process is created to identify challenges throughout implementation and result in greater impact.



Tips

- Planning is an ongoing process that is influenced by constant monitoring of the project activities.
- The intensity of the planning is dependant on the level of investment in the project.
- Include partners in the planning process; this will reduce confusion in terms of who is responsible for which activity.
- Rather find out half way through the planning stage that your intervention is not feasible than half way through its implementation.