

Victorian Health Service Management Innovation Council

Seeding Grants Program

PROJECT PLANNING KIT (PPK)

GUIDELINES

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Introduction

Why Plan?

Planning is a fundamental activity of any organisation and a powerful management tool. A plan is forward looking. It helps you determine what can be done to satisfy a need, reach a goal or accomplish a set of objectives. It helps to organise and focus activity. With planning, you can adopt a co-ordinated approach to providing services. Planning also has an important role in evaluation, helping you compare performance against goals and objectives.

A well planned project is likely to be:

- easier to implement
- easier to evaluate
- easier to document
- easier to communicate to others.

A well planned project can also:

- promote accountability
- support sustainability
- be a resource for others.

What is a Project?

A project may be any activity which is aimed at supporting, maintaining or improving the health and well being of people, or which supports the provision of health services. A project may target issues affecting individuals, specific groups of people, or whole populations. It is usually a short term piece of work, that either ends or becomes part of everyday practice, when it may be considered a program.

Projects do not have to come up with the solution to an issue. In general terms, a project for the Seeding Grants can fall into one of the following:

- Scoping a piece of work: Doing the thinking and getting the baseline measurements to scope a future project to ensure it is viable.
- Project work: Undertaking a project for which the scoping work has been done, and the piece of work is 'ready to go'.
- Spreading Innovation: Implementing an innovative piece of work that has been scoped or put into operation in another organisation.

Purpose of the PPK

The purpose of the Project Planning Kit (PPK) is to provide a resource for developing, implementing and evaluating projects in health care organisations.

The PPK is a step-by-step guide to planning a project. It provides a format for developing and documenting projects in health services. It provides a framework on which to build a project plan in any area of health service provision.

The PPK uses a series of headings and prompts as a foundation for constructing a project plan. Practical examples and sample project plans provide further help.

You will still have to do the research, talk with other people, focus on a particular issue, identify the target group, and decide on goals and objectives. After considering possible partners, think about how you can implement the project, evaluate whether you have achieved your goals and objectives, and decide how to communicate the results of your project.

The PPK helps you to do this in a formal and structured manner. It will help you to make the most of the resources available to you and your project partners. It will guide you in developing your project from an identified issue to a project likely to succeed.

End Result

Having used the PPK to guide the development of your project plan, you will have produced a written plan with:

- the project's name and registration number on the top
- five standard headings:
 1. The Issue
 2. Goals and Objectives
 3. Implementation
 4. Ethical Considerations
 5. Evaluation
- an explanation of how you have addressed the questions/points under each heading
- an action plan.

Each of these is covered in more detail in the Project Plan sections starting on page 9.

You will then need to create a project record and have your project registered. See page 7 for more information on recording and registering your project. You will need to check with your manager whether there are any requirements specific to your service.

Preliminaries

1. Supporting Your Project

Before starting to plan your project, read through the PPK. This will help you to gain an overall perspective on what is required to complete your project.

Think about the level of support you might generate within your team, department or organisation. You may be able to access the skills and talents of your colleagues to plan, implement and evaluate your project. You may be able to gain support through formal supervision arrangements. You may be able to access area-wide specialists for particular types of advice and support.

Next, it is essential to make time to discuss your ideas about the project with your manager. You will need to know that the organisation will support your efforts in terms of the allocation of time, personnel and material resources. Your manager should also be able to provide some guidance and support in regard to decision making during the development of the project through to its completion.

To adequately support you in developing and completing your project, your manager will need to feel confident that:

- there is an identified need for the project
- the project's aims match organisational or departmental goals and targets
- the project would be viable and achievable
- resource demands do not exceed the availability of resources.

2. Recording Your Project

Before starting to plan your project, it is important to establish how the project is to be recorded and how you are going to collect and manage data. Many health services have established formal systems for compiling and storing project or program records, usually complemented by a registration process. Records are often called files.

A formal project record system can enable a health service to monitor the quality and quantity of projects undertaken by employees. It can also provide resources for others who may wish to develop or implement similar projects within the organisation. Well developed registration systems and project data bases can also help minimise the duplication of efforts, or “re-inventing the wheel”, and the poor use of valuable resources.

Project record systems are often very similar to community patient/client health records or hospital medical records systems. A project record would use a standard record cover with the name of the project and registration number written on it, with a medi-clip to secure the contents.

The PPK not only guides the development of a project plan, but provides guidelines for the registration and recording of your project. It will also help you construct a sound Project Record to keep your documentation in order.

3. Naming Your Project

The name of your project may be of vital importance to its success. Ideally, it should:

- briefly describe the project and its purpose
- reflect the nature of the project
- make sense to the project’s target group.

The name of your project may be the one thing that ensures initial interest and encourages participation in your project. On the other hand, naming the project may simply require you to give the project a sound, functional title.

When do you need to decide on a name? Naming your project may occur at any stage of project planning. A name may emerge at a very early stage. Or it may emerge later on, as you and your partners progress through the planning process.

In any case, having a working title from the beginning will help you maintain a focus on the identified issue. It will also help you focus on the main task of developing the project plan, until you do establish the most suitable name for your project.

4. Sustaining Your Project

Depending on the type of project and what you are trying to achieve, sustainability is an issue that needs to be considered throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of your project.

Sustainability refers to the capacity for the project to be ongoing. This could involve the health service directly providing resources to support the long term implementation of the project, and making it a program, where the work is part of everyday practice. Sustainability may also involve allowing participants, partners or other stakeholders to take over the implementation of the project.

To promote sustainability, you need to:

- assess the value of continuing the project
- secure the longer term provision of resources (eg venue, funding) or encourage and motivate others to sustain the project
- establish systems and structures (eg terms of reference, management committee, policies, monitoring system) to enable the project to continue.

Project Plan - In Detail

1. The Issue

1.1 What is the issue?

State the issue in a concise and logical manner. An issue may be a problem or need. You might have to make more than one statement to adequately describe the issue. Start with broader, more general statements and then become more specific. Consider evidence or measurement of the issues surrounding the proposed project. What diagnostics have you done to define the project?

1.2 Who is it an issue for?

Who is directly affected by the issue? Who else, more indirectly, is affected by the issue in some way? What impact might the issue be having on others or the surrounding environment? What is the rationale for this project?

1.3 Why is it an issue?

What factors can be identified which make this an issue of concern or focus? Consult the literature (eg journal articles, texts, data, reports). Your library should be able to provide this service. What do others have to say about the issue?

1.4 How have other people addressed the issue?

Have other people in your health service attempted to address the issue? Consult the literature. You may find evidence-based solutions or examples of best practice which can inform you in the development of your project. Always acknowledge other people's work using a standard referencing style.

1.5 Is the issue a health service priority?

Is the issue related to the service's Strategic Plan or Performance Agreement? Will the projects results be associated with your service's goals and targets? Does the project and its associated activities address an identified service need? Does the project use new and innovative approaches and activities to promote changes in the physical and/or cultural environment to improve the service? Is there scope for project outcomes to influence policies in relation to the service?

1.6 Does the issue a fit in with the wider organisational directions?

Is there evidence that activities proposed support the organisation's business plan and are they consistent with performance agreements? Have internal and external partners been identified and indicated support and contribution for the project? Does the proposal identify how the project and its achievements will be sustained?

1.5 Value adding?

Is this an issue that other health services need to address? Does the issue have a broader application across the sector? Will the project need significant support to sustain system-wide application? Does the product have realistic broader application for the health system? Will the product need extensive modification when applied to the broader health system?

1.7 How can you narrow the focus of your project and the target group?

Determine the focus of your project and the target group. Most projects undertaken by health service organisations are implemented with relatively limited resources and in the context of defined geographical boundaries. Your project's capacity to address a particular issue may, therefore, be limited. Your project may have to focus on a particular aspect of the broader issue and/or a smaller portion of those directly or indirectly affected by the issue.

1.8 Who else could you involve in working on the issue?

Who are the key people who need to be involved in your project? Who are the stakeholders? Who can you identify as potential partners in your project? To what extent do health services consumers, other individuals and organisations and potential project participants need to be involved in considering and addressing the issue?

1.9 How are they willing to be involved?

Whilst you may be able to identify people who may be able to work with you in addressing the issue or participating in the project, you need to be able to secure this support and participation (eg letter of support or commitment to undertaking a specific role). Will they be able to be involved in the project in an ongoing way?

EXAMPLE

The Issue - SunSmart at Colac High

Responses to each point are shown. References have been removed to save space.

1.1 What is the issue?

Skin cancer due to sun exposure.

1.2 Who is it an issue for?

Everyone is at risk of skin cancer due to sun exposure.

1.3 Is this a health service priority?

Skin cancer prevention is a priority health issue in Victoria and is both an Area and District Health Service priority in Colac.

1.4 Why is it an issue?

Skin cancer is the most common cause of cancer in Australia. Its incidence in Colac is similar to the Victorian average and is the biggest cause of cancer separations in our hospitals. The treatment of skin cancer costs the community over \$150 million annually, yet the majority of skin cancers can be prevented by protecting the skin from overexposure to the sun.

Sun exposure is a major risk factor in the development of skin cancer. Because skin cancer is the product of life long behavioural patterns, intervention needs to occur early in childhood and be maintained through adolescence and adulthood. A review of the most recent literature on solar protection reveals that adolescents are in a uniquely favourable setting for intervention. Most of the sun damage leading to skin cancer occurs before the age of 20. Adolescents are a captive audience and health policy can be implemented and reinforced by teacher role models. Adolescents are more likely to move into the shade if it is promoted, provided and presented in a way that is acceptable to them. Adolescents' uptake of solar protection behaviour may be facilitated by teachers' active modelling.

1.5 Value adding?

Sun exposure is an issue in many places where young people gather. If providing more shade for young people in the places where they are most at risk assists with solar protection behaviour, then other schools and places where young people gather can apply the findings/lessons learnt from this project.

1.6 How have other people addressed the issue?

A number of successful campaigns have been run throughout Victoria. Most of these focus on applying sunscreen, wearing hats and other behaviour change strategies. Few have focussed on providing more shade for young people in the places where they are most at risk.

1.7 Focus.

Students of Colac High School will be the target group with the focus of the project the provision and utilisation of shade in the outdoors. The focus of this project will support efforts already undertaken by the school to promote the use of hats and sunscreen.

1.8 Others involved and commitment.

1.9 The following people have indicated in writing their support and commitment to the project as members of the *SunSmart at Colac High Steering Committee* throughout the life of the project.

M.A, Principal

M.B, P & C Representative

M.C, Student Representative

M.D, Cancer Council

M.E, Cancer Prevention Consultant, WCHP

2. Goal and Objectives

2.1 What is the goal?

The goal is the outcome, the longer term result to be obtained from your project. It is the issue addressed and wherever possible, it should be SMART.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-framed

EXAMPLE

Goal - SunSmart at Colac High

In this example, the goal is specific, measurable and time-framed.

Enable students at Colac High to use outdoor shade areas at least 50% of the time whilst undertaking outdoor activities at school, by the close of the final school term in the year 2008.

2.2 What are the objectives?

Objectives help you reach the goal in achievable steps. Objectives are more focussed on process and impact (see page 20). The objectives guide the development of an action plan and the implementation of your project.

It is essential that the objectives are SMART so that:

- you can be more focussed when you implement your project
- you can more easily devise particular strategies and tasks for each objective
- you can more easily evaluate the success of your project.

EXAMPLE

Objectives - SunSmart at Colac High

Each of the objectives meet SMART criteria.

- Develop and implement a sun protection policy at the school by early 2007. Policy to integrate all elements of solar protection including provision of information on sun protection, provision of shade, and use of hats, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Increase student, teacher and parent knowledge of the factors causing skin cancer and solar protection behaviours by end 2007.
- Increase outdoor shade areas in the school grounds by 50% by end 2008.

3. Implementation

Now that you have identified the issue, and developed goals and objectives, you are ready to plan your project's implementation. So far, you have developed the foundation upon which your project can be built. Now, you will be able to transform your vision of the project into the reality of action.

The questions and points listed below will help you to decide whether, or to what extent, your project may be successfully implemented. They will help you identify and address the tasks and issues involved in successfully completing your project.

3.1 Who will co-ordinate and manage the project?

Will it be the project developer or another individual? Will it be a management/steering committee or a working group of project partners? It is important to identify who will co-ordinate and manage the project during its implementation, evaluation and completion.

3.2 Who will the project coordinator/manager report to and how?

This is primarily about accountability. It should also be about support. Will the project coordinator/manager report to a steering or management committee? Is the reporting line through your manager, the Quality Improvement Committee or a team meeting? How will reporting be undertaken - for example, will it be through regular face-to-face meetings or by regular written progress reports?

3.3 How will decisions be made?

Will decision making processes be primarily confined to an individual or a small group, or will a steering/management committee be the primary decision making body? To what extent will project participants and other stakeholders be involved in decision making? Will certain types of decision making be delegated?

3.4 What other issues may affect the success of your project?

Discuss your project with your manager and others in case there are any other sensitive political, environmental or clinical issues which you may not have already thought about. Other relevant people to contact could include the Health Promotion Consultant, Quality Improvement Consultant, Clinical Nurse Consultant and others working in area-wide specialities such as Child Protection, or Multicultural Health.

EXAMPLE

Implementation - SunSmart at Colac High

Each question in this part of Implementation is addressed clearly and succinctly.

3.1 Who will co-ordinate and manage the project?

The Project Co-ordinator will be M.A. She will co-ordinate and manage the project under the direction of, and in consultation with, the *SunSmart at Colac High Steering Committee*.

3.2 Who will the project co-ordinator/manager report to and how?

Reporting will be undertaken by the Project Co-ordinator, on behalf of the *SunSmart at Colac High Steering Committee*, at each Health Promoting Schools Committee meeting.

3.3 How will decisions be made?

The *SunSmart at Colac High Steering Committee* will provide direction and support in the implementation of the project.

3.4 What other issues may affect the success of the project?

The success of the project will be dependent on a number of fundraising efforts and the donation of building expertise.

- P& C fundraising of \$3000 to purchase shade materials.
- Seeding Grant application for \$1000 to support activity of the Steering Committee, publicity, etc.
- Local builders (parents) donation of time and expertise to erect shade materials/structures (subject to building approval by Colac City Council).

3.5 Develop an Action Plan.

The Action Plan is simply a timetable of events which sets out exactly how the project will be implemented. To improve the chances of your project's successful implementation and completion, the Action Plan needs to be very specific, very clear and very tight. You will also need to review the Action Plan in light of ethical considerations (see page 18) and evaluation requirements (see page 20).

The Action Plan is the nitty gritty of your project's implementation. Don't forget critical issues such as advertising and marketing; budgetary accounting (you may need a separate budget report); the collection, collation, storage and distribution

of information and data; documenting progress and project outcomes; and communicating or reporting results.

- **Identify strategies to achieve your objectives.**
Usually, each of your project's objectives would need to be broken down into one or more strategies. A strategy is a general description of what you are going to do.
- **Break down each strategy into specific, more manageable tasks.**
Tasks are very specific, achievable actions.
- **Identify the resources required.**
Are they available? If not, what would be involved in accessing the necessary resources?
- **Allocate tasks.**
Identify who will be responsible for the completion of specific tasks. Make sure you specify all the tasks.
- **Set an accurate time frame.**
Each task is to be completed by the identified person within a specific time frame (usually a completion date).

EXAMPLE

Action Plan - SunSmart at Colac High

A partial Action Plan is shown. This example demonstrates the detail which would be expected in an Action Plan. The Comments column, which can be a useful option, is partly completed to indicate progress as at October 2007.

Another format is MS Project.

| Strategy | Tasks | Resources | Who is responsible | By when | Comments |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Establish Steering Committee | a). Send letters to partners inviting participation | Stationery & postage | M.A | Oct 07 | Completed |
| | b). Arrange a meeting date/time with respondents at school meeting room | Time / telephone | M.A | Nov 07 | Completed - 80% response |
| | c). Conduct meeting and develop SC Terms of Reference and meeting schedule | Stationery and admin for typing | Participants | Nov 07 | Completed - chair of SC M.B |
| 2. Develop "SunSmart" policy statement | a). Investigate what others have done - literature review - networking - existing policies and practices | Time, access to library for search | Steering Committee | Jan 08 | |
| | b). Review information gathered & discuss relevance / achievability | Stationery and admin for typing | Steering Committee | Feb 08 | |
| | c). Develop policy statement | Stationery and admin for typing | Steering Committee | Mar 08 | |
| 3. Launch "SunSmart" policy statement | a). Establish date and venue for launch, speakers and guest list (incl. media), and function manager | Time, telephone, stationery & postage | Steering Committee | Dec 08 | |
| | b). Hold Policy Launch function and introduce Policy | Venue, furniture, funds for function | Function manager, Principal | Mar 09 | |

4. Ethical Considerations

Have you considered and addressed the possible ethical questions or issues which may arise in the planning, implementation and evaluation of your project?

Most health services will have access to an Ethics Committee. As you work through this section and ethical issues are raised, or if you are unsure, an application to the Ethics Committee will be required before the project starts. Your project will not usually require Ethics Committee approval if:

- consent is given freely and participation is voluntary
- there will be no threat to privacy
- physical or mental stress, distress or discomfort is unlikely to occur.

4.1 Consent

Carefully consider and address the following issues as they might apply to your project:

- consent to participate in research
- consent in relation to disclosing information
- consent issues in relation to minors.

Voluntary participation in a project may imply consent, but it would need to be informed consent. How will you ensure informed consent?

4.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Issues of privacy and confidentiality in relation to clients/patients and project participants need to be considered and addressed. How will you ensure privacy and confidentiality in respect of the information about clients/patients and project participants, and other privacy issues:

- during the course of the project
- when reporting on, or publishing information about, the project and project outcomes?

4.3 Physical or Mental Stress, Distress or Discomfort

Will your project involve anyone being subjected to mental stress, distress or discomfort? If so, how can this be justified? What advice has been given by the Ethics Committee?

4.4 Legal Issues

What are the legal issues which may need to be considered and/or addressed in developing and implementing your project?

Certain legal issues are raised in each of the following examples, such as the need to notify the appropriate authority or duty of care.

- Disclosure of perpetration of domestic violence in a men’s discussion group.
- Safe sex education for under 16s in the context of mandatory reporting requirements.
- The need to obtain criminal record checks for non-health employee project facilitators/partners.
- Running a physical exercise program for elderly people in a neighbourhood centre.

EXAMPLE

Evaluation - SunSmart at Colac High

In this example, the major ethical issues have been addressed in a concise and logical manner.

Participation in all events and activities will be voluntary. There will be no undue physical or mental stress, distress or discomfort experienced by participants. Building work will only be undertaken by a licensed tradesperson or under that person’s direct supervision. Any information about the project which is distributed or published will not specifically identify individuals except where each person’s written consent is obtained. The participation of school students will require the written permission of each student and at least one parent/guardian for them to be involved directly in project activities and/or identified in marketing/publicity in relation to the project. Public liability insurance and WorkCover provisions through the Treasury Managed Fund apply on Victorian Education and Victorian Health property.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is principally about measuring the results of your project. Evaluation needs to link to your goal and objectives to measure achievement, directly or indirectly. Planning evaluation strategies can be challenging. You may need to seek further advice (eg Health Promotion Consultant, Quality Improvement Consultant) or refer to texts.

5.1 Process Evaluation

How will you measure the short-term effects of your project? Process evaluation relates to project content, environmental factors and quality assurance.

Process evaluation measures such things as:

- levels of participation
- participant satisfaction
- who the project reached
- participant recall of key messages/points
- quality and accessibility of environment and resources.

What tools and/or methods will you use (eg observation, interviews, survey)?

Process evaluation, on its own, usually reveals very little direct information about the effect of the project.

5.2 Impact Evaluation

How will you measure the intermediate effects, particularly those factors which contribute to or cause the identified issue. Impact evaluation relates primarily to the project's objectives.

Impact evaluation measures such things as:

- participant knowledge, skills and attitudes
- participant behaviour
- policy development or change
- environmental modification
- changes to rates and patterns.

What tools and/or methods will you use (eg pre-/post-test comparisons)?

Impact evaluation is an essential ingredient in understanding your project's success. Impact evaluation directly measures the achievement of objectives.

5.3 Outcome Evaluation

How will you measure the long-term effects of your project? Outcome evaluation relates primarily to the project's goal.

Outcome evaluation measures such things as:

- changes in mortality, morbidity, disability or handicap
- changes in quality of life.

What tools and/or methods will you use (eg data analysis, test comparisons)?

Outcome evaluation can provide evidence of the complete effect of your project.

Sometimes, however, outcome evaluation may be very difficult to undertake.

Process and impact evaluation, together, may provide a satisfactory measure of the overall success of the project where outcome evaluation is problematic.

EXAMPLE

Evaluation - SunSmart at Colac High

In this example, process, impact and outcome evaluation is clearly linked to the goal and objectives.

Process Evaluation

- Numbers of educational sessions on skin cancer and solar protection.
- Numbers and types of participants in education sessions on skin cancer and solar protection.

Impact Evaluation

- Development and adoption of sun protection policy at Colac High integrating all elements of solar protection.
- Comparative shade audit (pre/post) of school grounds using Victorian shade audit tool.
- Comparative survey (pre/post) of sun protection knowledge in school community.

Outcome Evaluation

- Survey and observational audit (pre/post) of student use of outdoor shade areas whilst undertaking outdoor activities at school.

Value Adding

- Assessment and evaluation of the plan, development and implementation of the project for replication.
- Identify and assess outcomes related to student use of outdoor shade areas whilst undertaking outdoor activities at school, in order that others may use the learnings/findings.

5.4 Evaluation Report

How will you report the findings of the evaluation to stakeholders and other interested parties? What recommendations should be made based on the findings? If you were to run this project again, what would you do differently?

The Evaluation Report draws together results and conclusions and communicates these to the relevant decision making body, your manager and other stakeholders. As with all parts of your project plan, the time and resources required to write your Evaluation Report need to be planned and budgeted.

EXAMPLE

Evaluation Report - SunSmart at Colac High

This simple statement makes it clear how the evaluation findings and any recommendations will be reported and communicated. Time lines and resources would be detailed in the Action Plan.

At the completion of the project, a final report will be presented to the *SunSmart at Colac High Steering Committee* by the Project Co-ordinator for endorsement. The final report will include an analysis of evaluations and make recommendations based on evaluation results. The Steering Committee, subject to final determination, will then distribute the endorsed report to representatives of identified stakeholders and publicise the results in the local media.

Completion

Completion is the final drawing together of the project, getting all the documentation together and finalising reports, distributing findings and typing up loose ends. Consider the following questions as you wrap up your project planning efforts to try and ensure there will be as few loose ends as possible when your project nears completion.

1. Have you completed the development of your project record?

Is all the relevant pre-implementation documentation completed with the projects name and registration number on each facing page, and all entries signed and dated?

Is the project record constructed correctly?

2. Have issues related to the projects sustainability been thoroughly addressed?

Depending on the type of project and what you are trying to achieve, sustainability has to be covered throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. Sustainability has been discussed in more detail on page 6.

3. How will you finalise the communications and reporting?

To what extent will you be communicating and reporting on the projects completion and/or evaluation results? Note that Public Affairs personnel will need to be consulted in regard to any public and media promotion, well in advance.

Written or verbal communication or reporting could be directed:

- to the projects primary reporting person or group
- to partners and other stakeholders
- to local or area-wide organisational groups (eg. Q.I. Committee, team meetings)
- through organisational media (eg newsletters)
- to professional journals, at conferences or seminar
- through the local media.

4. How does this project value add?

Have you considered the potential benefits of the findings of this project for the broader system?

- Is this an issue that other health services need to address?
- Have you clearly identified the findings / lessons learnt from this project that have broader application for the health system?
- Has the project been planned, developed, implemented and evaluated sufficiently to be able to be replicated by another health service?