

Fact Sheet 7 – Project Development

A project is not the same as a service. Put simply a project is an identifiable goal within a set timeframe, which can be broken down into the steps needed to achieve that goal. All projects share key characteristics, they are; unique, time limited, create a change, and focus on achieving a goal.

Most organisations will undertake specific projects from time to time, such as researching the provision of a new service, and many find it difficult at times to manage this process successfully.

Developing Successful Projects

Developing projects effectively can ensure that objectives are achieved, and that time and money are maximised. Successful projects usually have four key factors, and it is important to develop these as soon as possible:

- **A Need or Problem.** All projects must respond to a clearly identified need. Researching the need can help tailor the project and ensure it is delivered properly.
- **An Idea and Vision.** All projects need to have a sound vision, which will help drive the project forward and also let you know when you have succeeded.
- **An Opportunity.** All projects must have the opportunity and necessary support, for example from a local authority or key funders.
- **Capacity to Deliver.** The project must have the skills and resources to ensure it can be completed successfully, this may require team working or a partnership approach.

The Project Life Cycle

Experience shows that the life of a project does not follow a logical or tidy path, and it does not usually fall into neat steps. Understanding how the different stages in a project should be organised can assist successful development. The Project Life Cycle

includes all stages from beginning to end needed to complete a project:

- **Step 1:** Identification
- **Step 2:** Building Support
- **Step 3:** Testing
- **Step 4:** Planning
- **Step 5:** Developing a Financial Package
- **Step 6:** Implementation
- **Step 7:** Evaluation

Project Development Tools

A number of tools and approaches exist that can help to develop a project:

- **Critical Success Factors.** These are not the same as goals or objectives, rather being the factors that must be achieved or the project will fail.
- **Work Breakdown Structures.** Illustrates the scope of a project. It is an exhaustive tree structure from general to specific that subdivides actions that must be achieved.
- **Critical Path.** The longest path from the first event to the last, which determines the shortest time to complete a project. For example a one day delay of a critical path activity, delays the entire project by a day.
- **Project Charts.** Graphic depiction of a project. Some focus on time implications, others on sequencing, and common examples include Gantt Chart or Program Evaluation and Review Technique.

For further details about how Pulse Regeneration can help, please contact us.

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