Guide to

Project Planning

for Local Government and Not-for-Profits

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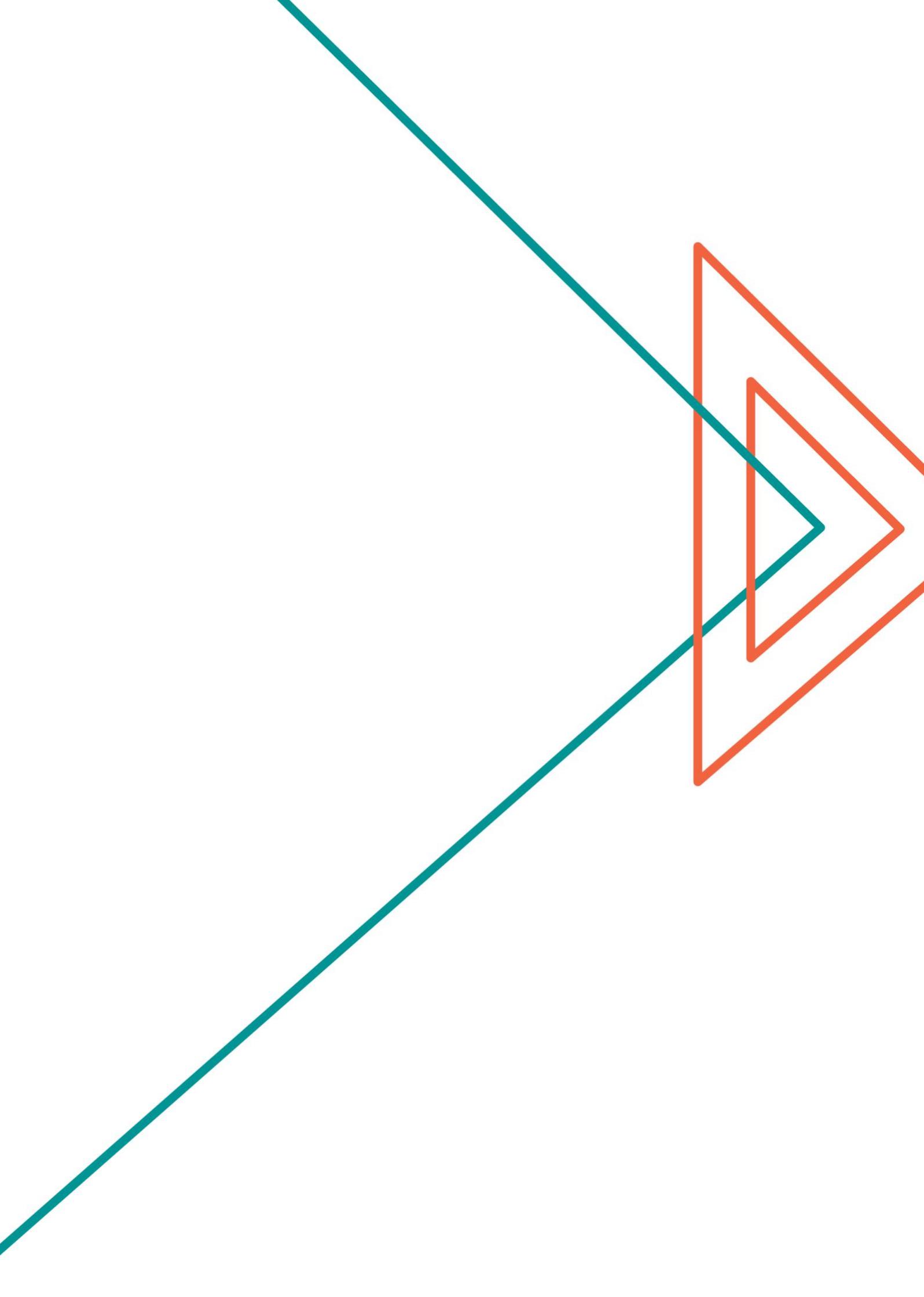
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About Project Planning

Before applying for any grants or embarking on a project, we strongly recommend preparing a project plan. This guide outlines each of the elements we include in a standard project plan. You can increase or decrease the level of detail depending on the complexity of your project, but this provides a good framework to tailor to your project.

1   Project Design

1.1   Project Purpose

In detail, describe the issue/problem/need/opportunity you are addressing. Avoid jumping straight to what you will do, instead focus on the WHY that is driving your action so you can fully understand the situation and potentially uncover different ways of addressing the issue.

1.2   Options Analysis

Brainstorm all possible courses of action (including taking no action). There are no 'wrong answers' here, rather it's an opportunity to find the best way/s to respond to the issue.

Consider all the options you brainstormed and identify which best addresses the issue. Depending on the grant you apply for, you may need to explain the options considered and justify why you chose the proposed solution. This could include consulting with stakeholders to check whether the solution will work for them.

1.3   Project Description

Precisely describe what your project will do – focus only on what will actually happen during the project, not anticipated benefits or justification for why your completing the project.

2   Consultation

Prior to embarking on a project, it is vital to consult with stakeholders. Stakeholders are groups and individuals with an interest in your project.

Having stakeholders on board is very important. Grant funders will want to know that stakeholders are in favour of your project, often asking you to explain what stakeholder engagement you've undertaken and sometimes requesting letters of support from the stakeholders. For your own purposes, you want to maximise the chances of success for you project and consulting with stakeholder will allow you to benefit from their insights and potentially identify ways to work together.

Stakeholder consultation can be quite complex, depending on the nature of the project. It may be necessary to develop a detailed stakeholder engagement plan, especially where it is a major project and/or potentially contentious.

At a minimum, you should consider who your stakeholders are, how much input you are able to offer them (for example, are you simply informing them of your plans, are you seeking suggestions that you might incorporate, are you wanting to co-design a solution or are you handing over total control to them to design the solution?) and how you will consult with them. You should also consider how you will 'report back' to them to explain how their input influenced the project's design.

3 Project Deliverables

3.1 Outputs

Define the specific things your project will deliver. You should be describing the tangible things which are the **outputs** of a project (not things like the impact or difference the project will make). Once you've defined the deliverables, then identify what 'success' will look like and how you will measure this. Three examples are provided below.

Output	Performance Measure	Performance Measure Method/s
Swimming pool (replacement of existing infrastructure that is not repairable)	One swimming pool that meets Swimming Australia's standards for competition requirements.	Swimming pool is completed by 30 June 2020
Hospitality-based training program for at-risk youth	10 at-risk youth complete the program within 18 months	Count of number of at-risk youth who have completed a Cert IV in Hospitality by 31 August 2020
3-day Karramara Alive Festival	3-day festival with multiple concurrent events attended by 5000+ people	Count of number of events delivered over 3-day festival Count of ticket sales over 3-day festival

3.2 Outcomes

The **outcomes** are the benefits your project will deliver. These could include social and economic benefits (there are many outcome categories within these but include health,

wellbeing, education, economic growth, employment growth, environment, industry development, social cohesion, resilience and more). Three examples are provided below.

Outcome	Performance Measure	Performance Measure Method/s
Increased physical activity by Ontonup population	Increased number of community members using the swimming pool	Count of number of users of swimming pool, including demographic data
Participants find full-time employment within 3 months of graduating program	10 participants reporting they are in full-time work by 30 November 2020	Count of number participants who are in full-time work by 30 November 2020
Local residents feel Karramara is a good place to live	City of Karramara's annual community survey finds at least a 5% increase in number of respondents ranking Karramara as a 'good' or 'great' place to live compared to previous year	At least 67% of respondents to City of Karramra's 2020 community survey ranking it as a 'good' or 'great' place to live

4 Project Implementation

4.1 Project Tasks

Develop a detail list of all tasks that will need to be completed for your project. We like to create a table that includes a column for each high-level task, then broken down into sub-tasks. Identify the planned start and completion date for each sub-task, along with the cost to complete each task (ideally seeking quotes for each item rather than estimating as most grant funders will want multiple quotes for major items as well as reducing the risk of your organisation running short of funds to implement the project). It is also worth assigning tasks to the person who will complete each of them to check they have enough capacity to meet the demands of the project.

4.2 Project Governance

How will the project be managed to ensure it remains on track? Who will oversee the project – a dedicated project management team or will it be governed by the organisation's board/committee? Or some other arrangement? Outline who the project manager will be

and the reporting structure for the project. Cover off on how the project will be managed and how monitoring of progress and reporting will be achieved.

5   Budget

A detailed budget should match the costings outlined in your Project Tasks section. If your project runs over a number of years, each line item should be costed out over each year, potentially with cost escalations to reflect anticipated inflation. Depending on the grant requirements, you may be required to provide an itemised budget with every cost item listed, while other grants may group expenses under pre-determined categories.

6   Funding Strategy

Identify where your funding for the project will be sourced from. Knowing what percentage of the project budget a grant will fund is important (for example, many grants will cover 50% or 75% of costs). Once the grant element is determined, identify the other sources of funding such as cash, other grants, loans or, in some instances, in kind contributions.

7   Risk Management

Risk management is a critical part of project planning. Grant funders want to know that applicants have thought about what problems could arise and have developed strategies to respond to these – they will be more worried if you don't identify risks than if you do.

We suggest creating a risk assessment and management matrix, listing each risk (potentially categorised) then assessing the likelihood and severity of each risk to determine the risk rating. For each risk, identify strategy/ies to ether avoid the risk, reduce the risk, share the risk (for example through insurance or outsourcing) or retaining the risk (accepting it and budgeting to manage it).

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