

Planning Health Program

What is planning?

Planning, which includes strategic, program and operational planning, involves a series of decisions based on collecting and analyzing a wide range of information.

Six step planning model

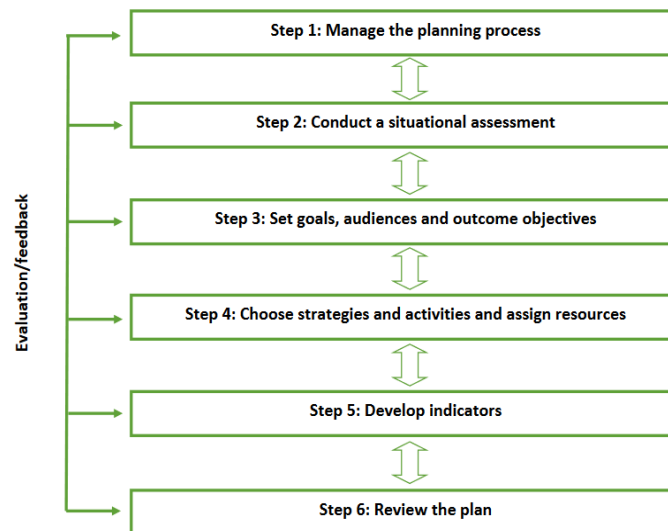


Figure 1. Six step planning model

- Step 1, managing the planning process → addressing how key stakeholders will work together to make decisions, based on good data-gathering and analysis, within the constraints of time, budget, and resources
- Step 2, involves a situational assessment, a multifaceted process that basically addresses this question: “Should we proceed, and if so, how?”
- Step 3-5, are planning decisions relating to setting goals, populations of interest and objectives (step 3), strategies and activities (step 4), and indicators (step 5)

Step 1 Managing the planning process

- Project management is about developing and managing a “plan to plan”.
- A good project management plan clearly describes steps and tasks, assigns people to various roles, sets deadlines and milestones, and show resource allocation
- Project management starts at the beginning of the planning process, and must take into account any assumptions, expectations, and other contextual issues .
- **Project management does not end until the program plan is completed and approved, signaling the beginning of the development and implementation phase**

The planner must manage five project management areas:

- Stakeholder roles and expectations,
- Decision making processes
- Time
- Resources for panning, and
- Data gathering and analysis processes

The Project Management Process

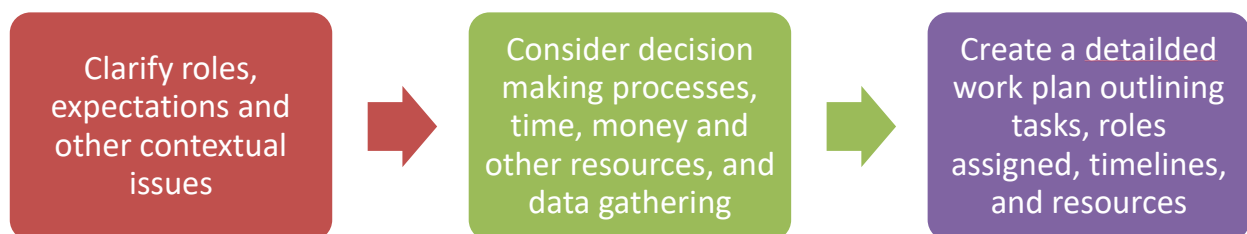


Figure 2. Management Process

How Do I do Step 1?

a. Understand The Context

- Why you are going through a planning process now?
- Are you modifying an existing plan, or starting a new one?
- What if anything, has already been decided (audiences, issues, strategies)?
- What kind of content do you have to include in your plan (e.g., a template or form from your potential funder or your organization)?
- Might any other circumstances or expectations affect how you carry out your planning process or your final program?
- What time will be available to implement the program that you plan?
- What financial resources are available to implement the program that you plan?

b. Identify Stakeholder roles and Expectations

- Identify the key stakeholders;
- Determine their overall degree of involvement (peripheral, supportive, involved or core)
- Determine the roles for each stakeholder in the planning process, engaging them in a meaningful way; and
- Ensure you understand why each stakeholder is interested or involved with the program and/or planning process.

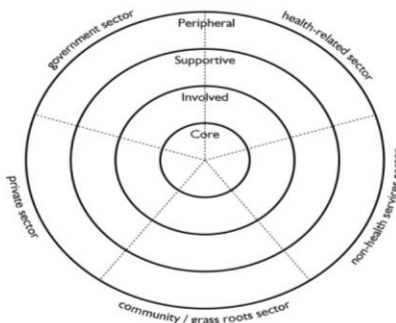


Figure 3. Stakeholder's Role

c. Choose a decision making process

Establish a clear decision-making process for the core planning group early on. Will the group run on consensus, majority vote, or some other method?

d. Determine planning start and end dates

Consider **When planning should/must begin and end**, the reasons for these timelines, and other deadlines

e. Assess resource for planning

Include budgets, staff time, equipment, space, expertise, and in kind contribution from volunteers and partners

f. Determine complexity of data gathering and analysis process

Must answer these questions:

- What expectations do stakeholders have about the rigour of the data and evidence to incorporate into the planning process?
- What expectations do stakeholders have about the need for new data (versus compiling existing data) to inform decisions throughout the planning process?

e. Develop the work plan for the planning process

Develop the the format and content