

# PROJECT AIMS, OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND TARGETS

When applying for grant funding, funders will ask questions about how you will evaluate your project. The questions might look something like this:

*How will you evaluate your project? How will you know what success looks like? What are your project targets? Or simply, Please detail your SMART targets.*

Use the following notes to help plan your project and complete applications.

## GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

It is impossible to have end goals when you don't know what you want to achieve in the first place, and how you will measure that. At the planning stage, you will have to think about the whole project lifecycle including what you will ask participants at the end of the project. Grant applications generally ask these main questions:

- What are your aims?** – This should be a high-level goal that you want to achieve with your project. For example: *To improve the mental wellbeing of people in our community.*
- What will be the main objectives of your project?** – These are what steps will be taken to achieve the desired outcome. Objectives are actions – things you do during the project. In order to improve the wellbeing of your community, your objectives might be: *We will recruit 30 adults from the community; We will give 4 therapy sessions; We will create a booklet of health and wellbeing tips as a group.*
- What will be the main outcomes of your project?** – These are the changes you will have caused due to the project: To improve the wellbeing of your community, your outcomes might be: *Participants will have learned coping techniques for depressive thoughts; Participants will be more confident in how to support others in the group. Participants will have an increased understanding of their mental wellbeing.*
- What are your metrics/measurable variables?** – To achieve your objective, you need to find something you can easily measure. If your objective is to improve people's wellbeing, you could ask people if they feel happier. Your metric is *'feeling of happiness'*. This is not really something you can count, so this would be 'qualitative data'. Or you could ask people how many times a week they felt 'depressed' before the sessions, and also after the sessions. This is something you can count, so it is 'quantitative data'. Your metric is *'number of times people feel depressed'*.
- What are your SMART Targets?** – After you have decided your objectives and you know what metrics you can measure, you must decide on some results that you want to achieve. These will be your targets. (See below for more information.)
- How will you evaluate/measure your success?** – After you have finished your project (and sometimes during the project delivery), you will need to check if you have achieved your targets. This means you will need to decide on suitable 'evaluation tools' (ways to gather information) so that you can measure your success i.e. see whether you have met your targets, or even exceeded them!

# SMART TARGET GUIDANCE

## WHAT DOES SMART MEAN?

- **S**pecific – Your objectives are high-level and can be more general, but a target must be more specific. Your target cannot be to ‘improve wellbeing in the community’, but it could be to ‘increase feelings of happiness by 40% amongst attendees of the therapy sessions’.
- **M**easurable – Think about this when you choose your metrics. If your objective is to decrease racism, how would you measure this? This is extremely difficult since you cannot ask people if they feel ‘less racist’ after an event. However, you could ask people whether they ‘feel more connected to their neighbours’, or if they have ‘learned something new about people with a different faith/ethnic background’. Think about your survey at the end of the project – what questions will you ask to find out the information you want? Perhaps, ‘*To what extent do you agree with this statement, ‘I feel more connected with people in my community who have different ethnic/faith backgrounds to me.’ (Strongly agree, Slightly agree, Slightly disagree, Strongly disagree, Not sure)*. A result from this question would sound like this: ‘*XX% of project participants strongly agreed that they felt more connected with people in their community who have different ethnic/faith backgrounds to themselves.*’ This sounds like an impressive result!
- **A**chievable – Don’t set targets that you can never meet! If your objective is to involve new and different community groups in your activity, you could set a target: ‘We will create new connections with 50 new community groups.’ However, if you only know about 10 new groups you could contact in your community, 50 is not an achievable target.
- **R**elevant – The targets you make should be relevant to your organization and project. If you are running wellbeing sessions, your targets should also relate to these. If you set a target, ‘40% of participants will become involved in volunteering in the community after the project’, this would be nice, but it doesn’t have anything to do with your objective of improving wellbeing.
- **T**ime-bound – You need to set a target that can be measured within the time that you have (i.e. within the project lifecycle). You cannot see if people’s wellbeing improves through their whole life, you only have the resources to ask them after the event you hold, so your target should also reflect that e.g. ‘We want at least 50% of participants to have learned something new about different faith/ethnic groups *by the end of the project sessions.*’

## SMART TARGET EXAMPLES

**Objective:** *We want to improve wellbeing in our community*

**Outcome:** *We will run 4 x 2-hour sessions once a week for a month for maximum 35 participants (found by advertising in the local church, mosque, library and medical centre) to teach people methods for recognizing depression and coping mechanisms to deal with it.*

**Metrics:** *New coping mechanisms learned / Number of attendees / Faiths of attendees / Sense of being able to cope*

### SMART Targets:

1. *We want to attract at least 20 people to each session.*
2. *We hope that at least 50% of attendees will learn at least one new coping mechanism for depression.*
3. *We hope to attract attendees from at least 3 different faith backgrounds.*
4. *We hope that at least 60% of attendees will feel better able to cope with feelings of depression by the end of the sessions.*

The above targets are one sentence long and are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound when compared with the objectives and outcomes.

## DID YOU MEET YOUR TARGETS?

Once you have completed your project, you need to find out if you achieved your targets so that you can complete your project reports.

### EVALUATION TOOLS

'Evaluation tools' are the ways in which you will collect the information you need about your targets. For different metrics, you will need different tools.

Our example SMART Targets:

1. **We want to attract at least 20 people to each session.** – The tool for this would be an attendance register at your event. Simply count the number of attendees and keep a record.
2. **We hope that at least 50% of attendees will learn at least one new coping mechanism for depression.** – If you want to ask people's opinion or find out what they learned, you will need to conduct a survey. There are many tools for this. One free online tool is Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/>) – you can do surveys online or on paper at in-person events. Example question: 'Have you learned at least one new coping mechanism for feelings of depression?' Yes/No. Or, if you want to have a more open question – 'How many new coping mechanisms for feelings of depression have you learned during these sessions?' None/1/2/3+. With this question, you may find out some interesting information, for example, ALL of the coping mechanisms might be new to people. This result is even better than you hoped for!
3. **We hope to attract attendees from at least 3 different faith backgrounds.** – 'What is your faith background?' could be a question you ask attendees during the sessions (part of the attendance register), or you could ask them later as a survey question.
4. **We hope that at least 60% of attendees will feel better able to cope with feelings of depression by the end of the sessions.** – This information would best be collected from a survey after the sessions e.g. "To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement, 'I feel better able to cope with feelings of depression after attending the sessions.' (Strongly agree/Slightly agree/Slightly disagree/Strongly disagree)" If six out of ten people say they Slightly/Strongly agree, you have reached your target!

NB. When you design your survey, make sure there is a question for every SMART target you have so that you can collect all the information you need in one place.