



What makes a good objective?

Now that you have identified the need for your project, it is time to develop clear and concise objectives based on what you want to achieve. Developing good project objectives is the backbone of all good projects. After all, if you don't know where you are going, how are you going to know when you get there?

Objectives are not a list of the activities you will be undertaking. Rather, objectives focus on the outcomes and allow you to measure your success. Objectives are clear statements that describe what you want to achieve. The activities are the key steps you will take in order to achieve the objectives.

Your project objectives should be linked to the overall program objectives under which your project is funded. Objectives should be developed for each key issue being addressed by a project, rather than a single overall objective for the project. There shouldn't be overlap in objectives for projects with multiple objectives. If you have the same or similar activities occurring under more than one objective then you should consider combining those into a single objective.

The **SMART** objectives writing principle is a great tool to assist in developing objectives.

Specific:

Objectives should be clear, well defined and unambiguous. Each objective should be focussed on one key outcome.

Measurable:

Objectives should be measurable so that you can demonstrate it has been achieved. If an objective is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether you are on track and have achieved the objective at project completion.

Attainable:

Objectives should be realistic and achievable. Agreement and commitment from relevant stakeholders is a must to ensure objectives can be reached.

Resourced:

Objectives should be suitably resourced. Resources include access to individuals with relevant skills and knowledge as well as the necessary tools.

Time bound:

Objectives should be achieved within a certain timeframe. This ensures commitment to a deadline so you know where you want to get to and by when.

“Your objectives should be outcomes focussed on what you want to achieve rather than what you have to do”

Here are a few examples of bad vs good objectives:

Examples of poor objectives	Examples of good objectives
Install 1,000 plants	Create a 1,000m ² riparian corridor and link two ecologically significant bushlands for local native fauna transit in the Blue Mountains Park.
Remove weeds	Reduce woody weed cover to less than 5% in 2,000m ² of degraded vegetation in Blue Mountains Park.
Run a workshop	Educate 100 local residents in the Blue Mountains region on how to prevent and restore degraded vegetation in Blue Mountains Park.
Install a sign	Increase the awareness of 500 people visiting Blue Mountains Park on the environmental and cultural significance of the Park.
Create a website that is appealing for all age groups	Educate and create behaviour change in 2,000 25-35 year olds on ways to reduce carbon emissions through an interactive website.
Expansion of partnerships and networks	Develop partnerships with 20 local businesses and reduce those businesses waste to landfill by 20%.
Improved environmental education with tools and strategies	To increase environmental education of 100 local Parramatta residents on the benefits of recycling and reducing waste through 10 community workshops.
Raise awareness of the issue of climate change	To raise awareness on the issue of climate change of Year 7 students in five Inner-Western Sydney schools by promoting the availability of online learning resources via social media.
Improve awareness of conservation issues	Educate 1,000 households within Blacktown Council on ways to reduce energy and water usage by 10%.

The examples of poor objectives do not provide much detail. They do not adhere to the SMART objectives writing principle. You will also notice they are not outcomes focused and some would be better suited as activities which will be undertaken in order to contribute to the achievement of the objective. Others could become objectives but more specific detail is required. The examples of the good objectives describe the degree to which change is expected and are outcome focussed.

“Use the SMART method to develop your objectives, ensure your objectives are outcome focussed and are linked to the program objectives”

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