ProMIS
PROGRAMMA MATTONE
INTERNAZIONALE SALUTE

E-MANUAL

TOOLKIT – GUIDE TO PLANNING EU PROJECTS IN THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL HEALTH SECTOR

2.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

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Ministero della Salute
CONFERENZA DELLE REGIONI E DELLE PROVINCE AUTONOME
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In order to carry out a project design always starts from the "creative" phase (the idea), so it is essential to fully understand the context of reference, clarify the scenario, needs and/or problems that you want to respond to with the project to be implemented.

It is also important to follow the parameters made explicit in the *call - policy context* - as these aspects will be considered in the evaluation phase.

Below are some design tools.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a method that aims to develop creative solutions to problems.

The goal of brainstorming is the production of "**possible solutions for a specific scenario**." Underlying this is the idea of play, as a light-hearted dimension that allows the creativity of individuals and the group to be unleashed, and which is normally prevented by a series of inhibitions. The ideal group of participants should be no more than about 15 people.

Once the starting point problem or need for the project idea has been focused on (and a time limit has been set for the meeting), each person will express the "first idea that comes to mind," in rapid sequence and by association of ideas. Typically, brainstorming rewards solutions that are as absurd as possible. Indeed, genius ideas or unexplored points of view are often hidden in creativity and imagination. The basic rule of brainstorming is that participants should not make any judgments at all about the ideas proposed by others.

Indeed, the **goal** is to **produce new ideas**, while judgment introduces an element of restraint and induces defensive attitudes. Initial brainstorming ideas are then refined and reworked, deepened and revised by the group, referring to ideas proposed by other participants, so that initial ideas are transformed into increasingly practical and feasible proposals.

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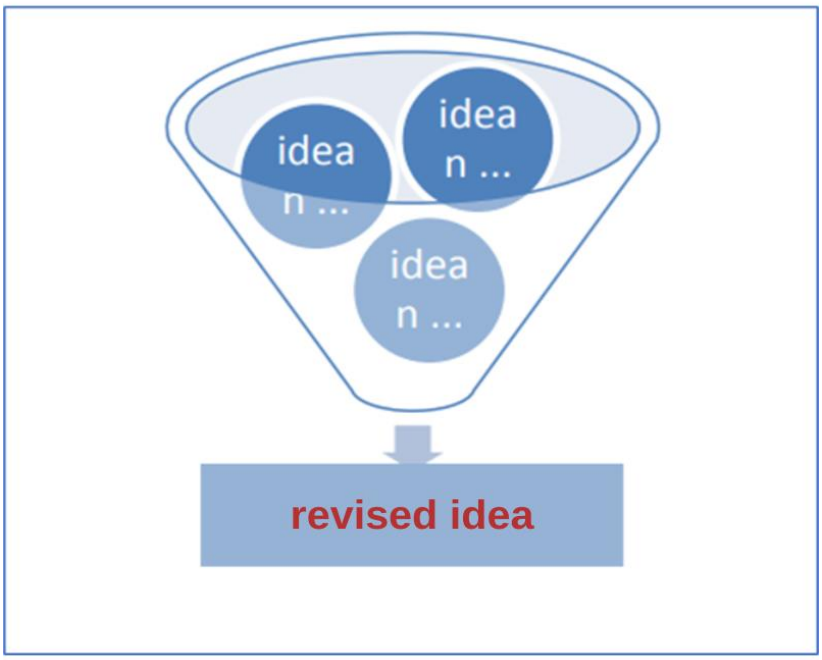

During brainstorming, it is useful for a **facilitator** to be present to manage the group dynamic by:

- proposing the initial scenario in a clear and simple way (the facilitator must have studied the relevant programme and call);
- reminding participants to suspend judgment and to focus on expressing ideas;
- not to be afraid of ideas that are considered disruptive and to welcome any ideas expressed;
- write down, on a whiteboard or similar, all the ideas expressed, so that they are visible to all and can be used for later elaboration;
- encourage participants to explore and elaborate on ideas expressed by others.

It is important to point out that in European planning, the economic and human resources that usually carry out this pre-project phase are often not considered eligible expenses.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

To detect the needs or demands of a certain context, that is, to ask stakeholders to express their opinions and expectations, the most immediate tool is the questionnaire.

Questionnaires can be a useful tool if they are well structured. Those who prepare the questionnaire should be very familiar with the relevant programme and call, as well as being clear about the goal: "to collect ideas and solutions in response to problems defined in the call." The processing of the questionnaires, as a synthesis of the insights, will lead to the definition of the project idea. This technique is cost-effective and it is often used to involve at an early stage international partners with whom we intend to work.

If you want to engage a larger, geographically dispersed group, you can use digital tools for conducting online questionnaires (Googleform, SurveyMonkey, etc.). These tools allow easy visualization of the responses collected for quantitative surveys (through graphs or other tools), facilitating their analysis and understanding.

FOCUS GROUP

A **focus group** is a **small group of people** (usually 4 to 12) **discussing a specific topic**.

This technique is used when there is a need to focus (hence the name focus group) on a phenomenon or investigate a specific topic in depth, **using the interaction that takes place among group members**. It is important to select participants carefully so that they can contribute from different perspectives to the focus group.

Even for focus groups, it is useful to have a **facilitator** to organize the work and clarify and reiterate the goals of the work itself. The first thing to do is to clarify the goal: "to gather ideas and solutions in response to problems defined in the call."

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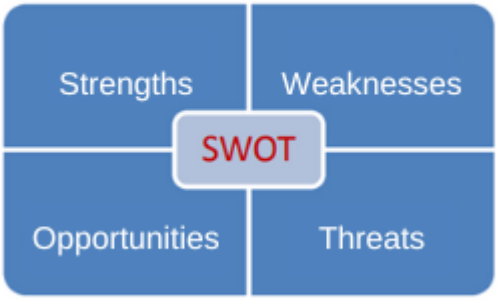
SWOT ANALYSIS

It is one of the simplest and most effective analytical tools for highlighting the characteristics of a project proposal or organization, considering its relationship to the operating environment in which it is situated, and offering a framework for defining strategic directions.

SWOT analysis is constructed by dividing a space (a sheet of paper, a whiteboard) into four quadrants and writing in the first the **strengths**, in the second the **weaknesses**, in the third the **opportunities** and in the fourth the **threats** of the object of analysis.



The most well-established scope, sometimes explicitly required by the relevant regulations and calls, is **design context analysis**.

In the early stages of the project cycle, it can be useful to identify the most relevant elements of the reality in which one has an interest in intervening and its relationship to the external operating context. In this case, it provides guidance on the key factors to be considered for strategic planning, highlights the need for specific insights into the elements, guides operational strategy and project identification, and, at the formulation stage, summarizes the scenario that determined the project choices.

SWOT analysis can be used in a wide range of other cases, such as a tool to support Stakeholder Analysis, institutional capacity, or the analysis of individual project activities.

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HOW TO USE IT

The analysis consists of identifying which internal aspects characterize positively and negatively a given object of analysis (community, territory, sector, organization, etc.) and highlighting them in the first two quadrants. The lower part of the space, on the other hand, should list those aspects outside the object of analysis that may offer support and opportunities for development (opportunities) and those that could worsen the existing situation and make it critical or limit future possibilities (risks, threats). The SWOT analysis can be carried out through collective or individual work, including briefly representing the results of the analysis or facilitating the collection of third-party inputs in a series of interviews/meetings as a function of a subsequent planning stage. Initially, a clear identification of the entity being analyzed and the identification of the elements to be included in the diagram are formed. This stage is followed by the identification, selection and synthesis of strategic directions derived from the analysis. The elements, whether they are already present or merely envisaged, are placed in the upper quadrants and become those that are to be enhanced, on which to build a path of development (the strengths) and those to be modified, on which to intervene to remove an obstacle or, in the worst case, to be considered as an inescapable constraint (weaknesses) which, with appropriate actions, should be made minimized as much as possible. ***The strategy will be geared toward seizing the opportunities given by the context to enhance or make up for its inherent characteristics***. Likewise, it will seek to limit the potential impact of external threats, focusing on addressing factors in the other three quadrants that can support effective and sustainable strategies. In addition to the classic and effective four-quadrant matrix, other ways of representing SWOT analysis have been developed. The most common way involves describing an area or region of intervention or a programme, with a thematic breakdown of the object of analysis on the rows and an indication of the four aggregates of elements on the columns, as in the diagram below:

Component	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*	*Opportunities*	*Threats*
Population Occupation …				

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This method is ideal as a checklist in the construction of a SWOT analysis or for the presentation of the synthesis of in-depth research to the public, but it risks losing its function of breaking out from the infinite number of useful elements the ones that really matter. While there are no binding rules, a SWOT matrix should not go beyond about 20 factors to remain effective for communication and strategy setting purposes. Therefore, after an "expansive" phase, it is appropriate to check the value of individual elements and make a selection to arrive at a lean matrix.

PROBLEM TREE

While the other methodologies belong to design in general, **the problem tree is a popular methodology in European design** and is sometimes required within the template.

With the help of all partners and beneficiaries (the latter whenever possible), problems and needs related to our project idea are identified. **The problem tree represents the placement of identified problems in a cause-and-effect diagram** (i.e., determining what causes what and what is caused by something else), represented vertically from bottom to top. The cause-and-effect links between different problems should be carefully checked as they form the basis of future design.

To work out the tree diagram, one must first identify the different problems and choose one from which to start. A second problem is then identified in relation to the first and it is defined as to whether it is: - cause of the first, in which case it is placed graphically at a lower level - effect of the first, in which case it is placed graphically at a higher level - neither cause nor effect, in which case it is placed on the same level. It may be that the same problem occurs in the different roots of the tree, or appears as the cause of two or more different problems, making the vertical logic on which the problem tree is developed difficult. In any case, there is no one, single absolute solution, the tree tends to open in the lower levels. Put another way, every problem is caused by one or more causes. It is necessary to involve all stakeholders and especially, when possible, the

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beneficiaries of our project (or their representatives). You tend to have to go deeper into the causes of the problem, so as to open the branches of the tree downwards (following the metaphor, they are the roots of the problem). The results will be obtained in this way.

At the higher end, there will be consequences, but these tend to be fewer and they will be the broader issues, not those that reach a single project. **These are the so-called overarching goals**.

Once the tree is completed, a single focal problem is identified, which will be the purpose, also called the specific goal: the why of the project**.**

In developing the problem tree, you must:

- not express problems in a generic way such as "poor culture," "marginality" (it is convenient to describe the problem directly, without resorting to specialized terminology, this helps the analysis of possible causes and effects and promotes the identification of the resulting target);
- not run into so-called "absent solutions" (i.e. ask whether the alleged problem is hiding an implicit solution, usually expressed in terms of a lack, because it may actually represent an absent solution. If the goal obtained, by turning the presumed problem on its head, leads to identifying a different problem to the one from which it started, it means that the solution is still absent);
- check whether there are alternatives to the solution and whether the final beneficiaries really feel the problem is theirs.

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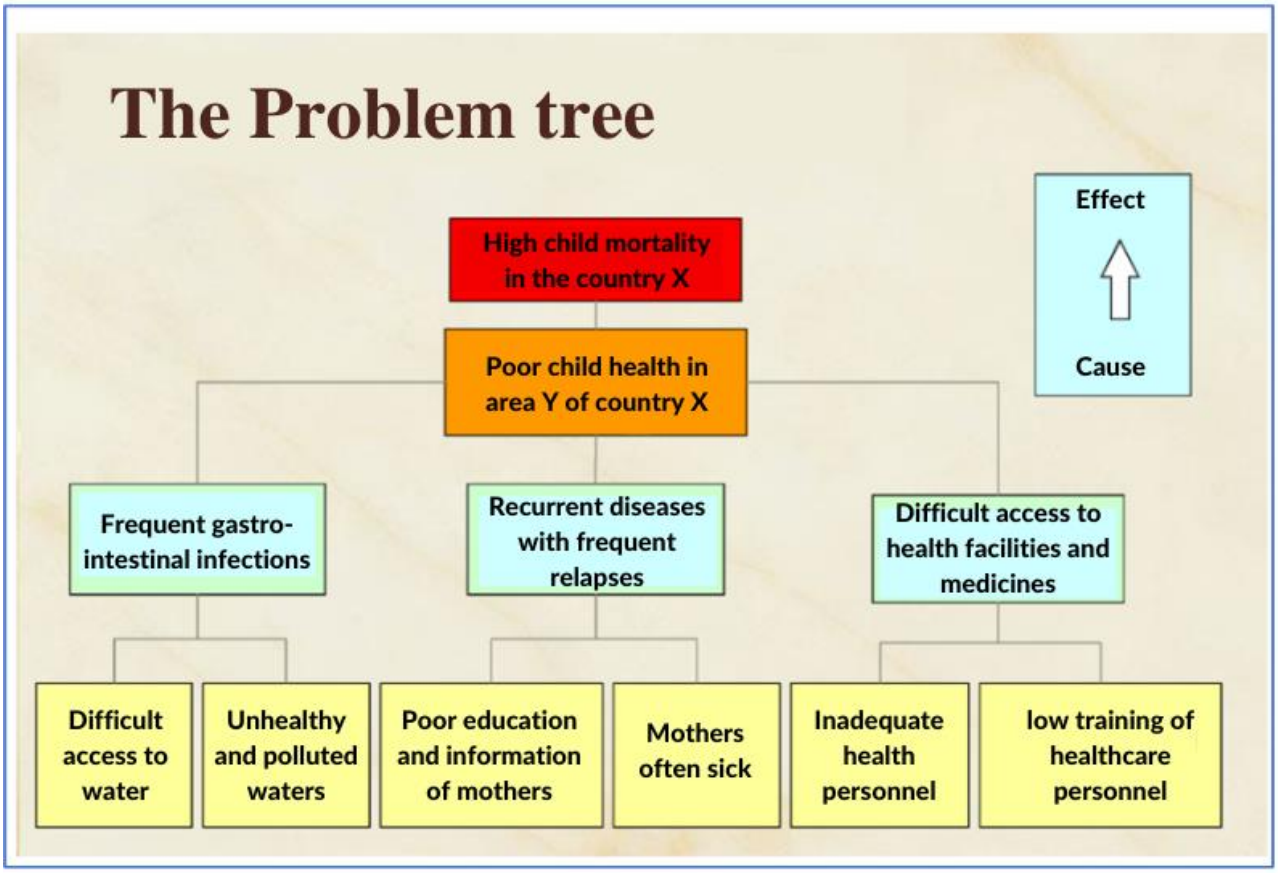

The problem analysis process should be as thorough, participatory and reiterative as possible. When you start to explore the problem or need, please avoid formulating the problems in terms of "lack" (e.g. "lack of space..."), as this does not identify the real problem of the beneficiaries of the intervention, but rather it already outlines one of the possible solutions to the problem: "having more space". Instead, one should ask, "What problem would be solved with respect to spaces?"; to this question, a possible answer may be, for example, "the beneficiaries have no one to support them in finding a space.")

It is always appropriate to:

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- **describe the problem directly**, without resorting to specialized terminology: a problem described explicitly (e.g., "supporting the educational provision of children in difficult circumstances") aids the analysis of possible causes and effects and promotes the identification of the resulting goal;
- **refrain from personal evaluations** (e.g. "Entity X is incompetent"; in this case the problem may instead be "Entity X is not capable of performing this activity");
- **avoid general statements**, it is appropriate to better specify the problem or need even with the help of data and always citing sources;
- **it is also advisable that you explore the context and related problems by structuring an articulated problem tree, to be transformed later into a goal tree**, subsequently choosing the activities to be initiated (with particular focus on the costs and the time they will entail). The need then translates into goals and then outcomes.

GOAL TREE

Through the construction of the problem tree, the problem/need situation at a given time is presented by clarifying the cause-effect relationships. **Goal analysis starts from the problem tree to represent in a goal tree the expected future situation** that would result from fully solving the problems detected and analyzed.

It represents the transformation of problems (current "negative" condition) *into goals* (desired future "positive" condition). If before we were dealing with cause-effect relationships, now we are thinking about the means to achieve the ends, the positive

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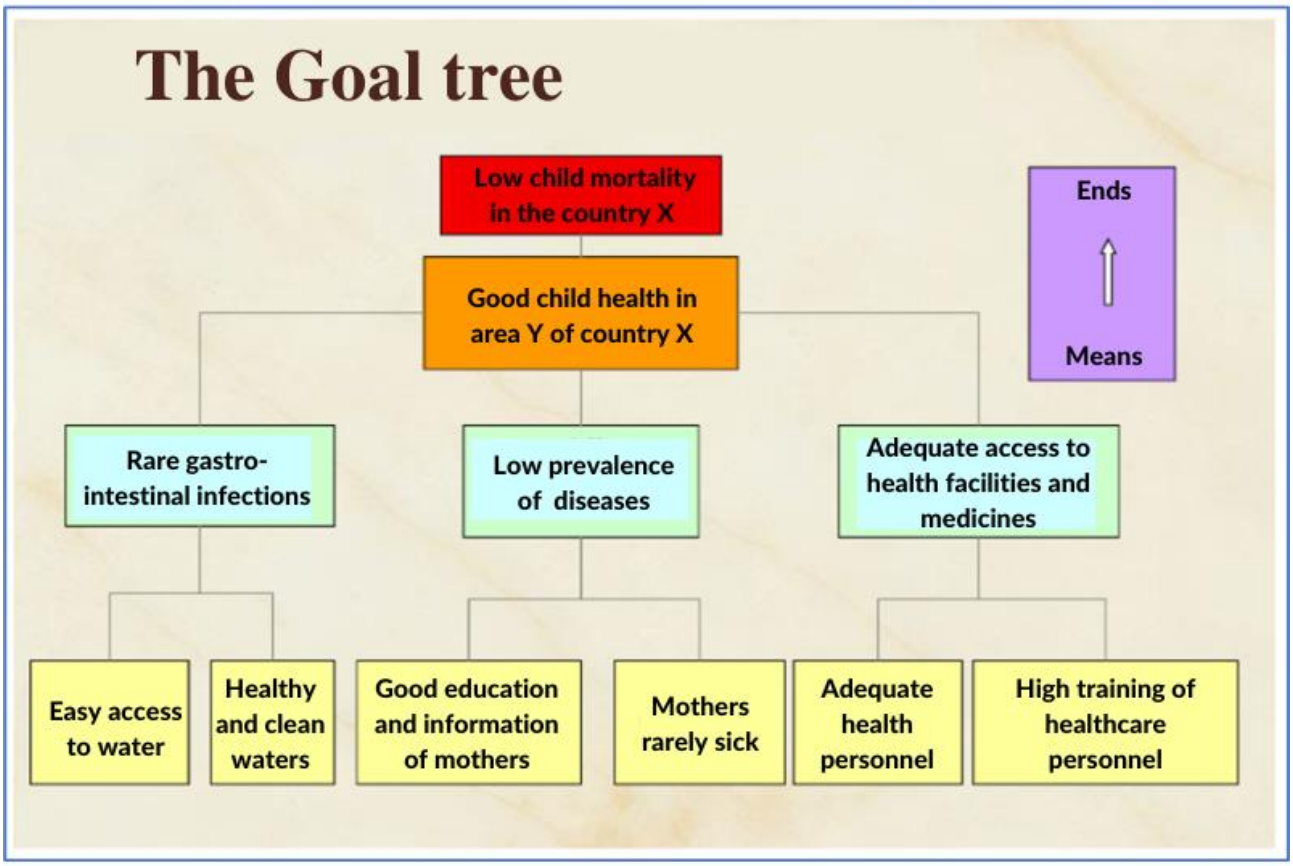

aspects. We flip the problem over and write the goal as if it had been achieved: the goal tree then reflects a picture of the desired situation.

It is important to point out that sometimes, by making a goal tree, one can encounter goals that are not related to specific problems stated in the problem tree. Then you have to find what the problem is that generates that expected outcome, so that you can "correct your aim." It is necessary to transform all problems into possible goals to be achieved by reframing the previously identified negative situation into a positive one. The goal, thus understood, represents a positive condition to be achieved. Once the goal

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tree has been outlined, it is essential to find solutions in synergy with the different project stakeholders (who does what: the roles of each partner). Each partner may bring their own initiative and resources to bear on the same goals, i.e., applying technical and institutional expertise

THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The **Logical** Framework, as explained in Chapter T.2, is a **design matrix,** widely used in programmes promoted by the European Commission and other international bodies, useful for clearly defining the different elements of a design intervention and visualizing them effectively.

The Logical Framework is then divided into the following columns:

	LOGIC OF INTERVENTION	INDICATORS	VERIFICATION TOOLS	EXTERNAL CONDITIONS
GENERAL TARGETS				
SPECIFIC TARGETS				
RESULTS				
ACTIVITIES		TOOLS	COSTS	
				PRECONDITIONS

INTERVENTION LOGIC: describes the basic elements of the project according to a bottom-up cause-effect logic. This means that activities lead to outcomes, outcomes lead to the achievement of specific goals and the achievement of general goals.

OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS: An indicator is what can be objectively observed when an outcome or goal is achieved. In the first three rows, a qualitative definition and a quantitative specification using appropriate indicators are given; in the fourth row, an estimate of the physical and non-physical resources required to perform each activity.

VERIFICATION SOURCES: We indicate in the first three rows, where and in what form the information will be sourced to assign values to the indicators in the previous column; in the fourth row, the estimated costs and source of funding for mobilizing the resources estimated as necessary.

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HYPOTHESIS: external conditions, the favourable hypotheses whose non-occurrence may prevent the intervention from running smoothly or jeopardise the achievement of Outcomes and Goals). External factors (outside the direct control of the intervention), which are essential for the achievement of: Specific Goals, Expected Outcomes, Activities; below are indicated the preconditions that must be met before project implementation begins.
GENERAL GOALS: socioeconomic development goals as defined at the policy or programme level.
SPECIFIC GOALS: specific goals of the intervention that you wish to achieve.
EXPECTED OUTCOMES: Outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the specific goals.
ACTIVITIES: actions performed during the implementation of the intervention to achieve individual outcomes.

QL is particularly well suited to assessing the coherence of a programme/project, and it is particularly appropriate for supporting the identification of the most suitable indicators for monitoring and evaluating project effects. The matrix sets out all the salient factors and components necessary for project implementation and its correspondence with the goals achieved, as well as the logical links that trigger the succession of events and their cause-and-effect relationships. The meaning of the QL is given by the column/row intersections and their double-entry boxes.

TIME SHEET, GANTT SHEET OR TIME SCHEDULE

Having completed the Logical Framework, the activities listed in the left column can easily be copied into a new table: the **Gantt Sheet**, (also called the time sheet or time schedule). **The time schedule is written to conventionally establish activity phases and times and the who does what**. It is also useful for the purpose of considering the executive development of the project in case delays or suspensions occur due to "internal variables."

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Steps for preparing the Time schedule:

1. Activity List. The activities described in the QL summarize what the project proposes to put in place to achieve its goals. Once the activities have been identified, each is divided into operational tasks, the purpose of dividing activities into specific subtasks or responsibilities is to make them sufficiently simple and easily manageable. The method consists in dividing an activity into sub-activities (it is advisable to take each sub-activity and divide it into tasks). Each task, therefore, can be assigned to a person or a work group. The most frequently made mistake is to divide and subdivide activities in an illogical and unmanageable way.

2. Defining Competencies. Once the tasks have been identified, it is possible to specify the type of skills needed to accomplish them. Experienced staff often have already been identified at this stage, but this step remains a good opportunity for partnership members to compare notes to check whether the action plan is feasible given the human resources available.

3. Agree Tasks. By allocating tasks, responsibilities for achieving the goals of each member of the partnership are defined; the allocation must take into consideration the abilities, skills and experience of each person. Often, if the assignment of tasks is generic, or worse if a certain task is no one's responsibility, then there are serious problems in project management and critical issues that can even compromise outcomes. It is preferable, when assigning tasks, for there to be clarity in what is expected from the execution of the task (if this clarity is not there, it means that the level of detail of the task specification will have to be increased).

4. State the time frame. The time sequence indicates in what order the activities are to be performed, the division of responsibilities, and the interdependencies between the activities. Specifying time frames means making a realistic estimate of the duration of each task (it is often not possible to establish these dates with absolute certainty, but it is always good to make assumptions.

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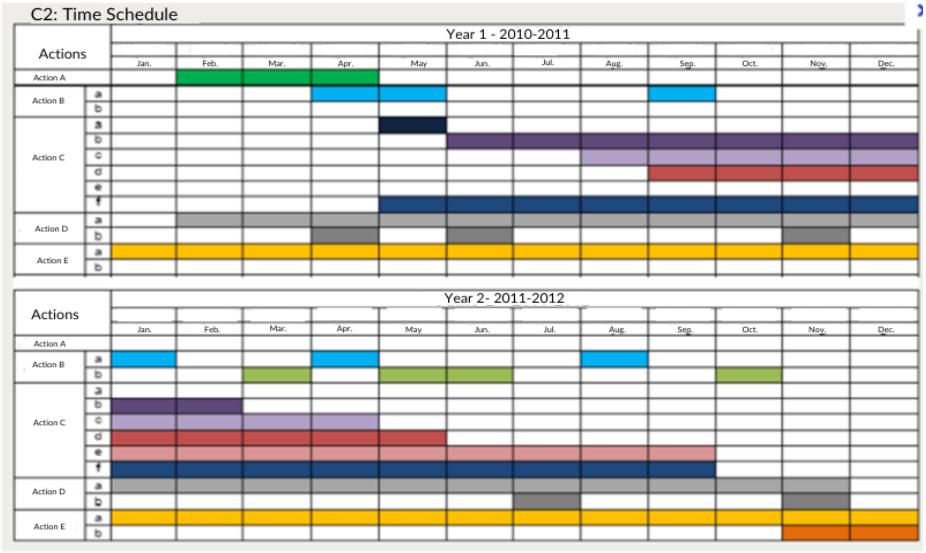
C2: Time Schedule



GANTT DIAGRAM	YEAR 1												YEAR 2												YEAR 3											
	month												month												month											
Work Packages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
MILESTONES		M1							M2					M3														M4								M5
WP1 Coordination & Management												D 1.1												D 1.2												D 1.3
Task 1.1 General Coordination																																				
Task 1.2 Financial Management																																				
Task 1.3 Risk Management																																				
Task 1.4 Meetings																																				
Task 1.5 Reporting & Monitoring																																				
Task 1.6 Quality assurance																																				
WP2 Preparatory Data & Crop Establishment									D2.1																											
Task 2.1 Site analysis																																				
Task 2.2 Existing practices in chosen sites, means of production availability																																				
Task 2.3 Crop, irrigation and fertilization prerequisites																																				
Task 2.4 Preparatory of agronomic activities																																				
Task 2.5 Data Base																																				
WP3 Design of the Pilot Plant														D 3.1																						
Task 3.1 Design of the solar desalination systems for the Plant																																				
Task 3.2 Design of the ICT remote management system																																				
Task 3.3 Design of the greenhouses																																				
WP4 Pilot Plant Management																												D 4.1								
Task 4.1 Assembling of the solar desalination systems, greenhouse & control system																																				
Task 4.2 Pilot Plant assembling and test																																				
Task 4.3 Crop and rotation design and implementation																																				
Task 4.4 Irrigation and fertilization design and implementation																																				
Task 4.5 Integrated Cultivation design and Pilot plant operation																																				
WP5 TECHNICAL VALIDATION & LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT																																				D 5.1
Task 5.1 Technical validation of the solar desalination sytems																																				
Task 5.2 Technical validation of the greenhouse structure efficiency																																				
Task 5.3 Technical validation of the system control																																				
Task 5.4 Validation of the crop production																																				
Task 5.5 Database and Standardisation of the activites																																				
Task 5.6 Development of the standard system scale-up																																				
Task 5.7 LCA Analysis & system optimization																																				
Task 5.8 Scale-up & industrialization roadmap																																				
WP6 DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION		D 6.1										D 6.2												D 6.3												D 6.4
Task 6.1 Development & implementation of the Dissemination Plan																																				
Task 6.2 Development & implementation of the Communication activities																																				
Task 6.3 Exploitation plan & innovation strategies																																				
Task 6.4 IPR Protection & exploitation plan																																				
Task 6.5 Development & implementation of the Data Access																																				

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THE BUDGET

Once the timeline is also completed, **a detailed specification and forecast of costs is made: the budget**.

Each European call provides all the documents needed to fill out the expenditure tables. You should always stick to the official and provided templates and, in any case, constantly check for changes and updates. In addition, it is advisable to prepare an Excel sheet detailing each cost to be monitored constantly.

SOME TIPS

1. ***The project coordinator is never alone****; it is important to involve all possible and interested parties in the development of the project idea.*
2. ***Carefully read all provided and existing documentation,*** *including FAQs****.***
3. *Propose the most qualified partner (institutionally or technically) for* ***coordination****.*
4. *Comply with the* ***directions on the template****.*
5. *The proposal must be created/thought out to* ***solve the stated problems and needs expressed*** *(not to seek funding).*
6. ***Writing with readability and evaluation in mind*** *(detailed but concise, realistic and not contrived; clear and organized writing (with highlights, diagrams, charts envisaged by the form).*
7. *Provide a logical, correct, attention-grabbing* ***summary****. Focus on assessment criteria (e.g., read the individual assessment form used by evaluators).*
8. ***Have someone who was not involved in drafting it read the project*** *and, if they think that it is "complicated," unclear, and poorly written, then you should carefully consider reformulating the project proposal*

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