Connecting Spheres

Financial and technical reporting

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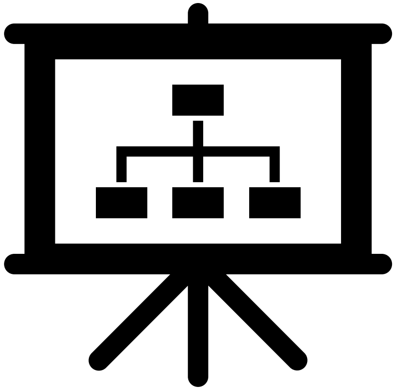
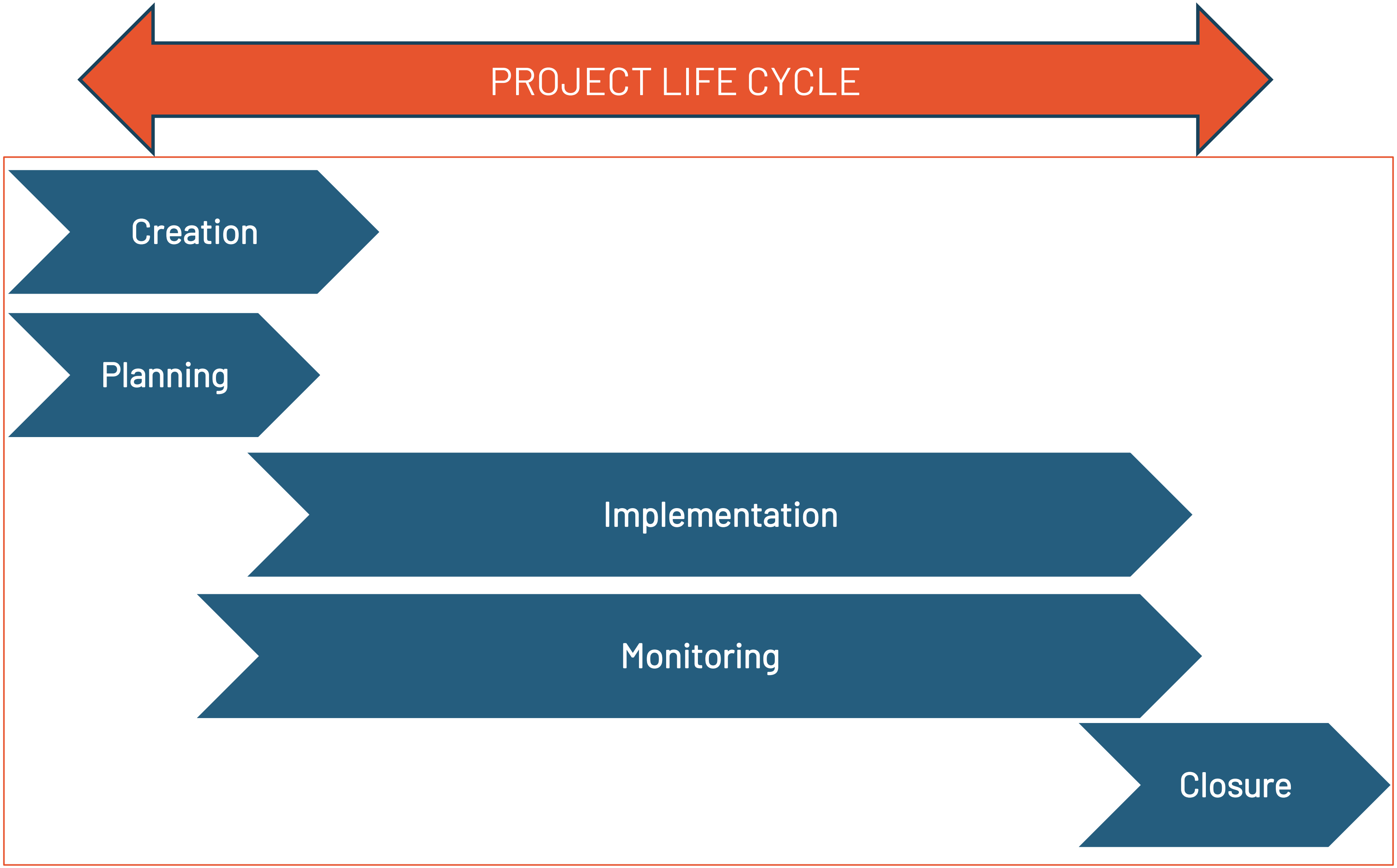
Objective

To provide organisations with the skills, tools and practical methods needed to plan, implement, monitor and report on projects in an effective and sustainable manner




PROJECT LIFE CYCLE
Creation
Planning
Implementation
Monitoring
Closure

What are we talking about?

Case study 1: "The phantom lead"

When the partners in the "Percorsi di Comunità" project meet for the first time, everything looks promising: three associations, a local council, and a small social enterprise. The lead organisation, the FuturoVivo association, enthusiastically declares: "Don't worry, we'll coordinate everything. We've got the experience!" The partners put their trust in them. The agreements are signed, and they get started.

But cracks begin to show as early as the first month. Coordination meetings are scheduled… and then postponed. Partners' emails receive replies days, sometimes weeks, later. The lead organisation fails to send the updated timetable and no one knows how activities are progressing at the various sites.

When the first monitoring deadline arrives, FuturoVivo fails to send the promised data collection template. Each partner fills in what they can, using different criteria. Instead of collating and organising the material, the lead partner simply forwards everything to the funder, without checking or standardising anything.

An urgent request arrives from the funder: "The report is inconsistent. Please provide verified and consistent data." The partners start to get agitated. One association says: "We're doing our bit, but we can't work without direction." Another threatens to withdraw from the project. Meanwhile, FuturoVivo is overwhelmed by other commitments and has no proper project manager: it is the chairperson who takes care of everything, in her spare time.

The project is not in danger because of the activities, which are running smoothly, but because of the total lack of coordination of the Coordinator

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- How should the roles and responsibilities of a lead partner be defined at the outset?
- What measures should the lead partner have put in place?
- How might the partners respond if the lead partner fails to fulfil its duties?

Planning – Project launch

Objectives:

- Building strong partnerships
- Setting up monitoring systems
- Awareness and accountability: regarding responsibilities and rewards
- Understanding who does what

Planning – Project launch

Relationship with the donor:

- Signing the contract with the donor
- Reviewing contracts and documentation with the donor

Analysis of the budget, project cost and any co-financing

- Payment arrangements and structure of the co-financing
- Eligible costs
- Eligibility period
- Required procedures and tools (dedicated bank account, attachments, timesheets, etc.)

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Planning – Project launch

Partnership relations:

- Partnership agreement
- Annexes containing:
  - monitoring tools
  - Technical reporting (qualitative)
  - Financial reporting (ledger, reporting guidelines, etc.)
  - Communication guidelines
  - Creation of a database to be updated with the contact details of the organisations
  - Project governance: roles and responsibilities, timelines, etc.

Planning – Project launch

Partnership relations

- Budget, project cost and any co-financing
  - Payment arrangements and structure of co-financing
  - Cash flow
- Eligible costs
  - Lump-sum reporting
  - Actual-cost reporting
  - Fixed-rate reporting
- Eligibility period
- Interim reports

Organise project management in terms of planning, timelines, and the tools used and shared

tasks	responsability	when
Creation of a database of partner organisations' contacts	Lead partner	M1
Drafting and signing of the partnership agreement and annexes (template for financial and narrative reporting, etc.)	Lead partner with each partner	M1
Development of a technical and financial project management manual: • Governance • Communication • Technical and financial reporting and reporting deadlines, monitoring • Conflict management and mitigation	Lead partner with approval and collaboration of all partners	M1-M3
Development of technical and financial monitoring tools: • Timeline / GANTT chart • Risk assessment • Workplan • Logical framework • Initial note and annexes	Lead partner with approval and collaboration of all partners	M1–M3, to be updated every 3–6 months within the partnership

Monitoring and implementation

These activities go hand in hand. They begin in Month 1 and conclude at the end of the project

Objectives:

- Ensure the smooth running of the projectPlan, implement and monitor activities
- Anticipate potential risks
- Develop mitigation strategies in collaboration with the partnership
- Monitor the results achieved (expectations vs reality)
- Monitoring expenditure
- Planning a reorganisation of activities

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Monitoring and implementation

- Regular partnership meetings
- Drafting and updating of monitoring tools:
  - Timetable
  - Work plan
  - Risk analysis
  - Logical framework
  - Etc.
  - Initial note
  - Training on the tools, if necessary

Excel example

Tools for monitoring activities

- Activity and results reports
- Evidence of activities carried out
  - Attendance records
  - Guidelines for carrying out activities
  - Photos
  - Screenshots
  - Evaluation questionnaires
  - Registration forms
  - Reports from suppliers, consultants or professionals carrying out the specific activity

Tools for monitoring activities

- Setting up the Journal/Expense List
- Why you need to set it up and how to do it
- What information is required? ...
- Budget monitoring
- Why monitor your budget?
- How to monitor your budget?

Project redesign

- a controlled review process of a project's objectives, activities, timelines, budget or resources, to realign it with the actual context and ensure its success

- When a re-planning is necessary:
  - Changes in the context (regulatory, organisational, political)
  - Significant deviations from expected timelines, costs or results
  - Emergence of new needs or priorities among beneficiaries/clients
  - Unforeseen constraints (reduced resources, delays, staff turnover)
  - Interim evaluations or critical monitoring

Project redesign

Why re-evaluate/re-allocate:

- To ensure consistency between objectives and activities
- To safeguard the impact and quality of results
- To improve efficiency and effectiveness
- To reduce risks and prevent project 'failure'
- To ensure transparency and accountability

Project redesign

So how do you adjust the plan?

- Analysis of deviations or changes
- Identification of alternatives and mitigation measures
- Consultation with stakeholders and decision-makers
- Formal review of the work plan / budget / indicators
- Updating of project documentation

→Strumento per rimodulazione finanziaria

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Budget Amendments

- What is a budget amendment (as opposed to minor adjustments), and when is it necessary to submit or request one from the donor?
- What is an NCE and how do you set it up?
- What tools are available for preparing a budget amendment and an NCE?

Interim/Final Reports and Audits

- How many and when
- Required formats
- Supporting documents

Monitor the activities carried out by partners in order to ensure the quality of the activities and the expected outcomes of the project

Task	Responsability	When
Communication among partners • Partnership meetings • Mail exchange	Coordinator with partners collaboration	• Every 45 days • After each meeting (minutes and to-do list) and as required
Technical and Financial Progress Report	Coordinator and partners	Every 3 months
submit the project results to a quality committee comprising impartial representatives from each partner country	Quality committee	Every 6 months and every time an output is realized
Retention of mandatory technical and financial documentation and supporting documents (document retention obligation)	Coordinator and partners	always

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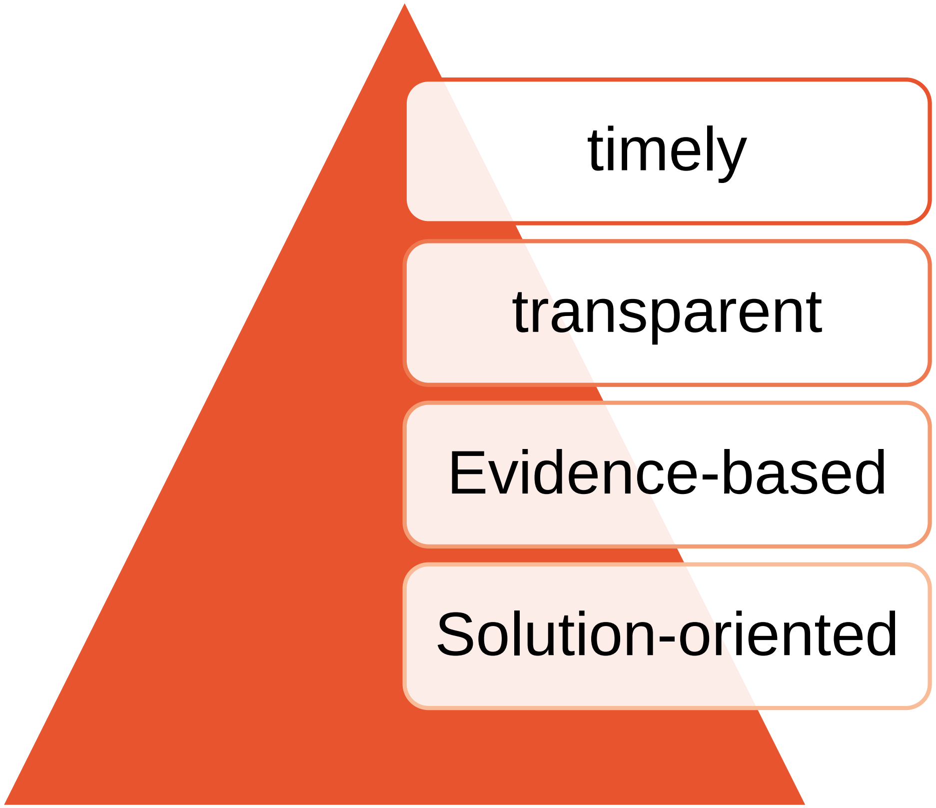
Communication with the funding body

- Contacting the funding body helps to ensure transparency, compliance and sound management. Proactive communication helps to prevent problems, reduce administrative risks and strengthen the relationship with the funding body.
- Why contact the FB:
  - Clarification on guidelines, criteria and requirements
  - Notification of changes to the project
  - Requests for formal approvals
  - Updates on progress
  - Reporting of critical issues or risks
  - Notification of significant events or activities

Communication with the funding body



Communication with the funding body

Example:

As the lead organisation, upon completion of a major project activity, we realise after collecting the data that the target figures have not been met.

What should we do?

Communication with the funding body: How to deal with delays and critical issues

1. A clear analysis of the problem.
2. An indication of the impact on the work packages.
3. Proposals for alternative strategies (e.g. online activities).
4. Evidence of partner involvement.
5. A revised schedule with realistic deadlines.
6. Preventive measures to avoid future problems.

What are the main challenges you face?

Tips

- Responsibility is SHARED
- Setting deadlines and seeking feedback
- Keeping track of meetings and decisions made
- Monitoring with the PM
- Producing reports at the end of each task
- Good relationships and division of tasks
- Empowering those involved
- Initial work planning
- Proper document archiving