

General introduction

1. Session outline

Do you want to plan sizzling Rotary projects that deliver effective outcomes for people and the environment? This workshop will give you a five step guide and tools, based on experience and good business practices, to develop, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate, and sustain successful Rotary projects, while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability. The workshop, led by experienced facilitators, will also assist you with access to online templates, worked examples and other resources.

2. About the Guide

There are many excellent examples of well-run Rotary projects. However, it is not always easy for new Rotarians to work out how to convert an idea for a project into a proposal for either a club board or for a grant application. Once a project has been approved, they may not then know how to effectively implement the program and monitor and evaluate it for lasting, measurable outcomes. This workshop will help address these needs and give a simple step-by-step guide for Rotarians, plus suggestions for how to access further information from their District and Rotary International.

The purpose of this Guide is to improve the capacity of Rotary members or clubs to successfully scope, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate, and sustain community and international projects with measurable outcomes.

3. Who is this Guide for?

This Guide was originally designed for Rotary District 9810 Community, Sustainability and International team leaders, Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors who are interested in developing and conducting projects. However, it is now being made available to other districts as well.

The Guide has been designed to suit any type of project, regardless of its size, budget or timeline. The principles of good project planning are the same for any project; it's just that the complexity of the planning may be greater with larger projects than smaller ones.

As you work through this Guide, try to keep in mind a Rotary, Rotaract or Interact project in which you have developed an interest in or have a passion for and would like to start planning. You will then be able to apply the learnings of the course to your own project. This will make the workshop and the support materials much more relevant to you.

There are many different types of projects that you could choose. Some are small, with very low budgets, others are large with correspondingly large budgets. Some could be based in the same community as your club, others could be based in different districts in your country or even in others overseas. Some categories of typical Rotary projects include:

- one-off events (e.g. conducting a renewable energy expo and symposium)
- regular events (e.g. conducting an annual tree planting day)

- projects that may run over several months or even years (e.g. drilling wells to supply water to a village in Papua New Guinea)
- ongoing projects (e.g. the East Timor Roofing Project, which has been building roofing materials, water tanks and food silos for the Timorese people since 2000)

For the purposes of this Guide, try to pick a project that is relatively simple, so that you will be easily able to apply the planning principles and to use the templates provided.

4. Learning outcomes

1. Understand the importance of thorough preparation and planning before starting a project, of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes, of planning for sustaining the project over time and for incorporating the practices of sustainability and principles of sustainable development into your project planning
2. Learn about a step-by-step process and other tools to develop, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate, and sustain a Rotary project
3. Use some of these tools with a project of your own choosing
4. Learn how to access Planning for Success resources on the District 9810 and Environmental Sustainability Rotarian Action Group (ESRAG) websites, so that you can apply the processes, tools and resources to your own projects

5. What makes a project successful?

Everyone starting a project would like it to be successful in delivering on outcomes and to make a real impact, but how can you be sure that it will? Even with careful preparation, things can still go wrong; often things that are outside your control, such as changes in government policy, natural disasters, equipment failures and new technologies that may arise. If this happens, be prepared to learn, to make changes, or, in the worst case, just walk away (after first communicating with all the players about what happened).

However, one way to learn how to design your project so that it will have a greater chance of success is to learn from others who have conducted successful projects and to ask them what they did, what worked well, what didn't work well and what they felt were the critical factors for success. The case study of the East Timor Roofing Project (on the following pages) gives many insights into running a project over several decades.

7Ps of successful projects: Prior Planning and Preparation Prevents Painfully Poor Performance

A case study: East Timor Roofing Project

This project, which was started in 2000 by volunteers from three Rotary clubs, built a factory near Baucau in Timor Leste to construct metal roof trusses, corrugated roofing material, water tanks and small food silos for the people in Timor Leste. After a few years, a company was set up to manage the expanding project. It has been hugely successful, as described in the following extracts from the case study.

The East Timor Roofing Company has raised enough money to build roofs on many schools, orphanages, community and commercial buildings and homes for East Timorese, over 2,000 water tanks and in excess of 1,000 grain silos, provide training for local East Timorese trainers, who themselves have trained over 250 East Timorese in building and administration skills. Over 1,250 tonnes of steel has been used to make the roofing and associated products.

When consulted, the committee of this amazing project were able to describe their key learnings and to identify some critical success factors project of this magnitude.

Some of their key learnings that could be applied to other projects are to:

1. Management and governance

- Decide on the best way of helping the community, keeping all the factors in mind
- Have a realistic timeframe, as projects will not happen overnight
- Ensure that the management committee has a broad range of skills
- Have someone competent on the ground to manage the project. This person needs a range of technical and interpersonal skills, shows empathy with the local population, and should be accustomed to working in isolation in remote locations.
- Set up a legal structure in the country in which the project is taking place. This helps to address potential risks – legal workers' compensation (e.g. redundancy), workplace conditions – legal, physical, health, cultural.
- Find like-minded people who are interested in helping with the project
- If sending volunteers, make sure they are carefully selected. They then can become ambassadors to sell the project to other clubs.
- Look at new products to keep the project viable

2. Respecting cultural differences

- Be prepared to accommodate any cultural differences
- Consult with and build the trust of the local people and the workers, as this gives them ownership

3. Fundraising and communication

- When deciding to start raising funds, start with your own club, and then go to other clubs in your District
- Gain support from the Rotary District Governor in your district

- In the early stages, provide regular updates to the District Governor for publishing in the District Governor's newsletter
- When ready, go national with your fundraising (e.g. write an article for *Rotary Down Under*)
- Communicate with other clubs – by writing to the President in each club in the District, giving presentations at Presidents' meetings, District Conferences and seminars and at clubs
- Invite clubs to sponsor particular projects or parts of projects (not forgetting to send thank you letters)
- After speaking to a club, make a follow-up visit, acknowledging any assistance provided by that club since your first visit

Critical Success Factors

The ten critical success factors were:

1. Getting support from the District Governor from the outset
2. Promoting the project to and obtaining support from other Rotary clubs (The ETRP committee members visited 11 clubs in the first year.)
3. Having a committee that was effective in planning and keen to succeed, with members possessing a wide range of skills, including financial management
4. Sharing the work load on the committee and with other partners. Co-operation at all levels has been vital.
5. Applying for and obtaining grants outside the normal Rotary fundraising channels
6. Structuring the organisation so that any surplus funds were reinvested back into the project
7. Demonstrating cultural empathy with the local people
8. Developing a reputation as being financially viable, reliable, producing goods of high quality and on time, i.e. developing into a successful business, so that ultimately, donations were no longer needed
9. Being entrepreneurial and flexible
10. Having someone competent to manage the project in the country of operation



Women and children often walk long distances each day to collect clean water

4. Building sustainability into your project

Literally, sustainability means the ability to keep going into the future. Rotary International uses this understanding of sustainability in global grant applications, with the ultimate goal of a sustainable Rotary project in a community or a developing country continuing to run into the future, without outside support from the Rotary club that may have set it up (see Step 5 of this Guide).

However, an alternative (and complementary) view of sustainability is having enough resources to provide a good quality of life for all people and other species on the planet into the future, without harming the natural environment. This is the focus of the District 9810 Sustainable Communities Committee, which was set up in 2000 in line with current trends and concerns over environmental quality, both locally and internationally.

Sustainability – “... providing long-term solutions to community problems that community members themselves can support after grant funding ends.” (The Rotary Foundation’s - TRF, Guide to Global Grants, p.9)

Clearly, a healthy environment and our social and economic wellbeing are closely connected. Over the years, many Rotary clubs in our District have taken initiatives to care for the environment through their local and international environmental projects, such as tree planting, litter clean-ups, and helping local schools to buy water tanks and build vegetable gardens. Many Rotarians and their families have made changes to their own way of life, such as recycling, installing water tanks or solar panels and using energy wisely. Sustainability is becoming an important part of our lives.

This Guide will help you to design projects that are consistent with both meanings of the term sustainability: the capacity for the project to continue into the future; and in a way that will be respectful of other cultures and not harm the natural environment. **It is important to consider sustainability at all stages of your project development, not just at the end.**

Many charters and policy documents describe what it means to have a sustainable community. An Australian Government booklet on education for sustainability, called *Living Sustainably*, brought together a list from these many sources which could be readily used by Rotarians to apply to their projects. The list included:

- “integrating environmental, social and economic goals in policies and activities
- dealing cautiously with risk, uncertainty and irreversibility
- ensuring intergenerational equity
- recognising the global dimension
- appropriately valuing, appreciating and restoring nature
- conserving biodiversity and ecological integrity
- ensuring no net loss of human or natural capital
- providing for equal opportunity and community participation
- committing to best practice
- committing to continuous improvement, and
- recognising the need for good governance”¹

¹ Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts. (2009). *Living sustainably: the Australian Government's national action plan for education for sustainability*. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.

You could think of this list as a set of principles for sustainability against which you could appraise your new project. How well would you rate some of your previous projects against these principles? If you'd like to delve further into this topic, have a look at the *Earth Charter* principles and the *Sustainable Development Goals*. You could also use the set of Sustainable Development principles in the box below.

Rotary and Sustainable Development

Many Rotary projects incorporate some form of development, as for example, providing new technologies where they are non-existent, providing medical services, equipping schools or medical centres, improving practices, providing training etc. But are these developments sustainable? What does sustainable development mean?

Sustainable development, which was defined over four decades ago in the now famous Brundland report, is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”². The following set of broad sustainable development principles, derived from a number of sources, are relevant to both small and large projects undertaken by Rotary clubs and larger groups. The set also includes questions for each principle that you could use as a checklist and, in some cases, examples of how these principles could be applied to Rotary projects.

1. Global perspective

- Does your project provide used goods or equipment that will have little value to the local community? (e.g. providing textbooks or books to a school in a developing country where the books are not culturally relevant nor in a language which can be understood by the children)
- How will your project ensure that it has a global perspective? (e.g. ask a school the local community if they need books and then provide money for them to buy books that are culturally and linguistically appropriate)

2. Triple bottom line approach to sustainability

- How could your project lead to environmental, social and economic benefits? (e.g. installing solar electricity systems on the roofs of homes in a village in a remote region of Indonesia may provide carbon neutral electricity for the villages, safe and healthy lighting for social activities at night and opportunities for the villagers to work at night on crafts that could be sold to provide income for the villagers)

3. Intergenerational equity

- Will your project leave the environment as healthy and productive for future generations as when you started the project? (e.g. your project will not result in waste materials that cannot be disposed of correctly)

² Brundtland, G. H. (1987). Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: our common future. Retrieved from <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

- What steps will you take to ensure that your project causes no harm to the natural environment? (e.g. set up a recycling system for used components of a solar lighting system)

4. Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity

- Will your project help conserve the biodiversity of the local region and ensure ecological integrity? (e.g. by supporting projects that foster organic or sustainable farming practices)
- What steps will you take to conserve the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the area? (e.g. provide training in and tools for sustainable agriculture)

5. No loss of natural or human capital

- How will your project ensure that there is no loss of natural capital (biodiversity, clean freshwater, healthy forests, healthy soils etc.) or human capital (knowledge or skills that contribute to the local economy)?
- What steps will you take to ensure that there is no loss of capital? (e.g. monitoring your project over the course of the project, ensuring that questions about natural or human capital are incorporated into your monitoring plan)

6. Precautionary principle

(Before making a decision about a project where there is some uncertainty or risk about a particular technology to people or the environment, to err on the side of caution and to shift the burden of proof to the manufacturer or provider of the technology, to look at alternative means of the activity and to involve the local community in decision-making.)

- Does your project err on the side of caution regarding uncertainty or risks of technology used in your project? (e.g. the type of batteries used for solar energy installations in developing countries)
- What steps will you take to reduce this risk and uncertainty? (e.g. use batteries that are secured, but which can be readily replaced and recycled by trained technicians)

7. Valuing natural resources

- Have you considered the value of the environment around the project area? (e.g. air quality, water quality, soil quality, products obtained by the local people from forests, fish and other wildlife used for food)
- What steps are you taking to help restore the natural environment of the project area? (e.g. the introduction of chemical fertilisers to a rural Indian community had led to crop weevils, seriously reducing the crop yields. Encouraging the local farmers to return to compost fertiliser improved the soil quality, eliminated these pests and led to higher crop yields.)

8. Community participation and equal opportunity (Social justice)

- Does your project involve community participation and provide equal opportunities? (e.g. by conducting a community needs analysis)
- What steps are you taking to do this? (e.g. in a project to install solar units in villages in Timor Leste, the villagers were involved in the planning of the project and invited to join a village management committee and to be trained in how to conduct basic repairs to the solar units)

9. Extra help

Where to go for assistance (General, District and Rotary International)

Project planning

- Project Lifecycle Resources [website](#)
- District 9810 2016-17 Project Portfolio [website](#)

Sustainability

- Earth Charter: Principles [online document](#)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [website](#)

10. *Templates, worked examples and case studies*

- East Timor Roofing Project [website](#)
- [Case study: The East Timor Roofing Project](#)
- [Case Study The First Wave Project.pdf](#)

The five step process



Planning for success: the five step process