

## Project Tool 12: Checklist for developing SMART objectives

*(S) Specific:* An objective is specific when it is well defined, detailed, focused and concrete on what it wants to achieve.

Tips on formulating specific objectives by answering the following questions:

- **WHAT** needs to be accomplished? Use action verbs to indicate action and result-oriented objectives. For example – develop, write, train, conduct, plan etc.
- **WHY** is this important to be done? Indicate the benefits or reasons in accomplishing this objective.
- **WHO** is going to do what? Identify the partners for implementing the objective and others who need to be involved i.e. authorizing partners, donors, beneficiaries, and targets.
- **WHEN** will the objective be completed?
- **HOW** will the objective be achieved?

Checklist test if objectives are specific:

- What exactly are we going to do, with or for whom?
- What strategies will be used?
- Is the objective well understood?
- Is the objective described with action verbs?
- Is it clear who is involved?
- Is it clear where this will happen?
- Is it clear what needs to happen?
- Is the outcome clear?
- Will this objective lead to the desired results?
- Does everyone who is involved aware of the objective and their role?
- Is the objective formulated clearly without any jargon and everyone involved can understand it?
- Is appropriate language used?
- Are all the terms used defined?

*(M) Measurable:* An objective is measurable when concrete criteria are set to track progress towards its completion. This is particularly important in monitoring and evaluating success and in reporting to stakeholders and donors.

Tips in formulating measurable objectives:

- Indicate a quantity for the action required in your objective.
- A system, method or procedure is established that enables to track the objective.

Checklist to test if an objective is measurable:

- How much?
- How many?
- When will we know when a change has occurred?
- How will we know when the action/objective is accomplished?

*(A) Achievable:* An objective is achievable when the necessary human and financial resources are available and it can be completed within the set time frame.

Tips in formulating achievable objectives:

- Who is implementing the activity or objective and do they have or are able to get the relevant knowledge, authority and skills?
- Have all the parties involved agreed to the activity/objective?
- Is the target group receptive to the planned activity?
- Are resources available, i.e. mission budget, donors?
- Have you examined the types of obstacles, barriers and limitations that may come up?
- Does the schedule take into account the time needed to overcome barriers?
- Are there success stories where the activity or objective has been accomplished?
- Does the political, economic, cultural and social environment enable the activity to take place?
- Are the activities or objective measurable?

Checklist to test if an objective is achievable:

- Can we get it done in the proposed timeframe?
- Do we understand the limitations and constraints?
- Can we do this with the resources we have?
- Has anyone else done this successfully?
- Is this possible?

*(R) Realistic:* An objective is realistic when the resources, time, opportunity, priorities and conditions exist to accomplish the objective.

Tips in formulating realistic objectives:

- Are the resources available to achieve this objective?
- Are the priorities adequate to make this happen?
- Do the conditions exist to accomplish the objective?
- Is it possible to achieve this objective?

Checklist to test if an objective is realistic:

- Has anyone accomplished a similar objective?
- Can constraints and obstacles be overcome?
- Do the implementing officers have the relevant knowledge and skills to do the job or can they acquire them in the set time frame?
- Do we have access to the financial resources or realistically are

able to obtain them?

(T) *Time-bound*: An objective that is time-bound has a set deadline with clearly identified start and finish dates (day/month/year). This stimulates motivation and action to implement tasks.

Tips in formulating realistic objectives:

- When does this objective need to be completed?
- Are there competing demands that may cause delay?
- Is the time line specific, realistic and measurable?

Checklist to test if an objective is time-bound:

- When will the objective be accomplished?
- Is there a set deadline?

*Project Tool 12: Extracted from United Nations Police Gender Toolkit Standardised Best Practices on Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping - Compendium of Project Tools. First Edition 2015*