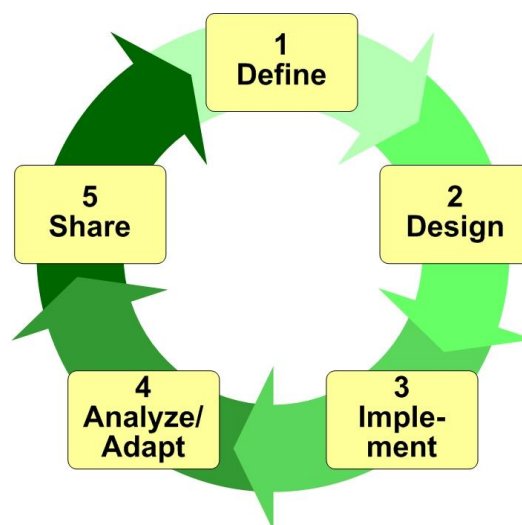# Resources for Implementing the WWF Project & Programme Standards

# Step 3.1
# Workplans and Budgets

**February 2007**

# Contents

# Workplans and Budgets

## What Are Workplans?

A workplan is a short-term schedule for implementing an action, monitoring, or operational plan. Workplans typically list tasks required, who will be responsible for each task, when each task will need to be undertaken, and the amounts of human and other resources required to complete each task. An accompanying budget, ideally organized both by objectives and activities and against standard accountancy budget lines, ensures all costs have been accounted for, and supports future financial management of the project.

The project's action plan explains how a project will achieve its goals and why the project undertakes certain activities. Likewise, operational and monitoring plans outline the general approaches for implementing and monitoring progress for your project.  In a workplan, your project team and partners turn your general action, monitoring, and operational plans into much more specific short-term plans. The workplan sets out the detailed tasks that need to be completed in order to deliver the project's general plans. A workplan normally covers the next few months or at most, a year – there is no point in developing this level of detail for time periods in the more distant future because the situation will undoubtedly change before then.

The project workplan is essentially a calendar or schedule that links the tasks to be done to the resources needed to do them.  The workplan identifies:

- **What** specific tasks are required;
- **Who** will be responsible for helping to complete each task;
- **When** each task will be undertaken and the sequence of linked tasks; and
- **How much** each task will cost and how it will be funded**.**

These workplans can be recorded in a table, Gantt chart, and/or project calendar. Depending on the size and scale of the programme or project, the overall workplan can be further developed into workplans for sub-projects, teams or even individuals.

## Why Workplans Are Important

A workplan breaks the project down into small, manageable pieces and reduces the overall complexity of the project.  It gives you a more precise definition of the short-term tasks, deliverables, and people responsible.  This helps the project team to:

- Ensure all the essential tasks in the project are planned and reduce the chance of overlooking an essential step in completing the project
- Allocate tasks efficiently to individuals (all tasks allocated with no duplication)
- Be aware of short-term priorities and how individual performance will be assessed
- Establish a project schedule that can be tracked and monitored
- Set expectations for project progress and establish accountability
- Analyse problem areas more effectively
- Develop a more accurate budget and ensure adequate funding and other resources are available.

## When to Use a Workplan and How Often to Review It

As outlined in the *WWF Standards of Project and Programme Management,* all projects and programmes need to develop a workplan during Step 3.1 as they commence implementation of their work. Initial workplans should be developed by the project team after the action plan, monitoring plan and operational plans have been completed. Workplans are short-term by nature; one year is a typical period of coverage but they can be from 3 months to 3 years. If a workplan is truly being used to guide a project's activities, the project team should be consulting it on a weekly basis.

It is also good practice to make time to formally review and revise your workplan at monthly, quarterly, or at least six-month intervals. In a multi-year project, you should produce a new workplan as part of your annual planning and budgeting cycle. Once you have developed your workplan, you can use it to guide project activities, prepare a project budget, and establish a baseline for monitoring and performance assessment. The first part of this guide discusses workplans and the second part covers budgets.

## How to Develop and Use a Workplan

Workplans need to be developed by the project managers, project staff and/or key team members who will be implementing them. Your overall workplan may be developed as a team exercise in a workshop, or by aggregating individual plans. Either way, central coordination by the project leader is clearly very important.

As you develop the workplan, you will need to refer to the general action, monitoring, and operational plans that you developed earlier so that each of the activities and needs identified in these plans are included in your workplan. You also need to ensure that your workplan includes any activities or needs identified in your fundraising, capacity building and partnership development.

Although your workplans may be quite detailed and precise, you should be prepared to make changes and amendments to your plans as your project's situation changes. You may find, for example, that you cannot get the funds or people at a certain time when they were originally expected to be available. This is why adaptive management is so important.

Developing a workplan involves going through the following steps:
1) Identify specific tasks that need to be done
2) Define who will be responsible for each task
3) Determine when each task will take place
4) Estimate costs for each task
5) Complete the workplan
6) Revisit and revise your workplan on a regular basis

The exact nature of each of these steps depends on the specific workplan format that you use (see Box 1). Furthermore, the level of detail to show in your workplan depends on a number of factors, including the experience of the team, project assumptions and risks, and the clarity of project strategies/activities.

## 1. Identify Specific Tasks That Need to Be Done

Developing a workplan starts by reviewing the various activities that you identified in your general action, monitoring, and operational plans and determining which of these need to be implemented over the current planning period.  These can be compiled in a work breakdown structure – the list of your objectives, activities/ strategies, monitoring needs, and operational actions shown in the first columns (See Box 1).

For each activity, you will need to break it down into specific tasks that will need to be completed to accomplish the activity.  A **task** is a specific action in a workplan required to implement activities, Monitoring Plan, or other components of a strategic plan. It is a discrete package of work that is assigned to specific individuals to complete over a relatively short time frame. (Some planners specify that each task must be able to be completed in two weeks.)  To the extent possible, you should define each task so that:

- It has clearly identified beginning and end points;,
- You can easily estimate the time and cost required to complete the task;
- You can easily assess its progress and completion; and
- It is distinct from other tasks, yet its relationship to other tasks can be described.

In many cases, breaking down an activity into its component pieces is a relatively simple process, especially if you have an experienced team and the activities are relatively straightforward and well understood.  In some cases, however, where the work is more complex or new to the group, this exercise may require creative thinking such as brainstorming a range of possible tasks to accomplish a specific activity and then evaluating these possibilities to see which makes the most sense.

Importantly, keep this process simple.  The key here is to understand the work that you need to do to carry out your strategies in the short run, in enough detail for you and your team to know who is responsible, over what timeframe, and with enough clarity so you can monitor progress.

## 2. Define Who Will Be Responsible for Each Task

As you develop each task, it is also important to define who will be responsible for it across your project team members, consultants, and partners.  The following factors should be considered when defining responsibilities for a task:

- Skills and knowledge required for the task
- Availability of individual – does the person have the time to do the work?
- Individual's interest and motivation in carrying out the task
- Organizational structure foreseen for the whole project
- Level of authority or positional power required for the task
- Natural groupings of tasks

**Box 1.  Options for Formats/Tools for Completing Workplans**
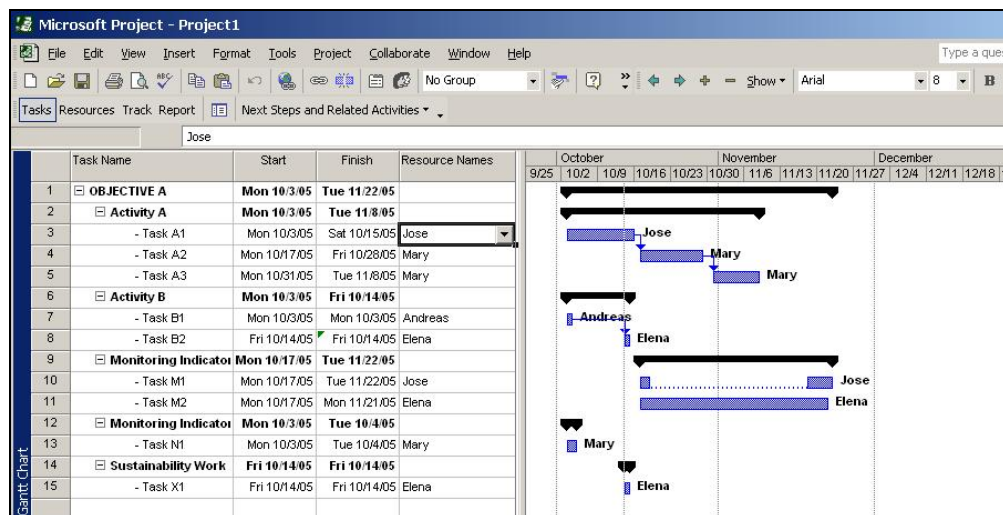
## A. Simple Table

This format can be done in a handwritten or word document or in a spreadsheet.  If you use a spreadsheet, you can manipulate the information more flexibly. For example you can:

- Insert unit cost figures and quickly calculate the cost of a task
- Filter (sort) all the tasks assigned to an individual, and calculate whether that person's time is allocated at an appropriate level

| Work Breakdown - Task | Who | Dates | Cost |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OBJECTIVE A** | | | |
| **Activity A** | | | |
| - Task A1 | Jose | Oct 1 - Oct 15 | 500 |
| - Task A2 | Mary | Oct 16 - Oct 27 | 1000 |
| - Task A3 | Mary | Oct 27 – Nov 5 | 1000 |
| **Activity B** | | | |
| - Task B1 | Andreas | Oct 1 | 0 |
| - Task B2 | Elena | Oct 3 - 9 | 2000 |
| **Monitoring Indicator M** | | | |
| - Task M1 | Jose | Oct 15, Nov15 | 100 |
| - Task M2 | Elena | Oct 15 - Nov 1 | 1000 |
| **Monitoring Indicator N** | | | |
| - Task N1 | Mary | Oct 1-3 | 1000 |
| **Operational Work X** | | | |
| - Task X1 | Elena | Oct | 500 |

## B.  Gantt Chart

This format can be done in a spreadsheet as shown in the example above or project management software as shown below.  A Gantt chart differs from a simple table in that it also shows a time line for the duration of activities. It can be very helpful to show the sequence of tasks in a visual way. For example, it can help you to spot upcoming peaks in activity, and periods where you should be less busy.  In the example below, you can see that Elena is double-booked for two activities that are scheduled to take place in mid October.

**C. Spreadsheet Gantt Chart (preferred format)**

This format can be done in a spreadsheet or text document.  If you use a spreadsheet, you can manipulate the information more flexibly. For example you can:
- Add a column of unit cost figures and quickly estimate the cost of a task
- Sort all tasks assigned to an individual and calculate the allocation of that person's time

| Work Breakdown: Activities and Tasks | Who | Dates | | | | Deliverables |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | |
| **OBJECTIVE A** | | | | | | Completion of nest boxes |
| **Activity A** | | | | | | Half of next boxes installed |
| - Task A1 | Jose | | | | | Remaining nest boxes in |
| - Task A2 | Mary | | | | | |
| - Task A3 | Mary | | | | | Monitoring plan complete |
| **Activity B** | | | | | | Monitoring cameras set up |
| - Task B1 | Andreas | | | | | |
| - Task B2 | Elena | | | | | Ongoing photos of nests |
| **Monitoring Indicator M** | | | | | | Analysis of nesting success |
| - Task M1 | Jose | | | | | |
| - Task M2 | Elena | | | | | Complete long term M plan |
| **Monitoring Indicator N** | | | | | | |
| - Task N1 | Mary | | | | | Two funding proposals sent |
| **Operational Work X** | | | | | | Completion of nest boxes |
| - Task X1 | Elena | | | | | Half of next boxes installed |

One benefit of defining who is responsible for each task is that doing the overall project workplan helps set up individual performance assessments. In addition to defining who is responsible for completing a task, some planners also like to decide who is accountable for ensuring that the task is completed, who must be consulted in undertaking the task, and who must be informed about the results.


### 3. *Determine When Each Task Will Take Place*

As noted above, for each task you should estimate a start and end date and the total time required to complete the task (e.g. number of days).  The accuracy of a task's time estimate usually depends on whether you have done similar work in the past.  Where this experience is lacking, sometimes you just need to accept this uncertainty and get on with the task.  However if you are very concerned you may be able to improve the quality of your estimate by breaking large or complex tasks down further into sub tasks and then summing the time for the sub tasks.  It is important to make the project schedule realistic and take into account everything from dependencies between tasks to holidays to other activities that project staff may have to do.

Estimating task duration is probably one of the most challenging aspects of project work planning.  Task duration is rarely <u>over</u>estimated, and is frequently <u>under</u>estimated.  The estimation process is

complex because activity duration can be impacted by many variables such as staff availability, funding availability, technical capacity, unexpected events, individual productivity, and problems during the implementation of a project.

When estimating the duration of a task, past experience is your greatest advantage. When building a project schedule, project managers should take into account staff absences, holidays, meetings, and related issues. No staff member is 100 percent productive every hour of the workday. If a scheduled task assumes 100 percent productivity, the schedule rapidly falls apart. A successful schedule builds these types of factors into the duration estimates. An accepted rule of thumb for estimating effort is that staff typically spend two-thirds of their time on productive tasks, while the remaining time is taken up with meetings, unplanned work, or other distractions.

A common technique to estimate task duration is to base estimates on a similar scope of work. Past project data can be used successfully to improve estimates and therefore project performance on deliverables. If historical data does not exist, seek the advice of others who have completed similar tasks. It is also good practice to consult the staff who will be assigned the work for their estimates.

## 4. Estimate Costs for Each Task

As you develop each task, you should also estimate the monetary cost of completing the task as well as describe any other required resources. There are essentially four major types of costs associated with any activity:

- Labour
- Materials
- Other direct costs (travel, telephone etc.)
- Indirect costs (i.e. overheads – office rental, utilities, administrative costs)

For most tasks in conservation projects, the largest expense will be labour – either staff, consultants or partners – which is why it is important to identify who is responsible and estimate how long each activity will take before estimating the financial cost. You need to judge on a per project basis how accurately you need to identify and allocate costs at the task level. Usually it is useful to have reasonable estimates in place to help you produce budgets, but don't make it a long exercise.

## 5. Complete the Workplan

Once you have completed the details for your first tasks, repeat Steps 1-4 for the rest of the action items in your action plan, monitoring plan, and operational plan as needed. In addition to the basic information columns for each task shown in Box 1, some teams find it helpful to track other items including:

- Description of deliverables expected
- Dependencies and assumptions
- Priority and importance of a task
- Skills needed for a task
- Percent of an individual's time allocated to a task

## 6. *Review and Revise Your Workplan on a Regular Basis*

As stated above, if a workplan is truly being used to guide a project's activities, the project team should be consulting it on a weekly basis.  It is also good practice to make time to formally review and revise your workplan at monthly, quarterly, or at least six-month intervals.

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**Box 2.  A Note About Project Planning Software (e.g. MS Project)**

There are a number of software packages on the market that are specifically designed to help with project schedule preparation and tracking. The most commonly used is Microsoft Project, which is relatively expensive to purchase, but is supported with many third-party guidance books.  WWF has a limited number of licenses for MS Project, and WWF-US can support its use in the field.

A similar, and freely available project management software package is Openworkbench.  This package is simpler than MS Project and shares many features. It has the advantage of being free, but has limited guidance and training tools.

Once you become familiar with such software, it can be quite useful, although the details involved in MS Project make it quite cumbersome and time consuming to use.  These software tools can generate a range of useful reports for both financial reporting and resource allocation.  However, there are potential downsides that you should at least consider before adopting the software:

- **Steep Learning Curve** – Most if not all project planning packages can be somewhat difficult for new users to master and use efficiently, unless you have access to training or WWF support.

- **Sharing Workplans With Others** – If you use the software, will all the relevant people (staff and donors for example) be able to view and edit the plan? The majority of team members need to be able to see the project plan and use the information that it holds (for example to produce their own individual plans). Will they be trained and equipped to do this?

- **Making Things Too Complex** – Project planning software is primarily built for managing construction projects, manufacturing processes, and other major business or government programmes.  In many of these programmes, you have dozens of similar workers doing similar tasks – for example, pouring asphalt or writing software code.  As a result, you can use the critical path analysis features of the software to find the optimum project plan.  In most conservation projects, however, we tend to have small teams in which specific individuals do many different tasks over the course of a week or month.  This makes it harder to use all the features of the software – indeed, it can be hard to use the software to capture non-continuous tasks.  Unless you know what you are getting into, it is probably worth you testing out the software first. Far more people in WWF have been trained in MS Project than actually use it.

One other option that will be available in the near future is Miradi software which is being designed specifically to help in the implementation of the WWF Project and Program Standards and other related conservation planning programs.  You can find out more at www.Miradi.org.

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## What Are Budgets?

Once you have developed a workplan for your project with expected costs, the next step is to prepare a budget that reflects the costs and resource needs for carrying out the project over the same time period. As noted with workplans, the time period for a detailed budget is often annual and coincides with your programme or national office's fiscal year and regular planning and budgeting cycle. However for multi-year projects, budget estimates for subsequent years are made, based on an extrapolation of the first year budget. This enables multi-year contracts to be agreed and supports longer-term planning. Workplans and budgets can be developed for a shorter time frame as well, depending on your specific needs.

In Step 2.3, as part of developing your project's Operational Plan, you will have prepared some level of financial estimates for your project. Using those overall cost estimates, and those in your annual workplan, you can prepare a detailed shorter-term budget (usually 1-5 years) for the whole of the project or just a part of it.

Note that the term "budget" is widely used and can serve several different purposes, as follows:
- An annual project budget can reflect an annual project workplan, as noted above.
- A project budget can be prepared for the full project or programme if it is planned for a longer time period than the workplan e.g. to support a multi-year contract.
- A project budget can be suited to a specific funding proposal for an external donor (such budgets are often prepared according to specific criteria or formats of the funder).
- An office budget is prepared each year for your entire Programme Office or National Organization, a portion of which may include your specific project or workplan.

As a general rule, however, it is good practice to develop an overall budget for your project and to then present the relevant parts of it to the appropriate audiences. Depending on the purpose, financial information in budgets can be organized in different ways:
- By objectives and activities – These budgets help you estimate the cost of individual actions
- By accounting codes – These budgets provide information needed by financial managers
- By funding source – These budgets show where money is coming from.

For details of the standard WWF budgeting and reporting timings, see the Table of Project Reporting Cycle within the Operational Network Standards.

## Why Budgets Are Important

Preparing a detailed budget for your workplan or project may seem tedious for very busy field managers and staff, but it is among the most important steps you need to take to ensure full and successful implementation of your project. An accurate budget will help you and your team:
- Understand the full costs of your project in the workplan timeframe;
- Ensure that your team understands the demand for resources and has access to all needed resources for completion of the project;
- Provide a basis for proposal development and fund raising;

- Understand any gaps between expected expenditures and needed income, in enough time to raise additional resources or take corrective action;
- Create a baseline against which your team can monitor performance and results; and
- Increase transparency for your donors and other stakeholders.

Without a well-prepared budget, even the most detailed strategies, activities and workplans do not provide your team with a full understanding of your project's costs and resource needs or the basis from which to raise needed funds.

## When to Develop and a Budget

Initial budgets should be completed along with your workplan and then updated on a regular basis.

## How to Develop and Use a Budget

The WWF Standards of Project and Programme Management specify that your team should prepare a workplan and associated budget for the reasons stated above. The basic steps in preparing a budget are described briefly here, but more detailed guidance on preparing a budget is provided as part of the WWF Operations Standards. Click here for the WWF Recommended Budget Template (guidance on using the template is provided). In the near future, under the Operations Standards, you will also find a budget checklist and sample templates for preparing more project-specific budgets.

Developing a budget involves going through the following steps.
1) Confirm the timeframe and format for the budget
2) List, cost and group the resources needed
3) Include cost recovery
4) Balance the budget
5) Review and revise the budget on a regular basis

It is assumed that you have already developed a detailed workplan (Step 3.1 above) and some level of financial estimates as part of your Operational Plan (Step 2.3). In some cases, such as starting the second phase of an existing project, it is possible to draw up a good budget with minimal information about future workplans if there is good information about running costs in the recent past and no significant changes are foreseen in the type or level of activity. However, these situations are rare, and it is good practice to refine the plan of action to the point where it is relatively easy to envisage the required resources.

### *1. Confirm the Timeframe and Format for the Budget*

As stated above, budgets can be for different timeframes and purposes. Typically for multi-year projects, you should aim for a detailed and accurate budget for the first year of the project and prepare budget estimates for subsequent years, based on an extrapolation of the first year budget. Alternatively you may be preparing an annual budget only.

Regarding format for the budget, for internally funded projects you should use the WWF Recommended Budget Template. This will ensure that you use the same format for your budget as you will use for your financial reports. However, where external donors are involved, there may be specific format requirements – in some cases external donors will accept WWF formats. For further guidance relating to GAA proposals, see the GAA Proposal Development Process Standard.

## *2. List, Cost and Group the Resources Needed*

Based on your detailed workplan (Step 3.1 above) and any previous financial estimate produced as part of your Operational Plan (Step 2.3), you should list and cost the resources required to carry out the activity. If your workplan has been developed to an appropriate level and lists the units of staff time and other resources required to complete a specific task, it should be relatively easy to do this assuming you know what each unit costs. There is no need to replan, but take the opportunity to ensure all the costs have been included and make your cost estimates as accurate as you can.

For example:
- Staff costs: What level of project leader, technical, project administrators and other staff is required in terms of qualifications, age, experience? Will all these staff be full time or part time?
- Physical resources: What office space, vehicles, computers, phones etc. will be required?

This is likely to be an iterative process where you discuss your progress with colleagues (including finance and project administration staff) and amend the budget based on their comments. Some large items of cost will be easy to budget as lump sums, such as salary costs. Others may be harder, such as stationery, and estimates will have to be made. If you are using a spreadsheet program, it can also be helpful to write your budget using formulas so that you can change one parameter (for example one person's salary rates) and have it reflected in the overall budget totals.

You should then group the costs into like items (salaries, consultants fees, travel, etc.) and present the figures in the required budget template. The WWF Recommended Budget Template is structured to help ensure that a unit cost basis of budgeting is applied and the components of each budget line are identified. It can be used for small projects with one activity or large programmes with up to 12 major activities. The template is structured as follows:
- A worksheet for each project activity;
- Each project activity split by category of costs.

Generally the activities in the budget template should correspond to the major activities in your workplan, because it is useful to present and control them separately. In turn, these activities will usually correspond to the major activities/ strategies in your action plan. Central project management costs (such as research, monitoring, evaluation and lesson learning) are often grouped as a separate section of the budget.

### 3. Include Cost Recovery

When you prepare a budget, another WWF requirement is to incorporate the WWF cost recovery percentage – or management fee – (12.5%) in your costs so implementing offices can recover some indirect costs. Indirect costs are the costs of those functions which will be carried on by the organisation regardless of whether the project is implemented and are allocated to the project because the project would not be able to function properly without them. Examples of indirect costs include project administration, finance services, and office space. It is very important to apply this 12.5% cost recovery fee in your project so that:

- Consistency is ensured across the WWF Network by applying a standard method for projects funded by WWF Network Donors;
- Implementing Offices recover both direct and indirect costs;
- Your budget is transparent because you have clearly defined:
  - Which costs are charged directly;
  - Which costs are recovered via the Management Fee.
- It reduces the co-existence of multiple Cost Recovery methods within implementing offices by aligning WWF Cost Recovery practices to methods generally accepted by GAA partners. *NB: Primary Donors restrictions always prevail.*

You can find further guidance on this in the Cost Recovery Standard available on Connect.

### 4. Balance Your Budget

You then need to make sure the project has a balanced budget, where the budgeted costs are covered entirely by funds available. If the income for the activity is known with certainty, this is simply a matter of ensuring that the amount of secured income will be sufficient to cover the budget, bearing in mind matters such as the timing of costs and receipts and exchange rate differences. An income worksheet is provided in the WWF Budget Template. If it is not known where the income will come from, it is important to find a secured source of funding before starting to spend funds (click here for basic guidance on Fund Raising).

WWF also provides a number of other financial and operational guidance and tools, some of which are required for programmes and national offices. Box 3 lists these documents and tools, the person in your office generally responsible for using them, and indicates where programme staff and operations staff need to collaborate.

**Box 3. Roles and Responsibilities for Financial Resource Requirements**

Financial management is not a task that should be performed only by finance or administrative staff; nor is it wholly the responsibility of the project team or leader. Rather, efficient financial management is the result of a continuous and open collaboration between project and finance staff. The following table shows how responsibilities should be distributed between these key staff.

| Task | Project Executant + Other Project Team Members | Finance & Administration Staff Members |
|---|---|---|
| **Budgeting** | - Prepare Budget | - Assist with Budgeting<br>- Establish new budget numbers, assists in preparation of budget projections, spending plan, final budget and modifications into system |
| **Project Proposal** | - Submit project proposal to donor(s)<br>- Implements appropriate start-up activities | - Approve budget <u>before</u> submitted to donor(s) |
| **Contract Work/ Order goods** | - Ensure resources included in workplan and budget<br>- Hire project staff according to local HR policies<br>- Monitor subcontractors program responsibility | - Prepare contracts and purchase orders<br>- Monitor subcontractors fiscal responsibility |
| **Compliance** | - Review and understand WWF policies and standards regarding HR, finance, accounting, IT, procurement, etc. | - Serves as a resource for interpreting policies and procedures |
| **Project Payments** | - Approve bills (work done satisfactorily, goods received) | - Prepare and execute payment orders |
| **Ongoing Forecast & Cash Flow Management** | - Inform Project Administrator or Finance Staff of changes in workplan.<br>- Monitor impact on cash flow and forecast for the year<br>- Review financial reports. Contact finance about any discrepancies. | - Call and chase donor's funds<br>- Book income and expenditure<br>- Watch project cash flow and highlight potential issues/opportunities to project executant |
| **Financial Data Analysis** *(Variance Analysis – i.e. "Notes to the R3")* | - Analyze quarterly financial data in collaboration with Project Administrator or Finance Staff<br>- Check that payments charged to project belong to the project<br>- Provide necessary information to explain variances to project administrator or finance staff<br>- Agree and follow-up on actions needed<br>- Seek Donor's approval for budget revision | - Provide financial results to project executant<br>- Analyze quarterly financial data in collaboration with project executant and/or other project team members<br>- Make any corrections to the accounts<br>- Agree on actions needed<br>- Provide explanations to donor(s) through the variance analyzis *(i.e. "Notes to the R3")* |
| **Financial Reporting** | - Review financial reports before submitted | - Produce project quarterly financial reports *(R3)*<br>- Submit R3s to Donor |
| **Full Term Forecasting** | - Draft full term forecast to end of project life | - Assist with full term forecast<br>- Submit full term forecast to donor |

### *5. Review and Revise the Workplan and Budget on a Regular Basis*

Your workplan and budget will ideally be used to guide your project's activities. As such, your project staff or team should be consulting them on a regular basis (as often as weekly). It is also good practice to formally schedule a review of the workplan and budget with your staff or team at monthly, quarterly, or at least six-month intervals. WWF requires the R3 financial report to be prepared and submitted quarterly, which would be a reasonable period for project review. You will want to keep your original workplan and budget as a baseline of your original thinking, but to also produce updated versions to reflect how your thinking has changed and evolved.

Workplans must be followed, updated and maintained to reflect an accurate picture of your project's current status. In a multi-year project, you should produce a new workplan as part of your annual planning cycle. A completed workplan guides project activities and acts as the basis for preparing both a project budget and a monitoring and performance assessment (see Analyzing Operational and Financial Performance (Step 4.3) and Adapting Your Plans (Step 4.4)).

Some offices and programme teams use a "rolling review," in which they carry out a WWF-required quarterly review and forecast, but this forecast is always projected a full 12 months forward. This way, the manager of a multi-year project always knows the next 12 month's needs for staff and other resources and always knows the projected project activities, deliverables and needs for any potential funder's cycle. In practice, external donors often make grants for 12 month periods that do not coincide with WWF's fiscal year.

## Overarching Lessons for Workplans and Budgets

A few final thoughts as you develop your workplan and budget:

- Part of the art of project design is to make only as detailed a workplan and budget as you need to be effective in your work. Keep your workplans as simple as possible, and avoid "planning paralysis." You want to be sure you get past planning and get into real conservation implementation.
- Maintain a sense of priorities. When producing and implementing plans, be clear about which tasks are absolutely critical to the success of the project and which can be delayed or changed if funding comes up short or other circumstances change.
- Involve the whole team in planning, or at least in reviewing the plans. Ensure team members commit to their tasks, including how long they will take.
- Build the skills of all team members to understand strategic activities, define deliverables and needed tasks, and implement plans. It is an important management skill that requires practice.
- Nothing ever goes exactly according to plan. Regular dialogue is needed within your office and with donors in order to openly share information about the foreseeable future and adapt plans accordingly.

# References

WWF Operations Standards

R3 Budget Template

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