# Project planning: Getting started with your idea

Planning a project is all about answering some key questions: Why? How? What? When? Who? And how much?

Writing a project plan is pretty much answering these questions in a bit of detail, so that everyone has a clear understanding of the project. Some answers might come more easily to your team than others, but the activity of working through these different parts of the planning process will help to show where your group might have had different ideas or expectations, where there are gaps in your skills or aspects of your project what you might not want to include at all.
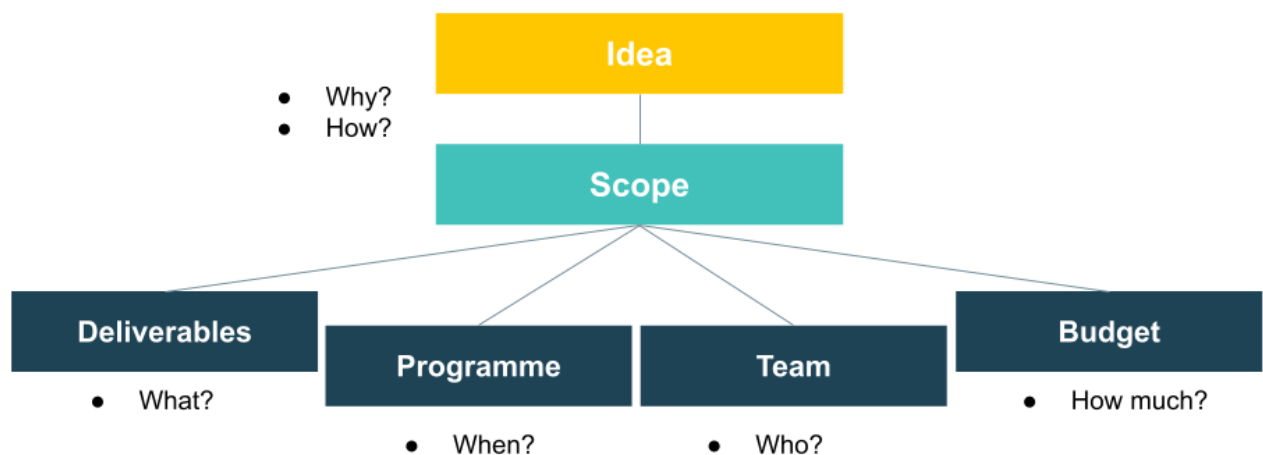


## Contents

## 1. Idea and scope

These two are very much linked. The idea could be something like the headline or executive summary of your project, whilst the scope is the slightly more detailed description of what you are trying to do. The key questions of this part of your plan are 'Why?' and 'How?':

For your benefit, the benefit of your group, wider community and potential funders, you should have a good understanding of **why** you want to do this project. What are the problems that this initiative will tackle and why would your community benefit from it. There is no need to get carried away and write philosophical essays about this, but some solid bullet-points on the anticipated benefits will help you stay focussed during the scoping of the project.

The scope of a project is the place where you define **how** you want to achieve your goals. The 'How' can help you really understand what your project will and won't include. You will want to be very clear on this as it is easy to create a long list of ideas you could do, but the scope is the place where you make decisions about which of those ideas is worth including and which are not.

## 2. Deliverables

Defining a list of the things that you actually want to deliver in your project is an excellent starting point and follows from your scoping exercise. The question to answer here is: '**What** do you actually want to do?'

For events this can be a short description of what the event might look like and the different things that you need to do around that, like publicity. Breaking your project into chunks of smaller jobs and tasks is called a Work Breakdown Structure.These chunks can then be put into an order (i.e. programme) and assigned to different people.

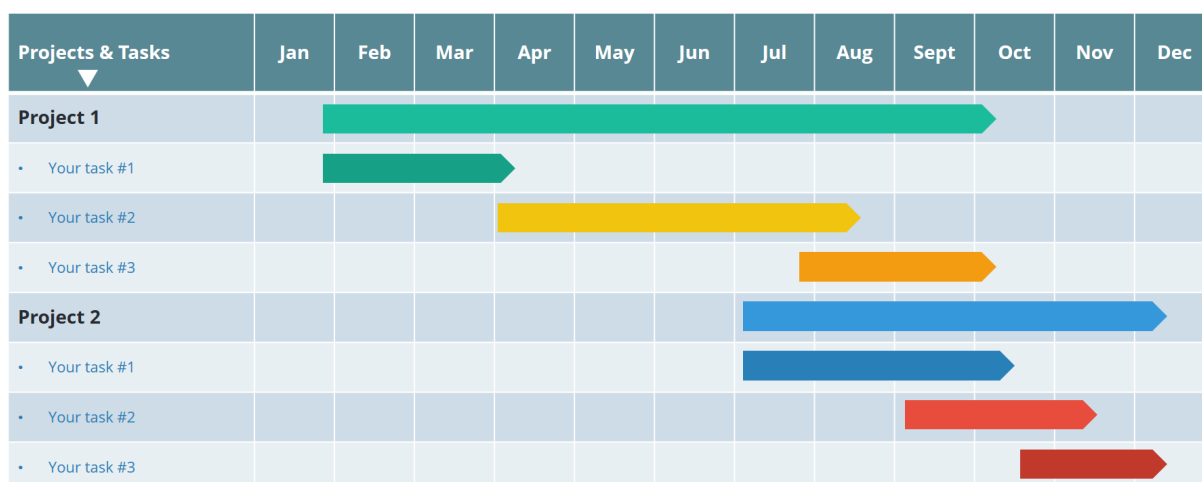This is what a work breakdown structure for a holiday might look like:
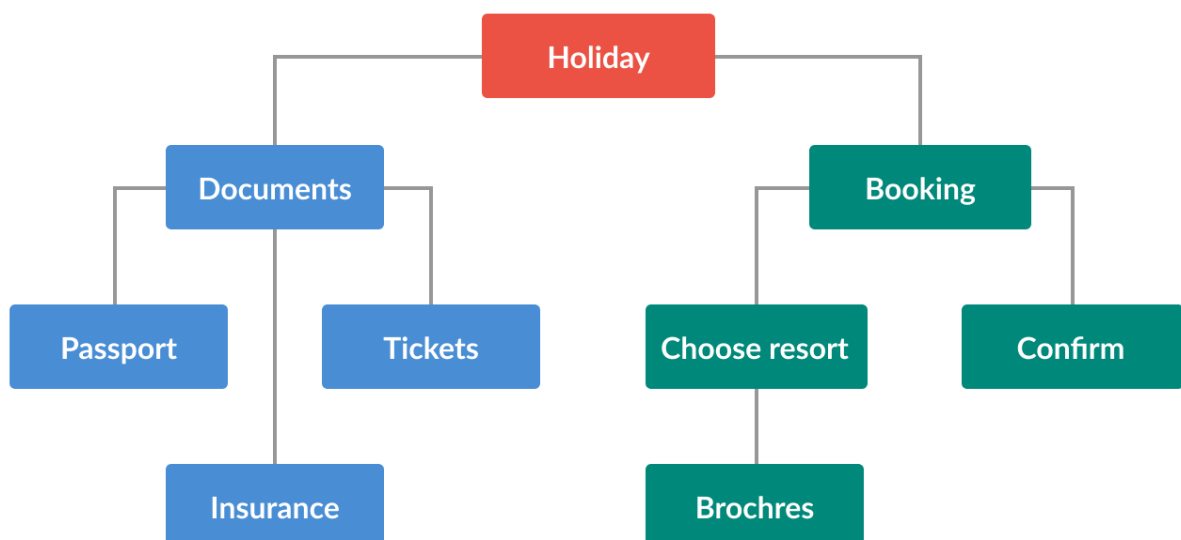
## 3. Programme

The question '**when?**' follows on pretty naturally from the definition of what you want to do. Now that you have an idea of the different things you need to get done you can put them in an order and start thinking about how much time each activity needs and when they are best to be done. You should try to go into ever more detail on this breaking bigger chunks of work down into smaller steps. You can also start to consider who in your team should be responsible for which steps in your programme.

Often programmes are presented in a Gantt chart showing what task should be done when.

# Gantt Chart

| Projects & Tasks ▼ | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Project 1** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Project 2** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Your task #3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## 4. Team

You can start listing people **who** are already involved and those that will need to be involved to make your project work. This might be a list that you keep to the side whilst you work through the other questions and keep adding names, connections or gaps whenever they come up. You can also start assigning tasks from your programme to different individuals.

## 5. Budget

Whilst working through the other questions you might also get a better understanding of **how much** different parts of your project may cost. Some parts of your project might even earn money. Creating a summary of this will form your budget and this in turn can be important if you want to apply for funding from an external source or need to run any fundraising activities.

If your project is juggling multiple outgoing costs or streams of income, you will want to stay on top of it in a spreadsheet. If you need to report on the budget use graphical tools like pie charts.