

Rotary WASRAG Sustainable Project Guideline

Author - - Dr. Omar Keith Helferich, Central Michigan University
okeithhelferich@msn.com

Sustainability Guideline Section 1: Overview

The Business Case for Sustainable Projects

With over one billion people without safe drinking water and over two billion without adequate sanitation facilities, the challenge of providing everyone with safe drinking water and proper sanitation along with associated hygiene education is daunting. Coordinating the involvement of up to 34,000 Rotary clubs in the world with the hundreds of other NGO and government programs requires disciplined guidelines to work effectively with partner organizations, host country governments, and village leaders if Rotary International is to be as effective as the Polio Plus initiative a planned and sustainable approach to humanitarian improvement projects through a country level plan will be needed.

WASRAG's work on water and sanitation guidelines has established "Sustainable Projects" to mean "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." Critical to creating sustainable projects is that Rotary clubs integrate their local project into a regional planning effort lead by an in country team of village leaders, host country Rotarians, and an active in-country NGO, with the support from the international Rotary club sponsors.

A WASRAG plan is different than a WASRAG project. A WASRAG Plan for a home, a school, a village or a region of a Country should be considered as the context or framework for providing sustainable WASRAG programs to the designated beneficiary(s). Within this group the plan must consider the needs, the available resources and the regional issues that will affect the successful implementation, over time, of the WASRAG project being considered.

The project or multiple project phases can be defined and pursued once the framework for the plan including village leadership, the alternatives available for meeting the WASRAG needs and priorities of the village leaders consistent with the area governments and traditional authorities are available. A sustainable project includes the following objectives:

1. Identifying potential alliances in the host country to support leadership, regional planning and to assist in monitoring and evaluation of successful operations at all levels.
2. Ensuring community ownership and demonstration of self-sufficiency of operation.
3. Project focus on needs, current state of community, desired future, and assessment of technical, socio/cultural and financial risks affecting the likely long-term viability of the project.

4. Involving women in the initial design of the system and in ensuring that the system is maintained and associated hygiene and behavioral changes take place and is incorporated in the primary and secondary school curriculums to establish generational changes.
5. Choosing appropriate technologies that are installed and operational support is available for both self supply and community systems consistent with the longer term needs of the village and region.
6. Focusing on overall community goals for the future with appropriate considerations of all areas of focus.

A sustainable project must plan for the stakeholder takeover of the process/product with accountability, maintenance and operational control within a practical timeframe. The stakeholder organization is to be defined in the Project Plan with the takeover program finalized early in the project implementation. The timeframe for the formal takeover will depend on the process/product with recognition that the sponsoring Rotary Club grant should include support through the stakeholder takeover. A suggested timeframe might be developed for frequent or a phasing of projects that require major assets and/construction with a general guideline to have the takeover be at project completion. A minimum of five years of mentoring support should be anticipated after facilities are completed.

The Sustainability Guideline provides Information to assist in application for Grant preparation for the range from a single Rotary Club to large grants with multiple Rotary Clubs. Club involvement may be simply a partner in funding or to be the lead International or Host Club guiding the multi-year planning, funding, and implementation lead for a major project or region of a Country.

The objective of the Sustainability Guideline is twofold. **First**, it provides steps for international, large and more complex Rotary projects that are submitted for Global Grant support. **(1)** The Sustainability Guideline states requirements for data that Rotary requests for major projects such as a Community Assessment. **Second**, the Guideline is intended to be the basic guide to achieve sustainability for all Rotary Club projects. The Rotary Host Club would follow the Sustainability Guideline format, but with less supporting detail than would be required for a Rotary Global Grant or International project. The **Help Information** provided with the Sustainability Guide will indicate the requirements for the general Rotary projects as well as the International Grant applications.

The Project Sustainability Guideline Format

A project in this document is defined as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. Each project is defined by a unique life cycle that passes sequentially through four stages: defining, planning, executing and closing. **(2)** Achieving project performance over the life of the project requires implementation of the following control steps within the project life cycle for measuring and evaluating project performance:

1. Setting a baseline plan.

2. Measuring progress and performance.
3. Comparing plan against actual.
4. Taking action.

The formal development and implementation of the control process and project follow-up are critical to achieve effective sustainable performance over the project life.

The format for the Sustainability Guideline follows project management methods based on the application of the “ Deming Cycle Steps of Plan, Do, Check/Analysis and Adjust/Act (PDCA)”. **(3)** The PDCA method is a proven methodology to assist in achieving continuous project improvement over the project life cycle-an effective sustainable solution. The Deming Cycle is utilized within the American Red Cross and is also the base for each of the International Standards Organization (ISO) Guidelines including; Quality Management-ISO 9000, Environmental Management-ISO 14000, Social Responsibility-ISO 26000, Sustainability Management (ISO In process) and many other topics. **(4)** The Sustainability Guideline continuous improvement PDCA method for project management is consistent with the detailed method utilized by Engineers Without Borders (EWB). **(5)**

This WASRAG Sustainability Guideline is intended to assist in project management for single Rotary Club humanitarian projects for local communities. Future amendments to this guideline will help the sponsoring and partner Rotary clubs in obtaining approval and project management for **TRF Global Grants** or other international matching fund grants and achieving the desired sustainable project outcomes. This Sustainability Guideline includes templates recommended to be completed and used by the Rotary Club sponsoring a proposed humanitarian initiative. Each template describes information important to follow proven project management steps using the PDCA continuous improvement method.

The Sustainability Guideline consists of three templates to be completed and submitted by the Rotary Club sponsoring the grant application. The templates describe the information suggested for the PDCA steps. The **Help Information** for application of the Sustainability Guide will be included in later versions

Sustainability Guideline Section 2: Project Definition and Control

The Definition Step establishes the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with the expected output (the target or goals). By establishing output expectations, the completeness and accuracy of the specification is also a part of the targeted improvement. The recommendation is to utilize Template 1 for Project Definition and Template 2 for Project Control. .

The information items important to be completed for the Definition Step are stated as follows in **Project Management Template 1: Defining the Project:**

1. Definition of the Project
2. Identification of the Stakeholders
3. Assessment of the Client/Community Needs
4. Discussion of the Sustainability Solution Characteristics

The primary items for definition of the project are the type of grant or proposal based on reference to the Rotary Foundation Grant Management Manual. The project category states the area of focus such as water and sanitation, economic development, disease management, or education. The stakeholder entry designates the host (e.g. primary Rotary Club), other key support organizations (e.g. contractors, suppliers, and NGOs), and the primary beneficiary organization (e.g. community).

If available, previous assessments within the past 1-3 years should be attached as part of the community assessment documentation. An electronic copy of the current Rotary Club Community Assessment Tool should be attached or hard copy provided. The assessment should provide information to support how the project will support documented community needs.

A sustainable project requires data that supports how the proposal plan addresses necessary characteristics to achieve sustainability (e.g. community needs and strengths, project materials and technology, funding through the life cycle, knowledge required and the motivation for the project). A suggested range of community financial/ resource contribution of 5%-20% is recommended to enable a sustainable project. **(6)**

The information items necessary for an effective process control are stated as follows in **Project Management Template 2: Project Process Control**

1. Financial Management Plan
2. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
3. Detailed Project Plan
4. Project Team

The information necessary to ensure process control includes a summary of financial management that covers disbursement of funds, financial recording, and club controlled bank account. The process for controlling and monitoring the financing, bank accounts document retention and asset/ inventory control are also important.

A very critical item for sustainable effectiveness is the monitoring and evaluation plan. This item includes the tasks in statement of the project goals and performance measures that cover each of the project categories listed in the project template. It is important to define baseline measures and data collection method for the project evaluation. It is also important to state the plan for monitoring and evaluation.

It is recommended that a project plan based from a simple Gantt chart (or bar chart) be developed that shows the relationships among the project tasks, along with time estimates. The project plan should state the key stakeholders with the roles and timeline for assigned tasks. It is also useful to identify any special project considerations (e.g. process to ensure continuity of the project through the project life time goal). The details for the project process control can be attached in electronic form or provided in hard copy.

Sustainability Guideline Section 3: Project Implementation, Check and Evaluation

Project management with goals to achieve targeted performance involves execution of the plan, status check and evaluation at critical points as well as upon completion. This step covers project operations, data collection, resource allocation, document control, maintenance of communications, implementation of operational control processes and supply chain management. Effective project management requires the following information provided through completion of **Project Management Template 3: Evaluate & Improve**

1. Project Status at selected points within and at project conclusion.
2. Monitoring and Evaluation at selected points and at project conclusion.
3. Identification of short and long term improvements for the project and project management process.

The status review is a check of actual results against the expected results (targets or goals from the "PLAN") to ascertain any differences. Look for deviation in implementation from the plan and also look for the appropriateness and completeness of the plan to enable the execution. The monitoring and evaluation effort provides information to help ensure sustainability of the project plus opportunities to seek continuous improvement during the life of the current project initiative and also for the next project cycle. The template could be used for periodic reporting during the implementation and evaluation of the project to provide check and analysis at critical points.

The overall project review provides the review of status of the project organization, installation against the plan, and the progress of the client training for a sustainable project. The status review for project operations should consider the key resources and processes covering the support network including; transport, materials handling, inventory, information, procurement, and expected services and client accountability. A review of financial status considering expense and asset control is an important activity. Document control including maintenance of status reports is also necessary. Communication of progress for the project team and other stakeholders should also be reviewed.

The completion of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) summary is also valuable to identify the areas of challenge, non-compliance, and potential opportunities for improvement. Based on the M&E information the recommendation for improvements in the current project initiative both short term and long term can be defined. The M&E could also provide insights to improve the overall Sustainability Guidelines.

Project Management Template 1: Defining the Project:*

| Domain | Identification | Contents/ Description |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Definition | | Definition may require a separate project charter attached or with a link. |
| Type of Grant | | |
| Project Category | | |
| Activity | | |
| Stakeholder-Partners | | |
| Host | | |
| International | | |
| Other Primary Support Organizations | | |
| Primary Beneficiary Organization | | |
| Community Assessment | | |
| Previous Assessment | | |
| Current Assessment | | |
| Sustainable Solutions | | |

* Attach and/or provide electronic source for relevant documents.

Project Management Template 2: Project Process Control *

| Domain | Identification/ Project Status | Contents/ Description |
|---|---|--|
| Financial Management Plan | | Financial Management Plan should be provided with application. Attach document or provide link. |
| Budget | | |
| Financing | | |
| Bank Accounts | | |
| Document Retention | | |
| Inventory | | |
| Other Questions | | |
| Monitoring & Evaluation Plan | | Monitoring & Evaluation Plan should be provided with application. Attach document or provide link |
| Step 1:Project Goals | | |
| Step 2: Rotary Foundation Measures | | |
| Step 3: Identify additional measures | | |
| Step 4: Data Collection | | |
| Step 5: M& E Plan | | |
| Step 6: Collect Data for Status | | |
| Step 7: Evaluate | | |
| Detailed Plan | | Attach detailed plan or provide link. |
| Gantt or Bar Chart Plan | | |
| Project Team | | Attach Project Team information or provide link |
| Project Team Organizations | | |
| Special Project Considerations | | |

* Attach and/or provide electronic source for relevant documents.

Project Management Template 3: Evaluate & Improve*

| Project Management Template 3: Evaluate & Improve* Domain | Identification/ Project Status | Review Key Performance Indicators KPIs Against Targets- Check/ Monitor, Analyze, Evaluate and Improve |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Status- Project Overview | | |
| * Roles and Responsibility * Project installation *Client training & sustainability | | |
| Status -Operations / Supply Chain | | |
| Review project activities *Transport *Materials Handling *Inventory *Information *Procurement *Service & Client | | |
| Status-Financial | | |
| *Expense *Asset Control | | |
| Status- Documentation | | |
| *Documents *Report Management | | |
| Status-Communication | | |
| * Project Team * Other Key Stakeholders | | |
| Project Follow Up - Monitor & Evaluation M&E | | |
| *Project M&E Report *Non-compliance & issues | | |
| Project Follow Up- Act-/Adjust -Improve | | |

* Attach and/or provide electronic source for relevant documents.

References:

1. Rotary Grant Management Manual, source Rotary and **WASRAG** web sites- Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group, www.wasragfoundation.org
2. Project Management Institute, Project Management the Managerial Process, fifth edition, Erik W. Larson and Clifford F. Gray, McGraw Hill , The McGraw Hill /Irwin Companies, Inc. New York, NY 2011
3. Modified Deming Cycle - Plan, Do, Check and Act (PDCA), modified to be Plan, Do, Check/Analysis, and Act/Adjust, modified by Dr. Omar Keith Helferich. PDCA source various Internet sites, <https://www.deming.org> The W. Edwards Deming Institute. The **Cycle** is a systematic series of steps for gaining valuable learning.
4. International Organization for Standardization (ISO), www.iso.org . Deming Cycle process is the base framework for all ISO standards.
5. Engineers without Borders (EWB) method utilized for project management. www.ewb-usa.org/resources/ewg-us, The EWB approach- Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (PMEL)
6. A range of community financial resource contribution is 5% -20% of the total project costs to ensure sustainable project over the expected life of the project, source is WASRAG.