JRS Biodiversity Foundation Proposal Glossary of Terms

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Glossary of Terms

Project Planning and Management Terms: Vision > Goals > Objectives > Activities	
VISION	Some projects like to express a long-term aspiration to which the project contributes. E.g., Our vision is a future where all the floral biodiversity data of our country is on-line.
GOALS	The goal of the project is the highest level achievement to which you can claim plausible attribution. E.g., Create global access to a comprehensive database of our country's leaf beetle biodiversity.
OBJECTIVES	An objective is a sub-goal or major project component that can be used to logically organize a discrete set of activities and whose achievement is a major step towards the overall goal. E.g., Digitize the leaf beetle collections of the National Museum.
ACTIVITIES	Activities are what you do to implement the project. Grant funds pay for activities and other inputs like equipment, software, and services. E.g., Assign geo-references to locality names used in the national leaf beetle collections.
Monitoring and Evaluation Terms: Results > Impact > Outcomes > Outputs > Inputs	
RESULTS	A general and broad term for achievements that is inclusive of the outputs, outcomes and impact of a grant project.
IMPACT	Ultimate measurable change upon the status of biodiversity – generally this is not directly attributable to J.R.S. grants but there may be evidence of contributions.
OUTCOMES	The first thing that occurs as a result of your activities and your outputs that is not in your control or is directly funded. Outcomes may include citation and use of papers and data, application of new skills, conservation decisions, new partnerships and funding, new policies, use of web portals, receipt of additional funding, etc.
OUTPUTS	The direct products of your funded activities. These may be items like publications, databases, graduates of training workshops, student theses, and new discoveries or technologies. Outputs are the immediate accomplishments of your work and may or may not be sufficient to create outcomes.
INPUTS	Inputs are the resources you 'buy' to implement a project such as salaries, equipment, training, equipment, and publishing fees.
INDICATORS	An indicator is a general term for a qualitative or quantitative variable or fact that can simply and reliably define the status of the project (*progress indicators*) or its achievements. Similar terms to indicators are *metrics* and *measures*. Indicators define goals or targets that are meaningful evidence of progress and success.
MILESTONE	Specific, sequential and time-bound indicators designated to monitor significant stages in the progress or achievements of the project. Milestones are significant because of their dependence upon the successful completion of prior activities. Milestones may be activities, outputs or outcomes. Milestones may be 'targets.' See Page 3 on S.M.A.R.T. goals. We look for about 6-12 meaningful milestones per year to monitor progress and guide adaptive management.

Work Planning Table

The Work Planning Table focuses specifically on a project's activities, outputs, and outcomes, grouped by objective. An objective is any subdivision of work that makes sense as a logical way to organize the project. A project could have one objective or many objectives. The diagram helps explain the connections among activities, outputs, and outcomes. Key milestones are the most critical project activities, outputs, and outcomes that are used to manage and monitor the progress of a grant Add rows as needed.
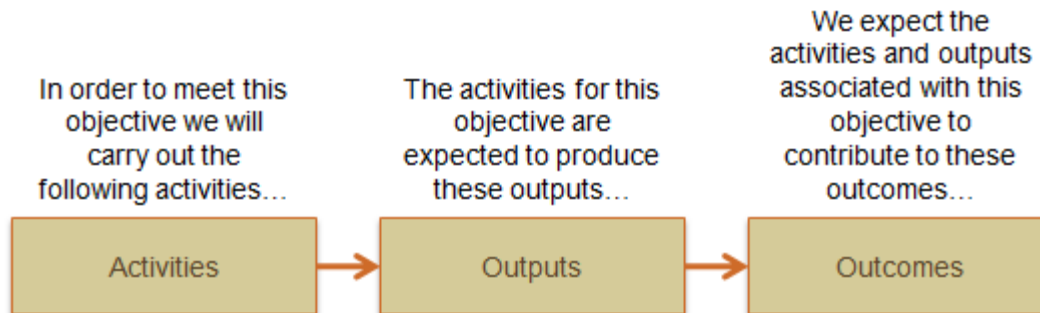
SAMPLE

Project Objective 1: Statement of the project Objective achieved by the activities below. Objective statement may be in terms of indicators and a specific time.			
Activities	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**	**Indicators and Key Milestones**
• Describe multiple activities per cell that you can map to outputs or outcomes. • Name the activity and put dates in parentheses (start date – end date).	• List here. Outputs may be publications or database records. • Outputs could be a workshop or web portal • Specific measures are best.	• There tend to be multiple activities or outputs contributing to outcomes. • Outcomes are the 1st thing that results from your work beyond the project's control or spending. • Outcomes may be citations, data use, conservation decisions, technology adoption, policy change, employment of trainees, etc.	• Indicators may be interim indicators of progress, proxy indicators for outcomes, or indicators of success. • Indicators may be quantitative or qualitative.

Being S.M.A.R.T.

The development of specific milestones, objectives, and goals can be very useful to help you manage your project, assess your progress, adapt to changing circumstances, and to communicate your success. Specificity also helps you to efficiently report to the JRS Biodiversity Foundation since progress reporting can then focus on adaptation, learning, challenges, opportunities and the nuances of your work.

A useful framework is S.M.A.R.T.:

S: Specific

M: Measurable

A: Actionable

R: Relevant

T: Time-bound

Asking yourself whether you have defined your objectives and milestones to fit the S.M.A.R.T. framework can be a powerful tool for planning, forming partnerships, setting expectations, and motivating a team[1]. SMART can apply to defining objectives, goals, or milestones.

Specific	Define the objective in an unambiguous way with clear indicators. What are you seeking to accomplish? Do you have specific targets?
Measurable	Other terms might be 'assessable' or 'evaluable.' Please consider the time it takes to measure the indicator. For milestones to be relevant to your project management, you want to be sure you have the methods for real-time or timely measurement. How will you know that a specific milestone or goal is accomplished?
Actionable	A good test of a goal is that it is meaningful so that you or other parties can act upon the information. If you don't meet or exceed this goal, so what? Then what?
Relevant	Is it worthwhile and meaningful to achieve and measure this objective? A good mantra is to "measure what matters" and to be sure you can directly connect the objectives and milestones to what you are trying to achieve.
Time-bound	When will this occur? Relevant milestones that don't occur as scheduled indicate a need to revise plans, change your approach, reset other objectives, or to redeploy resources in a different way. An activity may have a time range (e.g. we will do field work in Months 1-6) but a good milestone is time-bound (e.g. 2000 collections from 7 field sites are completed by Month 7).

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[1] Organizations have adapted the S.M.A.R.T. mnemonic to fit their cultures and goals. Here we use "Actionable" instead of "Achievable" as I would consider 'achievable' to be a component of 'Relevant', see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria.