

Tool 14: SMART objectives

Phase	Phase 2: Where are we going? Vision and strategic objectives
Sub-phase	Sub-phase 2.2: Set strategic objectives and build consensus on strategic directions
Name of tool	SMART objectives
Objectives	The aim of the tool is to encourage the development of objectives, which will provide a good basis for project development and later evaluation.
Under which circumstances to use the tool	Use tool to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Refine objectives and make measurable
Main actor(s) responsible and participating	The planning team is responsible. This is an activity where the development of the smart objectives is best done by a planning team, but the result should be discussed and agreed with a wider representative group
Target / beneficiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The planning team ▪ The wider participatory group
Description of tool	<p>SMART stands for four important qualities of objectives relating to urban development. Objectives should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific in terms of place ▪ Measurable in terms of <i>what</i> is to be achieved (not how to achieve it) ▪ Acceptable. This means that an objective should be accepted by key stakeholders. The process to set and agree the objective should be participatory to maximize acceptance. (note some sources use “Achievable” but that is very similar to “realistic”) ▪ Realistic. It should be possible to reach the objective with regard to resources including finance and organizational capacity ▪ Time bound. It is critical that objectives are related to a meaningful time frame. The time frame should itself be linked to political and social realities as well as to physical development aspects <p>The process to develop SMART objectives goes through the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Step 1 The starting point of this tool is the initial or draft objective developed through another tool. <i>Problem Tree Analysis</i> (tool XX) is recommended for this, but is not the only means. Problem Tree Analysis enables core problems to be identified. These can be turned into objectives. For example, a problem identified as “no access to basic infrastructure in a certain area” could be turned into the broad objective “ensure access to basic infrastructure in a certain area”.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In addition, it is important to look at objectives which may be developed from the visioning process and SWOT analysis. ▪ <u>Step 2</u> Make each objective specific by adapting it so that it answers the four questions linked to SMART. This can be done by individual participants with suggestions written on cards or sheets of paper (see Meta plan tool XX). If using cards or paper – pin or stick on a wall / whiteboard/flip chart ▪ <u>Step 3</u> Discuss and refine each objective until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It meets the SMART criteria ▪ Group members agree on the objective and its formulation
Total time required for use of the tool	Objective setting is fundamental for the development of a strategy, and is more difficult than it appears. Allow half a day for a participative exercise.
Advantages and disadvantages of this tool	<p>Advantages (+)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + It is easy to remember + Helps create a sound foundation to strategy development <p>Disadvantages (—)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Although it looks simple it is difficult to do well (applies to all objective setting) – SMART represents only a limited selection of questions about the quality of an objective. Other lists are more thorough.
Related tools	<p><i>Problem tree analysis</i> is a useful starting point</p> <p><i>SWOT</i> analysis identifies issues which can be reformulated into objectives</p> <p><i>Visioning</i> tools provide a wide framework</p>
References and further sources	<p>The version of SMART described here is developed for IHS. The attached table is an adaptation of material in</p> <p><u>Generally accessible documents:</u></p> <p>UNCHS (1991) Guide for managing change for urban managers and trainers, (Training materials series) Nairobi, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.</p> <p><u>Academic documents (access may be limited):</u></p>