



Establishing Your S.M.A.R.T. Objectives

What are S.M.A.R.T objectives?

S.M.A.R.T. is a simple acronym that can be used to help you identify and evaluate project objectives. It is important to develop a S.M.A.R.T. objective for each goal or outcome you hope your project will meet. Questions and examples for helping you create S.M.A.R.T. objectives are described in the following sections.

Specific (What is the specific task?):

- Who is involved?
- What do you want to accomplish?

Measurable (What are the concrete criteria for measuring change?):

- How will we know that change has occurred?
- How much change is expected?

Achievable (Is the task feasible?):

- Are the limitations and constraints understood?
- Can you meet this objective with the resources available, and within the proposed timeframe?

Relevant and/or Realistic (Does this relate directly to the goal?):

- Does the objective accurately address the scope of the problem?
- Are there other factors that need to be considered to ensure the plan works?

Time-specific (Within what timeframe are you working?):

- When will this objective be met?
- When can short term outcomes be expected?

Where Do I Begin?

FIRST, identify the problem you want to solve or the goal you want to achieve.

Example: People in our community don't eat enough fresh fruits and vegetables.

NEXT, reword your problem into a question you can answer. Start thinking about what you want to measure and what results or outcomes will tell you how you've been successful.

Example: A draft S.M.A.R.T. Research Question may be -- Will a community-driven farmers market increase fruit and vegetable intake?

THEN, determine the key components of each question posed, goal or outcome by utilizing S.M.A.R.T. objectives. Here's an example:

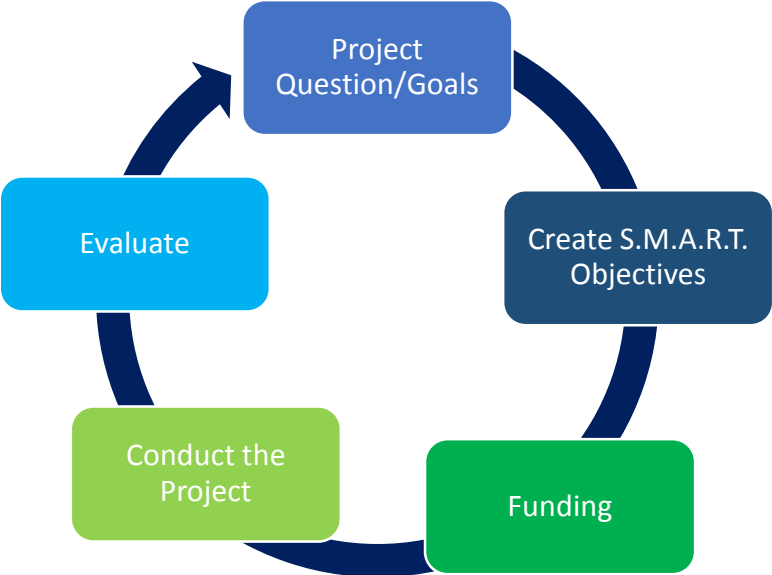
Key Component	Objective
<p>Specific - What is the specific task?</p>	<p>Implement a farmers market in the community to help increase fruit and vegetable consumption among adults.</p>
<p>Measurable - What are the concrete criteria for measuring change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a questionnaire <i><method></i> to determine the frequency of reported fruit and vegetable consumption <i><what is being measured></i> in a sample of adults aged 20-65 <i><who></i> visit a local community center where the market will be held <i><show how you are reaching your target population></i>. • Use the above questionnaire before the farmers market opens and again 3 months later <i><measuring change over time></i>. • Ask individuals if they visited the farmers market in the post-survey and whether they purchased fruits and vegetables <i><helps to interpret results—did the farmers market have an effect or was consumption of fruits/vegetables the result of something else?></i>. • Compare the number of vendors selling fruit and vegetables versus non-produce items at the farmers market <i><do people have greater options of purchasing produce at the market></i>.
<p>Achievable - Is the task feasible?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, when the farmers market opens, people will have the opportunity and access to fresh produce. • However, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ socioeconomics may influence results (if individuals in the target area don't have the financial resources to purchase fruits and vegetables and food stamp tokens are not available); ○ younger or older adults may not cook for themselves; or ○ you may not be able to measure the same people before and after the farmers market to really understand if it was the farmers market that is increasing produce consumption. • These items help you think about things that may go wrong so that you can hone your project and identify limitations. • Also, what benchmarks <i><feasible targets></i> are you setting? Are you trying to increase produce consumption by 10%, 60%? Determine what is feasible and be able to say why you picked a specific metric and why that metric might be important to measure in support of your project. •

<p>Relevant and/or Realistic - Does the objective relate directly to the goal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, local farmers will provide fresh fruit and vegetables to stock the market. • However, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ who will pay for the space occupied by the farmers market? ○ what additional project-supportive costs should be considered (for trash disposal, for survey printing costs)?
<p>Time-specific – When will objective be measured/met?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first survey will be administered during the month before the farmers market opens. • The second survey will be administered 3 months after the market has been in operation. • Adding extra time for survey development and analyzing your results are two other important time-specific considerations that people sometimes forget!

Next Steps

REFINE your research question ensuring that all S.M.A.R.T. objectives are addressed:

Will opening a farmers market one day a week during the summer months result in a 10% or greater increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables over 3 months among adults aged 20-65 as assessed using a validated food frequency questionnaire?



Create S.M.A.R.T. objectives for each goal that you have and get your project rolling!