

## Objectives, Measures and Deliverables - A Quick Guide

---

### Project Objectives:

Write a one line statement (or a few concise bullets) that specifies what the project is trying to achieve. Objectives are often expressed in the form: “To [improve/increase/enhance/etc.] something, by [x amount], by [dd/mm/yy date]; e.g.

 To reduce time to respond to complaints by 50%, by November 2008

 To increase income by £50k, by 31/03/09

Ideally, they should be SMART, or be capable of being made SMART once further definition work has been done. SMART = Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. If you can track achievement against the objective on a graph, then it’s probably a SMART objective.

They don’t contain words such as “*optimise*”, “*maximise*”, “*minimise*” and they don’t have deadlines such as “*Autumn*” or “*Quarter 3*”. They certainly aren’t “*ongoing*”.

They should **not** describe what you plan to do, how you plan to do it, or what you plan to produce.

The only type of project where you probably cannot write a SMART objective is a scoping, or feasibility project, where the aim is to deliver a recommendation or report.

An objective “To implement a new xyz IT system” is not an objective. What is the expected organisational benefit here? If you can see it, feel it, file it, trip over it, or put it on a shelf, it’s probably a deliverable, not an objective! You won’t be able to draw it on a graph.

So, objectives must define desired benefits, outcomes or performance improvements that you expect from the project. What you need to measure on your project will naturally fall out of the definition of good objectives.

## Objectives, Measures and Deliverables - A Quick Guide

---

### Project Measurements:

What you need to measure on your project will naturally fall out of the definition of good objectives. Measurements are about data and should therefore be capable of being summarised on a graph. There aren't that many things you can measure, although there are many examples and many potential derived measurement ratios:

Measurements	Examples
Volume	Input volume, Output volume (yield), Number of..., Frequency & Usage rates (No./Day)
Time	Activity processing time (Duration), Cycle-time (end-to-end), Delay (waiting time)
Cost	People cost (from time & overhead), Resource costs (non-people), Profit/Loss, Value-add
Success Rate	Accuracy, Error Rate, Response Rate, Attrition Rate, Completion Rate, Wastage Rate, Non-compliances
Conformance	% Achievement of specification, Completeness, Availability
Timeliness	On-time Delivery, No. or % Delivered within target, No. or % Delivered late
Perception	Satisfaction, Happiness, % Agreement/Disagreement, Intention to re-purchase/re-use/recommend, Loyalty
Physical Parameters	Length, Weight/Mass, Volume, Area, Time, Acidity, Velocity, Acceleration, Current, Voltage, Energy

## Objectives, Measures and Deliverables - A Quick Guide

---

### Project Deliverables:

These may also be called “outputs” or “products”. Too many Project Initiation Documents specify Deliverables as their objectives. Deliverables are only produced in order to enable achievement of the objectives.

Deliverables are the tangible things that the project will produce to enable the objectives to be achieved. The focus should be on the “real” deliverables (such as new facilities, paperwork, equipment or materials), not the “internal deliverables” (such as a Project Definition, a Business Case or a Risk Log). It is these “real deliverables”, when used, that will deliver the project’s proposed benefits.

Deliverables will often have a level of quality or specification associated with them, against which their performance can be assessed.

Many IT and Facilities projects suffer from having deliverables expressed as objectives. The result is that the focus of the project is on delivering “stuff”, rather than improving organisational performance.