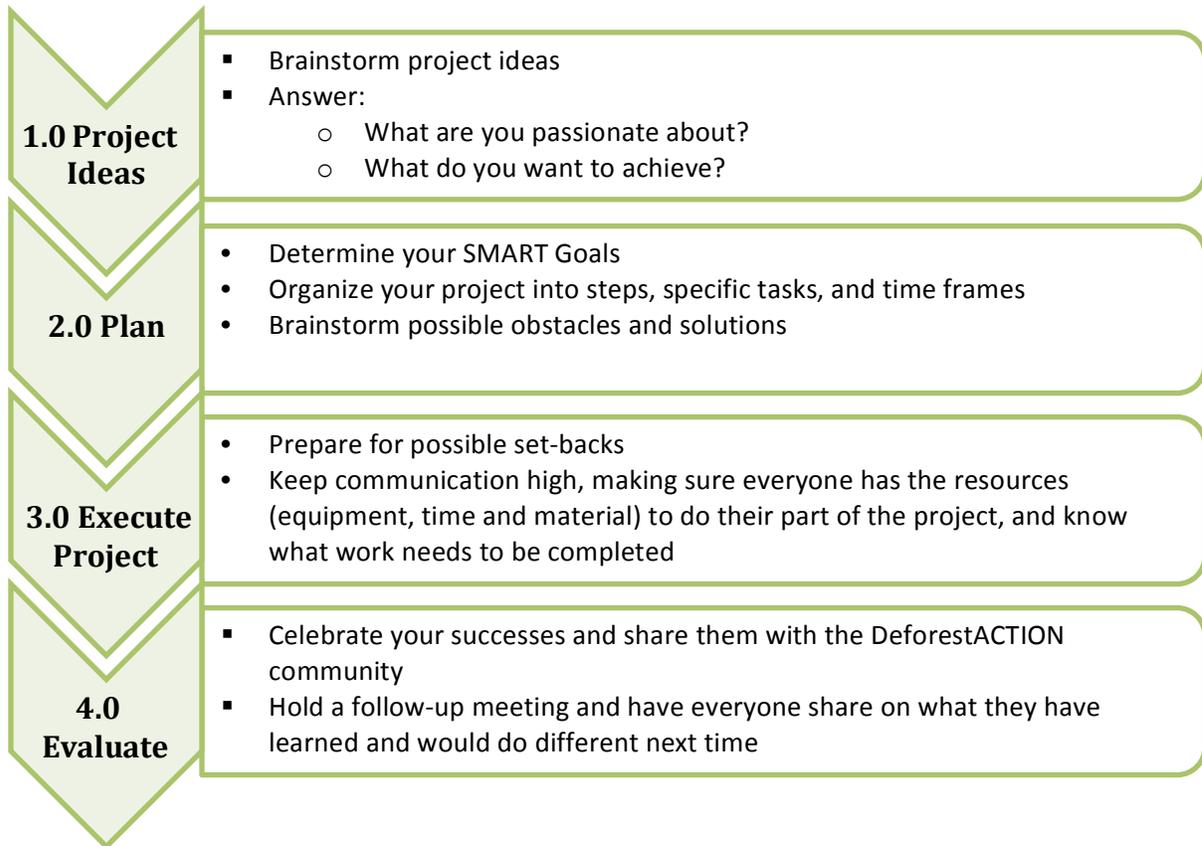# Student Project Planning Guide

This guide is meant to be your project organizer, and help you develop a successful project.

It's purpose is to assist you in mapping your ideas, developing SMART goals, and carryout your project in a way that will lead to success and great experiences.

Below is an overview of the stages in developing your class/or individual project.

1.0 Project Ideas
- Brainstorm project ideas
- Answer:
  - What are you passionate about?
  - What do you want to achieve?

2.0 Plan
- Determine your SMART Goals
- Organize your project into steps, specific tasks, and time frames
- Brainstorm possible obstacles and solutions

3.0 Execute Project
- Prepare for possible set-backs
- Keep communication high, making sure everyone has the resources (equipment, time and material) to do their part of the project, and know what work needs to be completed

4.0 Evaluate
- Celebrate your successes and share them with the DeforestACTION community
- Hold a follow-up meeting and have everyone share on what they have learned and would do different next time

1.0 Choosing a Project Idea

Every project is unique, and every type of movement different. Use your creativity to come up with actions that you believe will make a difference.

List all the ideas you have for potential projects:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Example project idea: *To encourage people to become conscious consumers and reduce their impact on forests we will start an eco-stationary product fundraiser at our school.*

With your team/class discuss the project ideas listed by everyone in your team and circle the top three.

Individually, write one project you want to pursue: _____

_____

_____

There are thousands of great ideas for projects, but often <u>creativity</u> and <u>social media</u> is your greatest weapon!

Try to find ways to share your project with the DeforestACTION online community to inspire others, and raise awareness of your initiatives. Document your project journey and showcase it on your Action Hub, in the Collaboration Centre, or on Facebook www.facebook.com/deforestaction.

2.0 Developing an Action Plan

Part 1: Setting "SMART" Project Goals

Now that you have picked a project idea, you have decide how to take action! First it is important to pick SMART goals for your project. Setting good SMART goals are the key to successful projects.

The first step in implementing any project is to create "SMART" Project Goals.

What are SMART Goals? They are goals that are:

Specific	Goals are clear and unambiguous by answering WHAT is expected, WHY it is important, and WHO is involved.
Measurable	Can your goal be measured? Being able to measure your progress and goals will help your team stay on track and focused. Think of answers to the questions: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?
Achieveable	Set your goals high, but attainable. As you grow and develop, your goals become more achievable!
Relevant	Make sure that your goals are relevant to what you are trying to achieve. Ask questions like: Does this match our efforts and needs? Will this help us achieve our desired end result?
Timely	A time-bound goal (deadline) establishes a sense of urgency and helps your project stay on track and focused.

Work with your team and create 2-3 different SMART goals for your DeforestACTION project.

1)
Example: To raise awareness of climate change solutions by launching a student-run composting program at our school by May

2)

3)

Part 2: Transform Goals into an Action Plan

Now that you have created your SMART goals, it is time to create an action plan! The purpose of an action plan is to create a connection between the SMART goals you have created, and the steps that need to take to achieve your SMART goals.

Creating your Action Plan can take a lot of time, however, a well-planned project will save you a lot of time in unidentified obstacles, challenges, and steps that you may run into.

In your project team:

1. Take some time to go over all the steps that need to be taken in order for you to achieve your project goals.

2. Think about possible challenges and obstacles that may arise – being prepared for challenges is a great way to ensure that your plan will be a success!

The example below highlights an action plan of a student-run compost program to highlight climate change. Use the chart provided on the following page to help create your own plan.

SMART Goal	Steps Needed To Achieve your Goal	How Will You Do This? (Tasks)	What Resources will I need to do this?	Who Will Be Responsible?	How Will You Know When You Are Successful?	Deadline
To raise awareness of climate change solutions by launching a student-run composting program at our school.	1) Learn more about indoor vermaculture (using worms to create compost)	Search online and at the library for vermiculture guides.	Contact people who already compost for tips and tricks. There might even be a local or regional composting association.	Rahul Lee	I will have enough information to create a task schedule for the volunteers to keep the project running smoothly. I will know what equipment is needed and where I can get it.	May 18, 2010
	2) Get support from school administration	Talk to principal and cafeteria manager.	May need support of a teacher who will oversee project.	Angela Nick Jasmeet	Our principal gives us permission to install the composter and collection bins. We may get financial support from school.	June 4th, 2010
	3) Recruit a group of volunteers	Put up posters, get on the morning announcements, ask friends	If there is an environmental club already, they can help. Find a teacher to help recruit.	Trevor Lisa Ayla	I will have a list of volunteers, with emails and phone numbers, to do the day-to-day tasks.	June 10th, 2010

Possible Challenges	How Can I Overcome This?
What if none of the guides have information about composting on a school-wide scale?	Try to find a teacher or environmental group at another local school that runs a similar program.
People may not want to volunteer.	Find a teacher who will let volunteers have a 10 minute break from her class to do their tasks or reward volunteers with a field trip or pizza party. Everyone loves a pizza party!!

"**Tactics**, by definition, **are the actions that you take to achieve objectives set by an overall strategy**... All too often tactics replace strategy altogether, leading mostly to one defeat following the next. Tactics are important, but they are only one consideration among many in a campaign, only one piece in the overall puzzle, and you **cannot define your tactics without first knowing what you are trying to achieve.**"
Australian Student Environment Network, Uni Clean Energy Toolkit.
Referenced in our *Climate Change Youth Guide to Action*

Action Plan Template:

3.0 Execute the project

Revise and Update

When carrying out your project, expect to run into obstacles and setbacks. Make sure you revise your action plan for any new identified possible challenges along your way and develop a tentative plan to overcome them. If your project does encounter setbacks, make sure to revise your initial deadlines. Making the deadlines realistic will help all your team members stay positive and on track!

Communicate

Holding lots of team meetings where everyone has a chance to update and report on their tasks helps keep everyone on the same path and motivated to work on the project. Make sure during the meetings you always refer back to your action plan and your deadlines. Make any necessary changes (new obstacles or new deadlines) on the project plan.

Team cohesiveness and milestones

To keep everyone working together and motivated to finish the project, highlight and celebrate Key Milestones. Key milestones are constructed points along the project timeline that the team chooses to focus on and celebrate. They normally highlight the accomplishment of a huge task or obstacle.

Milestone Examples

1) Project: Holding a fundraiser
   - Completing formal proposal to hold a fundraising event at out school
       Deadline: October 25th
   - Receiving confirmation of 100 students to participate
       Deadline: November 30th
2) Creating a social awareness video
   - Completing the backdrop stage to our social awareness video
       Deadline: November 15th
   - Getting X number of hits via social media awareness
       Deadline January 10th

4.0 Evaluate

Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect and learn from what you've done, to assess the outcomes and effectiveness, and to think about new best practices. A key to learning about a project is the follow-up afterwards.

Evaluation ➡ **Reflect** ➡ **Learn**

At the end of your project, you will want to be able to know how much of a difference you really made, so that you can see if you achieved your objectives. This process is called "Evaluation." You should also check in at different stages of your project to monitor your progress along the way, via team meetings.

Possible indicators of success to evaluate your project on:

• The number of people who said, in an evaluation form, that they learned from your project

• The amount of waste being composted instead of landfilled

• The number of people involved with your project (team-members and participants)

• The amount of greenhouse gases reduced

• How many projects have been inspired by your work

There are a lot of websites that offer reflection tools and survey development services, which can allow you to help evaluate your project and derive any lessons learned from your project management journey.

Reflection Tasks:
www.exploreatree.org.uk
www.gliffy.com
Surveys for evaluation and reflections
www.surveymonkey.com
www.micropoll.com

Tips for evaluation:

• Keep your evaluation simple and relevant. Measurable outcomes are great.

• To avoid bias, try to gain inputs from a lot of different sources. Ask your participants, your partners and your team members what they thought.

• You will probably learn that the project has unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative. Think about how the project has influenced and affected the participants, your community, your organization, and even yourself.

• Include details on factors that negatively impacted your project (were these truly outside your control, or were they risks that could have been avoided?)

• Spend some time highlighting commendations for the future, so that when similar projects are launched, they are more likely to have a greater impact.

Remember to share your initiatives and successes with the DeforestACTION community! You can share your fundraiser event with the online community by posting your story, photos, and videos in our Collaboration Centre, or on the Action Hub your school automatically receives when you sign-up for DeforestACTION. You may also e-mail the DeforestACTION team, and have them assist you in highlighting your story at deforestaction@takingitglobal.org