Vision and Goals

1) Do you have a shared, clear idea of what your overall goals are?

You can test whether you all feel the same way by trying to explain your goal in a sentence or two.
e.g. I/We would like to influence recycling practices in our neighborhood.

◎ No

◎ To some extent

◎ Yes

2) Are your initial goals clear enough?

Eg. Our group / We will host an event in the area where we invite people to make art from their recyclables collectively.

◎ No, there still is some vagueness.

◎ Yes, we know what we want to do.

3) Have all the team members participated in the definition of the goals? Have everybody's ideas been heard?

◎ Some but not all.

◎ Yes, everybody has a say in what we do.

4) Do you feel like your project is flexible / open?

Imagine, for example, that something were to come up at this moment (be it an opportunity or an obstacle). Do you think your group would easily manage to reshape its goals to make use of the opportunity or overcome the obstacle?

◎ No not really.

◎ To some extent.

◎ Yes, we are flexible!

5) Considering the resources and the limits of the group, are your goals achievable?

i.e. can you translate your goals into a plan of action?

◎ No, not really.

◎ We still have a few issues.

◎ Yes, we have a realistic plan of action.

Personal Resources

6) Have you discussed together as a group how each team member would like to be involved in the project?

◎ No, not yet.

◎ Most members have shared their views.

◎ Yes, we've covered that.

7) Are the group members satisfied with the tasks they have chosen and been assigned?

◎ No / I don't know

◎ Most of them, yes.

◎ Yes!

8) Consider a situation where one of the group members can no longer be involved in the project. Can the project go on?

This helps define if your project might be too person-dependent rather than group-dependent.

◎ No, not really.

◎ To some extent.

◎ Yes, we've covered that.

Group

9) Have you managed to form a group that is just the right size for you?

> e.g. Are there too many tasks and too few people? --> Maybe you need more hands on board. Or is the group too big to communicate effectively? Maybe you should form sub-groups to deal with that!

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ Not sure…

10) Are you re-creating a project that has been done before? If so, do you feel at home with the concept as it is or would your like to change and develop it in your own direction?

> i.e. Are you repeating an event that happens yearly? If yes, do you feel like you have to continue in the previous direction or do you feel that you have shaped it to your group?

◎ We're happy with the tried and tested blueprints.

◎ We'd rather give it a new spin.

◎ This hasn't been done before. [Not applicable]

11) If someone were to join the project now, do you think they would be able to influence the outcome?

> Are you potentially missing out on great new development ideas by not engaging new people?

◎ No, not really.

◎ It depends on the person (and whether we need their skills anyway)

◎ Yes, we are open enough in that way.

12) Have you turned your project into concrete to do lists?

> i.e. Contact the local company X to ask if they can provide the things Y, design the poster for the event, document the meeting outcomes, etc

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ Not so clearly.

13) Are the tasks distributed fairly among the group? This doesn't necessarily mean that everyone should have the same amount of tasks, but rather that everyone has the amount they are comfortable with.

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ To some extent.

14) Does everyone in the group know the limits of their responsibilities?

Try this example. Think of the task "Informing the X newspaper about the event". In your current group set-up, who would be assigned to do that? Is it clear and obvious? If not, your roles are maybe a bit intertwined which might cause confusion in the group dynamics.

◎ Yes, the roles are well defined.

◎ No, we improvise as we go along.

◎ They are defined but not completely.

15) Do you see your project as open / transparent?

Consider, for example, the last meeting you had or a decision that was made. Has it been documented somewhere in such a way that someone who wasn't present could understand?

◎ Yes .

◎ No.

◎ Maybe.

16) Do you have a clear method of internal communication that everybody can use?

For example, Facebook for acute issues or a mailing list or an intra net for sharing longer texts.

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ Maybe.

17) Do you have a preliminary schedule of what is to be done and when?

◎ Yes!

◎ No…

18) Have you taken into account the personal time of the group members?

Imagine, for example, if someone does not have time to contribute for a specific time period. Would that be easy to overcome?

◎ Yes

◎ No

◎ To some extent

Partnerships

19) Do you have a clear idea of what you would expect from a partner organization or individual?

Funding, materials, promotion, service etc.

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ To some extent.

20) Have you identified the type of benefits you can offer to the partner?

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

21) Do the partners you have (or will acquire) have the possibility to influence your activities?

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ Not sure...

22) Have you analyzed what kind of interaction you will need to have with the city?

If you need permits, have you discovered which ones? If you're collaborating more extensively, do you know which department you need to address?

◎ Yes.

◎ No, we have no idea!

◎ To some extent.

23) Have you gathered relevant information from other similar projects?
It's good to ask. Others might have solved the same problems you're having now.

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ I couldn't find any similar projects. [Not applicable]

External Communication

24) Have you defined a marketing strategy for your project?

In short: who do you want to know about your project, and how to spread the information the best. Having a strategy also includes appointing "a publicist" who will be responsible for that.

◎ Yes.

◎ Not yet.

◎ We have some outlines.

25) You should have easily accessible written material prepared on your project so that you can easily provide a summary to anyone interested. Is that in order?

This is useful since there might be a need to quickly pitch your project to someone interested and then refer them to a text (online or not) for further detail!

◎ No.

◎ Yes, we are ready to give a presentation to anyone!

26) Have you determined whether your project / event needs a dedicated website or a blog or both?

For example, events with many scheduled happenings might need a website, projects that are more about the process (see EA) benefit from a blog. Ongoing, more general projects (like DDP) might benefit from both!

◎ Yes!

◎ We haven't decided yet,

◎ We're still looking into it.

27) Have you used social media, such as Facebook, to promote your ideas on a more personal level?

You can make dedicated social media pages, groups, posts, everything!

◎ Yes.

◎ No.

◎ Probably not enough.

Recommendations

Vision and Goals

(Defining the vision & the goals)

Gather as a group and try writing down what you want to achieve. Does everyone feel included? Settling things together makes it the group's vision/goal. Group members should have a genuine sense of ownership of the commonly shared vision.

This can be done through a facilitated session. For more info, see "Defining the vision & the goals".

(Goal management)

Consider what you have, and what you can get. It's good to think big, but immediately after consider "Ok, what should I do to make that happen...". If your idea is feasible – pursue it. If it's not – reshape. Keep in mind the joy of doing and participating, that's what this is all about!

Project-forming is an iterative process! So don't get disappointed!

Personal Resources

(Personal Skills)

Everyone has something to offer, and they will be more willing to volunteer their time and skills if they can do something they enjoy! The only way to know is to ask & discuss!

(Flexibility)

Try sharing all the information with all the group members. This makes it easier for people to be up-to-date with the situation and hop on and off when they need to.

Personal Resources

(Personal Skills)

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Group

(Forming a Group)

Invite people to a meeting. This can be done in person, through an association, through social media, posters or any other way!
Let them know that nothing is predefined, and that they will have the chance to influence and participate as much as they want to.
In the meeting, try to "Listen louder" as described in "Forming a Group".

(Decision-making and sharing responsibilities)

Try to identify the roles in your group. You can utilize the roles used in business environments such as production / project manager, communications, etc.

Then, try to identify the different tasks to be completed, write them down and delegate them in a way that no-one gets too many. Ensure that the responsibilities are recorded into a file that can be accessed by all group members!

(Internal Communication)

Try setting up a tool for communicating decisions to all the group members. Artova uses an intranet and it's working well!

Also, find a place where you can arrange general meetings. A neutral place (community centers, libraries etc) might work better than someone's house.

Generally, in Artova, people try to incorporate transparency and openness in the general vision of each project. It has to do with more than just methods of communication, it is a central principle that projects rely on!

(Time Management)

Try not to make the scheduling to tight. Give a large enough timeframe for the team members to manage their personal life and volunteer work as they see fit.

On the other hand, try to get into action as fast as possible! Leaving plans on paper rarely motivates anyone – it is the doing and the progress that people enjoy the most!

Partnerships

(Partnership strategies)

Partnerships are give-and-take situations. The clearer you define what you need *from* the partners and what benefits you can offer *for* the partners the easier you will communicate.

This is also a useful exercise for the group: everyone should recognize that they are not asking for charity, they are giving the partners an opportunity to be part of their project.

Moreover, even though it is not necessary, by letting the partners take a part in building the project, you are creating a much stronger bond that can come in handy later on!

(The city as a partner)

By gathering info from previous similar projects you can predict some of the difficulties and learn about how others have solved them!

Even though the city administration might feel like an abstract, dehumanized institution, it is still run by people who have their own private opinion about your project! This means that any kind of pressure your group is laying on the public servants or offices should be done in a respectful manner.
This is why face to face meetings seem to be more effective.

External Communication

(Media Relations)

Initially, find out which media might be interested and keep in mind that they also have deadlines, so you might have to work within their schedules.

Depending on whether your project is an event or a more general intervention, you will need to give out different information. All in all, describe your vision and goal and be prepared to give out contact information and details if asked!

It is a good idea to share the tasks within the group evenly so no one gets overworked!

(Web presence)

A simple solution is to set up a blog. There are many easy tools out there to promote your activity. A combination of Facebook and a dedicated blog will work and is easy to set up!

Note: as with most external communication, timing is important. Starting early and updating regularly is best because things need time to spread!

External Communication