Milestones

Introduction

Milestones mark important steps in the progress of a project and are both a planning and controlling tool. Milestones help to:

- plan and mark important achievements,
- evaluate the project's advancement,
- identify any positive or negative deviations that might need to be accounted for while the project is underway, and
- learn continuously and revise assumptions fundamental to the project.

In other words, a milestone might be a prerequisite for the initiation or completion of a project phase, a periodic measurement of continuous progress towards a major project objective, or an otherwise important achievement (organizational, legal, public, symbolic, etc.). Celebrating achieved milestones can create awareness and publicity, motivate the project's team and stakeholders, and convey appreciation for participants involvement and hard work.

Definition in applications

Milestones should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART):

- Specific: The milestone is clearly defined and easy to understand.
- Measurable: The achievement is observable, can be objectively assessed and reported upon (yes/no, measurable quantity, concisely describable facts).
- Achievable: It can realistically be achieved by the time stated.
- Relevant: The milestone is of significant importance to the project's further continuation or final objectives.
- Time-Bound: A date by which the milestone is expected to be achieved is given.

It is very helpful if all the involved stakeholders agree on the milestones.

Anywhere from two to six milestones per year is typically adequate for the purposes of the Foundation.

Examples of milestones in applications

What milestones will you use to define and manage the project's progress?

Milestone (what?)	Target value (how much?)	Measuring method	Timeline (when?)
Baseline assessment of the quantity of chemical pesticides used	46 farms	Survey, visits	June 2026
Young adults starting the educational program	140 (min. 45% women)	Participants in first workshop	August 2026
Initial reduction in the quantity of chemical pesticides used	-30% vs. initial baseline	Survey, visits	April 2027
Local water management council established	Required formal decisions giving sufficient resources and powers	Observation: council's first decisions are implemented	June 2027
Further reduction in the quantity of chemical pesticides used	-75% vs. initial baseline	Survey, visits	April 2028
Etc.			