

Tool 18: SWOT Analysis

Aim of the tool

To set achievable goals by identifying the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving them.

When to use it?

Appropriate in many phases of an MSP. In particular, for strategy formulation and review/M&E.

What is a SWOT Analysis?

A SWOT analysis is a well-known strategic planning tool to discover weaknesses and strengths of an individual, group or organization, and to identify both potential opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis in an MSP can be an effective way to review strategies participants are developing, or to evaluate a particular activity implemented. The tool helps participants be realistic about what they can achieve and where they should focus.

What are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?

Strengths	The aspects that are working well in a project or situation and which people are proud to talk about.
Weaknesses	The aspects that do not work so well.
Opportunities	Ideas on how to overcome weaknesses and build on strengths.
Threats	The elements that constrain or threaten the range of opportunities for change.

SWOT Analysis - Step by step

1. The group defines, discusses and records as many factors as possible for each heading. Emphasize that strengths and weaknesses should refer to internal aspects of the group, project site or activity. Opportunities and threats can be looked at as internal or external factors affecting them.
2. Alternatively, different sub-groups can, for example during a workshop, undertake a SWOT on their own. Comparing the different SWOTs can foster a constructive discussion about the differences and similarities of experiences and possibilities.
3. Based on this overview, discuss what actions are needed. Use these questions to help the discussion:
 - How can we apply our strengths to make use of the available opportunities?
 - How can we use our strengths to avert threats?
 - How can we deal with our weaknesses?
 - And what about the threats looming on the horizon?



Tips:

SWOT is an adaptable and flexible method, allowing for different perceptions to be recorded, and it directs the attention of those involved towards joint action.

This method is useful to encourage many people to share their inputs, helping them think about potential solutions and constraints, for example, as part of a strategic planning process. SWOT can also take past mistakes or weaknesses and transform them into constructive learning processes. It can help make complex problems easier to deal with, in the shortest time possible. It is a useful starting point for a group self-evaluation.

A SWOT analysis can be done as a brainstorm in a small group or workshop setting, or it can be done as an analysis and synthesis of other information. Finally, SWOT is often an useful complement to a stakeholder analysis (Tools 5, 10, 11, 12). Both are good precursors to Force Field Analysis (Tool 16).

Learn more

<http://betterevaluation.org/evaluation-options/swotanalysis>

IFAD (2002) Managing for impact in rural development: A guide for project M&E. Annex D', page D 21.

www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/annexd/Annex_D-3DEF.pdf

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