The Blue Module – Crafting EU grant applications

Learning materials for writing a work plan



ICER - Pro

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Composition of a work plan

A work plan is comprised of:

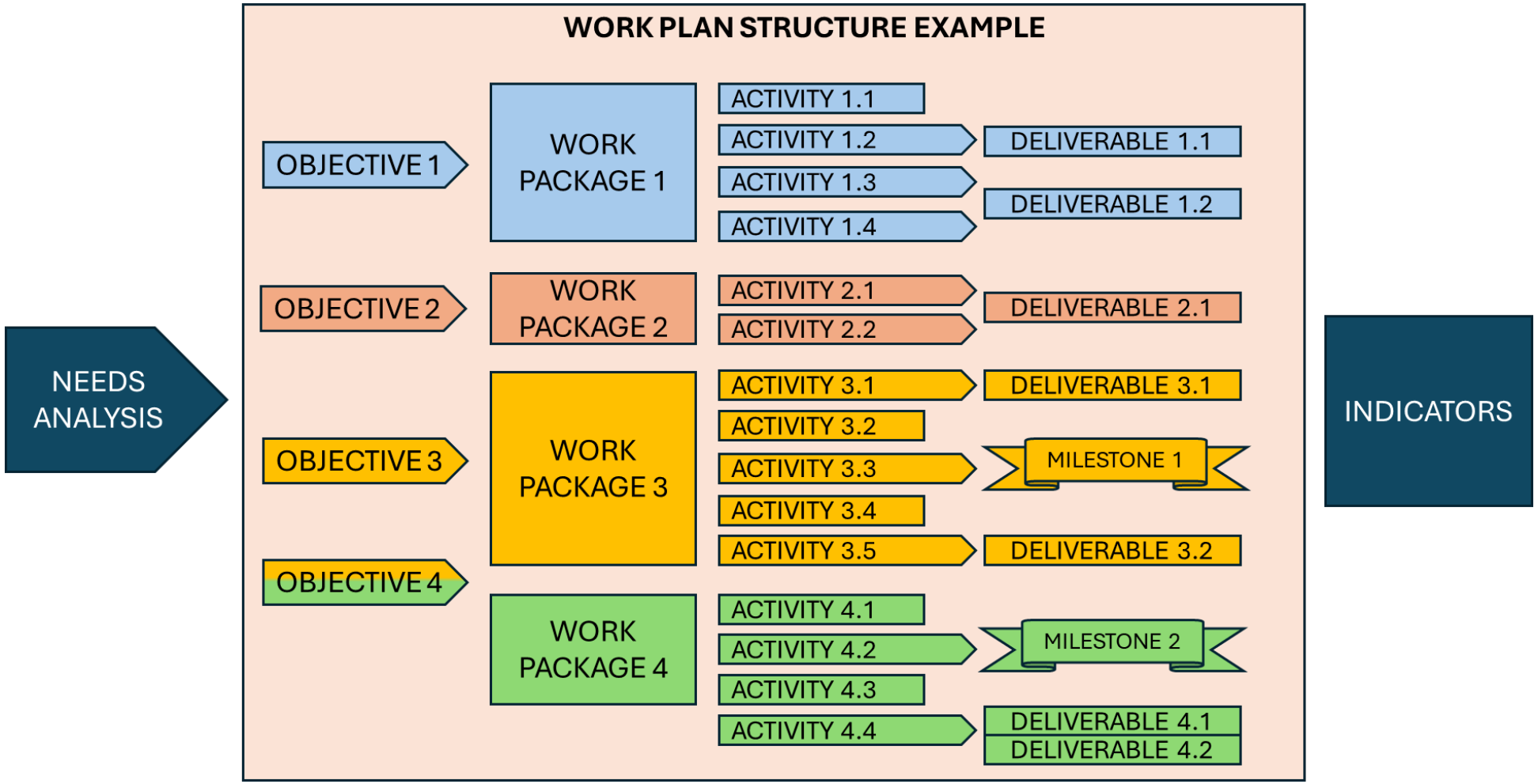
A. Specific Objectives
Objectives express the purpose of your project and describe its desired change and measurable achievements.

B. Work packages
A work package is a group of activities that target common specific objectives.

C. Activities
Activities are tasks inside a work package describing the concrete actions in your project.

D. Deliverables (and milestones)
Deliverables are the outputs of certain activities. They prove the project has achieved its objectives by completing promised activities.

Composition of a work plan



A) What are specific objectives?

Specific objectives: concrete, measurable, scope aligned, outcome driven

Specific objectives describe the concrete, measurable achievements the project will deliver during its lifetime.

1. Identify three to five **key challenges or needs your project will address** (Needs Analysis).
2. Identify what *target groups* are expected to benefit.
3. Identify what *results/outputs/outcomes* the funder wants.
4. Convert each need into a **desired change** (objective).
5. Assign each objective to the **work package(s)** that will realise that change.

Rule of thumb: If the specific objective sounds like a task, it belongs in the WP description—not in the objectives section.

Prefer: “Strengthen SMEs’ capacity to adopt sustainable terraforming technologies, as demonstrated by measurable improvements in knowledge, skills, and readiness among at least 20 SMEs and 10 VET organizations across three regions.”

Avoid: “Organise a training course on sustainable terraforming technologies”

Prefer: To enhance the pedagogical and methodological approaches in advanced terraforming education across the Solar System by developing two new interplanetary intensive courses including open-access learning materials.

Avoid: Develop intensive courses and learning materials for advanced terraforming.

B) What are work packages?

- A work package is a group of activities that target common **project specific objectives**.

- Work packages are NOT periods of time (e.g. first year of project). They are **divisions of work**.

- Work packages are NOT a single activity (e.g. organizing a conference)

- In lump-sum projects, have at least 1 work package end before project midterm to ensure continuous grant payment

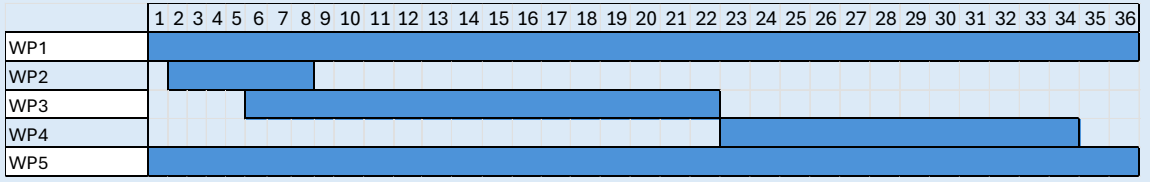
- The optimal amount of WPs ranges from 3 to 10 depending on the scale of the project. Usually, ~5 WPs are enough for a three-year-long project.

Example 1 – Work packages in a work plan

A division of work packages in a three-year-long project could look like this:

N.o.	Work package	Lead	Timing
WP1	Project Management (e.g. coordination, finances, quality)	University of Mars	M1–M36
WP2	Synergy Framework (e.g. surveys/workshops/research)	Tellus UAS	M2–M8
WP3	Development and Piloting (e.g. creating/testing materials)	Tellus UAS	M6–M22
WP4	Training the trainers (e.g. training/staff mobility)	Pluto training Ltd.	M23–M34
WP5	Dissemination & Impact (e.g. seminars, publications, media)	University of Mars	M1–M36
(WP6)	(Quality Assurance) (included in relevant projects)	(Jupiter Industry)	(M1–M36)

It is recommended to create a visual timeline of the work plan to help the planning process:



B) What are work packages?

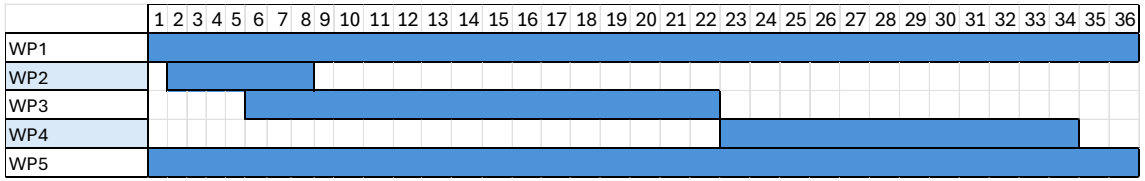
About work packages:

- Each WP has a dedicated lead organisation that is coordinating the WP.
  - Divide responsibilities evenly and according to the expertise of the organisations.
  - The WP leader oversees that the activities progress as planned and in time.

- One WP is usually dedicated to Project Management, and one to Dissemination and Impact.
  - In big or complex projects, a separate Quality Assurance WP is good to have.

- The other WPs contain the substance activities of the project. These include the research, development, training or other actions that you are promising to implement in your project.

- Timing and duration of the WP's are indicated in project Months (M). M1 is the first month of the project.
  - Notice that work packages can overlap each other chronologically.
  - Do not leave "empty" months in the work plan.
  - Avoid time consuming substance activities on Month 1 – there is a lot of Project Management work during the first month.
  - Leave some wiggle room in the end of the project to concentrate on dissemination, ensuring impact as well as project final reporting.



Taskbook task 1: From objectives to work packages

(pages 3-5)

Create work package titles.

The work packages should be **based on project specific objectives**, which are derived from the needs analysis.

1A) You can practice by using an example project idea, or/and

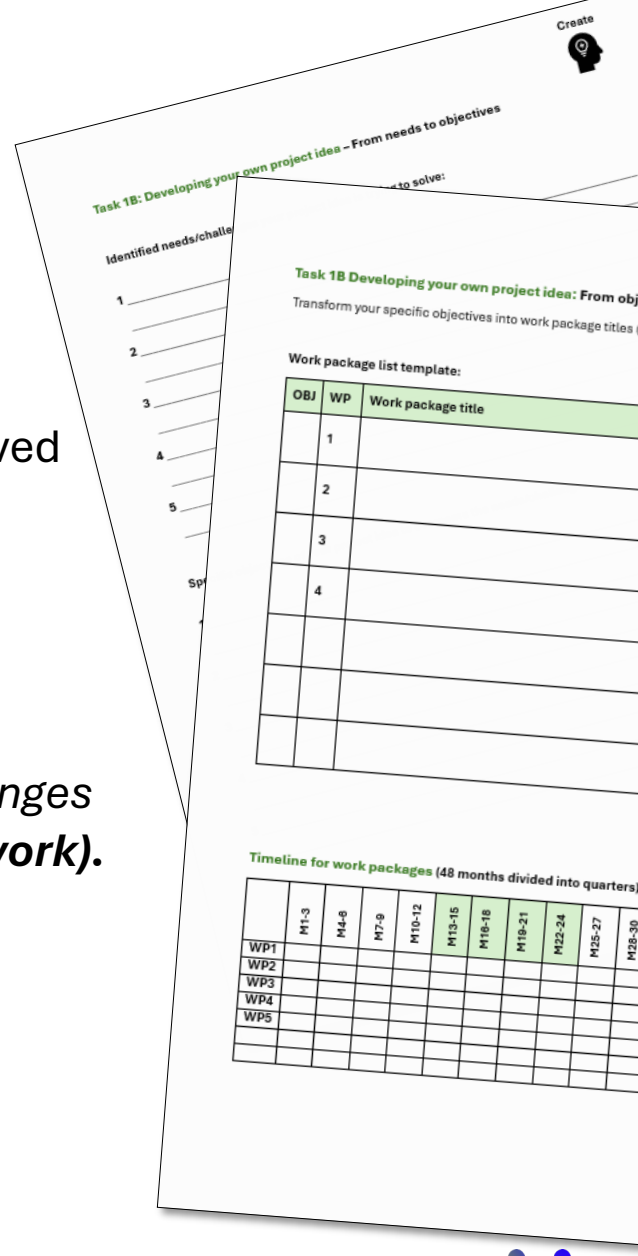
1B) Develop your own project idea

Identify needs/challenges your project idea is trying to solve

Write specific objectives of your project idea to overcome the needs/challenges

*Transform your specific objectives into **work package titles (divisions of work).***

If you have time, estimate WP duration, give each WP a lead organisation and draft a timeline for the work packages



C) What are activities?

- Activities describe the concrete actions you are planning to do in your work packages.
- You should group similar activities together to keep the work plan clear and logical.

- Activities should make your project progress towards the WP's objective(s).
- Project objectives should be made before the work plan. Link relevant objectives to their WPs.

- Activities do not automatically create deliverables. It is OK to have activities without deliverables.

- The approximate number of activities in a work package is 2-5.

Example 2 – Activities in a work package

The first iteration of activities in our example WP3 could be:

N.o.	**Work package**	**Lead**	**Timing**
3	Development and piloting	Tellus UAS	M6-M22
Objective: The objective of the work package is to develop a new interplanetary intensive course for advanced terraforming, including a methodology and learning materials.			
Activities			
N.o.	**Activity**	**Lead**	**Timing**
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops	Pluto training Ltd.	M6–M8
A3.2	Developing a new methodology	University of Mars	M9–M15
A3.3	Developing learning materials	Tellus UAS	M10–M16
A3.4	Testing and editing of materials according to feedback	Jupiter Industry	M17–22
A3.4.1	Pilot course for professionals in industry	Jupiter Industry	M17–19
A3.4.2	Pilot course for students in vocational education	Tellus UAS	M18–20

C) What are activities?

About activities:

- Each activity has a lead organization that coordinates the hands-on implementation of the activity.
  - Having a lead role in an activity is more work than leading a work package!
  - The activity leader coordinates the work group while actively implementing the tasks as planned, and reports to the WP leader.
  - The leader of the work package does not have to lead all of the activities. Share the workload and responsibilities.

- Notice how the numbering of the activities (A3.1) indicates the WP this activity belongs to (WP3).

- This makes it possible to reference activities precisely throughout the proposal.

- Making subtasks more than 3 digits long is NOT preferred (e.g. 3.1.1.1). A good work plan is easy to understand!

- Good activities “feed” into each other, e.g. the project first drafts a plan, uses the plan to implement another activity, and then uses the feedback from the implementation to evaluate and finalize the deliverable.

D) What are deliverables?

- Deliverables are the **measurable outputs** of the activities inside a work package. It is how the project proves the work has been done and objectives achieved.

- Not all activities will necessarily produce a deliverable or a milestone!

    - A milestone is a checkpoint on your way towards a deliverable. Milestones show progress during a long process.

- Deliverables are usually **documents that prove certain activities have taken place successfully**. For example, an event as a deliverable can be proven by a list of participants and a feedback report including pictures. More concrete items like physical prototypes or abstract outputs like digital software also need a short report detailing the deliverable and its development process. **Making small reports along the way makes it easier to write the periodic and final reports!**

Examples of deliverables:	**Ways to prove it has been done:**
Report on survey findings	*(Report)*
Data management plan	(Document)
A prototype or software	*(Access if openly shared, Report)*
Intensive course	*(Schedule, List of participants, Pictures, Feedback report)*
A publication	*(Access if openly shared, link to permanent web address)*
A virtual learning environment	(Report, screencaptures)

D) What are deliverables?

Example 3 – Deliverables in a work package

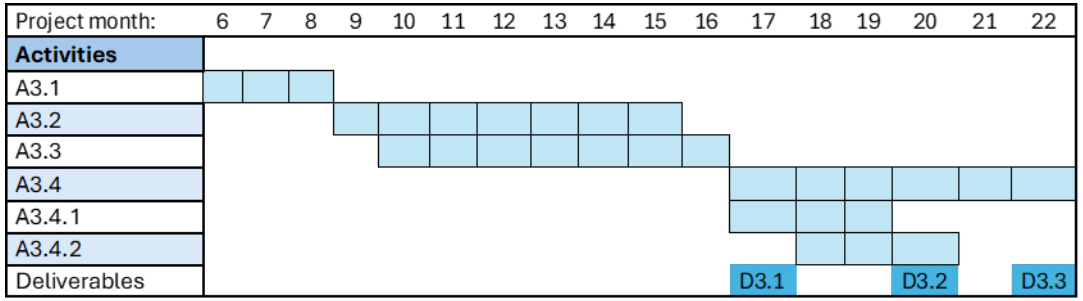
The first iteration of Deliverables in our example WP3 could be:

N.o.	Deliverable	Type	Lead	Due month
D3.1	New methodology and learning materials	Report	University of Mars	M17
D3.3	Pilot groups' evaluation report	Report	Jupiter Industries	M20
D3.2	Finalized version of intensive course	Report	Tellus UAS	M22

About Deliverables:

- Notice how the Deliverables' numbering indicates the WP they belong to (eg. D3.1).
- **Milestones.** Milestones are key deliverables in your project, or/and can show progress during a time-consuming activity.
- The leader of a deliverable is responsible for delivering the promised output according to the funder's rules.
- **What kind of documentation will you create to prove that you have achieved your goal?**
- Each deliverable has a due month (M) that the deliverable should be ready by.

A GANTT-chart shows your project in a summarized and visual form. Below is an example made from our WP3:



D) What are deliverables?

- Refer only to **major outputs.**
- **what kind of information helps to evaluate and showcase the project's progress?**
- Try to keep **balance** of the deliverables to be submitted along the lifetime of the project
- **Limit the number of deliverables.**

Example – Combining deliverables

If every output of a work package is made into a Deliverable, the reporting workload becomes too big, also affecting the workload of the funder.

Avoid this:

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Lead	Due date
D3.1	Summary report of workshops	Report	Pluto training Ltd.	M8
D3.2	New methodology for terraforming education	Report	University of Mars	M15
D3.3	Learning materials for advanced terraforming	Report	Tellus UAS	M16
D3.4	Evaluation of industry pilot course	Event/Report	Jupiter Industry	M19
D3.5	Evaluation of VET pilot course	Event/Report	Jupiter Industry	M20
D3.6	Finalized version of intensive course	Course	Tellus UAS	M22

Instead, combine the deliverables and explain in their description what they consist of. Above, the three first deliverables (D3.1, D3.2, and D3.2) can be combined into one report including outputs from each of these activities. In the same way the deliverables for the pilot course evaluation (D3.4 and D3.5) can be combined.

This is OK:

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Lead	Due date
D3.1	New methodology and learning materials	Report	University of Mars	M17
D3.3	Pilot groups' evaluation report	Report	Jupiter Industries	M20
D3.2	Finalized version of intensive course	Report	Tellus UAS	M22

Combining the parts: First work package draft

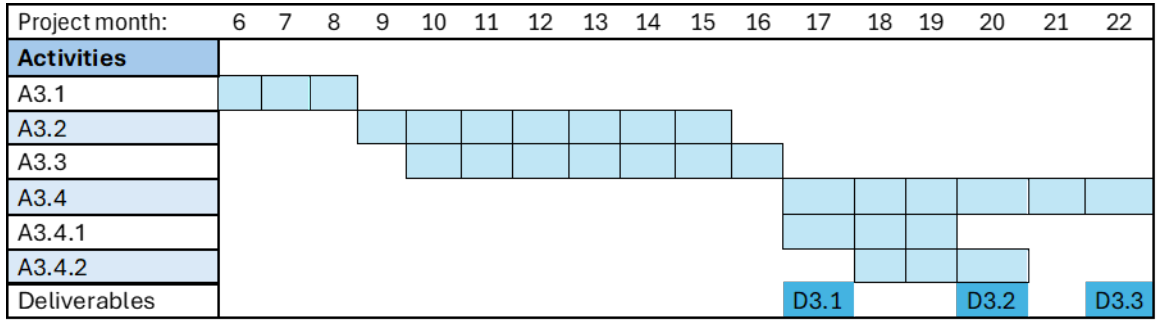
The table below reiterates the matters that you should decide upon when drafting a work package. This process should be repeated for **each work package** in your work plan.

1 **What** is/are the objective(s) of the work package?
2 **What** kind of activities will you implement to reach the objective(s)?
3 **Who** will be responsible for implementing these activities?
4 **When** will these activities be done?
5 **What kind of outputs** will be produced from these activities?

Example 4 – Work package in a work plan

When we put this information together, we now have our first version of a work package:

Work package			**WP Lead**	**Timing**
3	Development and piloting		Tellus UAS	M6-M22
Objective: The objective of the work package is to develop a new interplanetary intensive course for advanced terraforming, including a methodology and learning materials.				
Activities				
N.o.	**Activity**		**Activity Lead**	**Timing**
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops		Pluto training Ltd.	M6–M8
A3.2	Developing a new methodology		University of Mars	M9–M15
A3.3	Developing learning materials		Tellus UAS	M10–M16
A3.4	Evaluation and editing of materials according to feedback		Jupiter Industry	M17–22
A3.4.1	Pilot course for professionals in industry		Jupiter Industry	M17–19
A3.4.2	Pilot course for students in vocational education		Tellus UAS	M18–20
Deliverables				
N.o.	**Deliverable**	**Type**	**Deliverable Lead**	**Due month**
D3.1	New methodology and learning materials	Report	University of Mars	M17
D3.2	Pilot groups' evaluation report	Report	Tellus UAS	M20
D3.3	Finalized version of intensive course	Course	Jupiter Industries	M22



After these steps have been taken, it is time to start thinking about the detailed descriptions of the activities and deliverables as well as which partners will participate in which activity - and how.

Tasbook task 2: Activities and deliverables inside a work package

(pages 6-7)



Choose **one work package** from your work plan. Create activity and deliverable titles "inside" the work package.

The activity titles should be **descriptive of the work** that will be implemented during it. For deliverables, think **what kind of outputs** the implementation of these activities will produce.

Create activity and deliverable titles:

2A) For the example project idea

2B) For your own project idea

If you have time, estimate the activities' duration and assign leaders.

Describing activities

The descriptions of each activity should explain in concrete terms:

- **What** is going to be done?
  (see: discussion agenda, four workshops, and a summary report)
- **How** it is going to be done?
  (see: in-person, themed discussions with a specific methodology)
- **When** is it going to be done?
  (see: task timing, workshop timetable and duration)
- **Who** is going to participate?
  (see: confirmed stakeholders listed, organizers mentioned)
- **Why** is it done?
  (see: developing education, synergies, building future activities)
- **Where** is it done?
  (see: headquarters of partner)

Example 8 – Description of an activity

Below the activity description is color coded to showcase what is consists of.

N.o.	Activity	Lead organization	Participants	Timing
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops	Pluto training Ltd.	University of Mars	M6–M8
	Description: A discussion agenda is first planned and written (M6) for organizing four consecutive workshops (M7-M8) where the challenges regarding terraforming are discussed, solutions to existing needs are searched for, and synergies between education and industry are probed. Four workshops are then organized, each one of which include participants from 5 industry stakeholders as well as 5 education institutions. PlutoPeda TM methodology is used to facilitate the discussion. All workshops will be organized in-person at Pluto Training Co. headquarters. The duration of one workshop is 2 hours. The workshops are organized by Pluto training Ltd. in collaboration with the University of Mars. These organizations have the most practical (Pluto) and theoretical (Mars) knowledge of advanced terraforming in the consortium, and can learn a lot from each other. The participants can also benefit from the expertise of the consortium, and vice versa. As a result of the workshops, a summary of proposed solutions and synergies which may help to develop terraforming education is written (M8). The summary is used in the development of the methodology (A3.2) and learning materials (A3.3). Preliminary timetable and themes for workshops: 1st Workshop, M7: Understanding the needs of industry and education regarding terraforming 2nd Workshop, M7: Finding solutions for education needs 3rd Workshop, M8: Finding solutions for industry needs 4th Workshop, M8: Finding synergies and collaboration possibilities between industry and education The following workshops participants have already confirmed their participation in the project. Industry: 1) Meteor Mining co, 2) Starreaktor, 3) Noqia Oyj Education: 1) Saturniversity, 2) Venus VET, 3) Andromeda School of Stars The other 4 participants will be recruited using the existing collaboration networks of the consortium, including the Small Orbiting Rocks Industry Union and the Interplanetary Educators Committee.			

Describing activities

- Notice how the activity description has months (M) inserted after each different phase of the activity to show that the time and effort required for each task has been thought of.

- Complementarity of the activity is highlighted by describing how participants can learn from each other.

- Activity is justified in its description (explaining why it is done) The activity is also linked to future activities (A3.2, A3.3), further justifying its role.

- It is good to have some confirmed target group participants for your activities. These organizations can be involved in the consortium as Associated Partners to show their commitment. If participating organizations will be recruited during the project, explain in detail how you will reach them.

N.o.	Activity	Lead organization	Participants	Timing
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops	Pluto training Ltd.	University of Mars	M6–M8
	Description: A discussion agenda is first planned and written (M6) for organizing four consecutive workshops (M7-M8) where the challenges regarding terraforming are discussed, solutions to existing needs are searched for, and synergies between education and industry are probed. Four workshops are then organized, each one of which include participants from 5 industry stakeholders as well as 5 education institutions. PlutoPeda TM methodology is used to facilitate the discussion. All workshops will be organized in-person at Pluto Training Co. headquarters. The duration of one workshop is 2 hours. The workshops are organized by Pluto training Ltd. in collaboration with the University of Mars. These organizations have the most practical (Pluto) and theoretical (Mars) knowledge of advanced terraforming in the consortium, and can learn a lot from each other. The participants can also benefit from the expertise of the consortium, and vice versa. As a result of the workshops, a summary of proposed solutions and synergies which may help to develop terraforming education is written (M8). The summary is used in the development of the methodology (A3.2) and learning materials (A3.3). Preliminary timetable and themes for workshops: 1st Workshop, M7: Understanding the needs of industry and education regarding terraforming 2nd Workshop, M7: Finding solutions for education needs 3rd Workshop, M8: Finding solutions for industry needs 4th Workshop, M8: Finding synergies and collaboration possibilities between industry and education The following workshops participants have already confirmed their participation in the project. Industry: 1) Meteor Mining co, 2) Starreaktor, 3) Noqia Oyj Education: 1) Saturniversity, 2) Venus VET, 3) Andromeda School of Stars The other 4 participants will be recruited using the existing collaboration networks of the consortium, including the Small Orbiting Rocks Industry Union and the Interplanetary Educators Committee.			

Describing activities

About Activity Descriptions:

The descriptions of project activities should be:

- **Concrete**
- **Balanced**
- **Realistic:** Carefully decide upon the timing of your activities and assess their workload.
  - Be flexible in the timing of the activities – everything takes more time than planned.
  - One project cannot fix everything. Limit your activities to pursue **specific objectives**.
- **Cooperative**
- **Valid**
- **Aware:** Know what you promise! The work plan is a part of the Grant Agreement. For example There is a difference in:

  "*The project will use the PM2 method for project management*" and
  "*The project applies practices from the PM2 method in project management*"

  - Keep in mind that **locations** of activities affect the travel budget – a central location to all is preferrable.

Describing deliverables

Example 10 – Combining deliverables

Another example on combining deliverables in a work package.

Avoid this:

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Lead	Due date
D1.1	Project management guide for consortium	Document	University of Mars	3
D1.2	Data management plan	Document	University of Mars	3
D1.3	Summary of feedback from activities	Report	University of Mars	6,12, 18, 24, 30
D1.4	Self-evaluation of project team and suggestions from the steering group	Report	University of Mars	6,12, 18, 24, 30
D1.5	Report on achieved indicators VS. target values	Report	University of Mars	6,12, 18, 24, 30

This is OK:

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Lead	Due date
D1.1	Project management guide and Data management plan	Document	University of Mars	3
D1.2	Reports on quality and progress: Internal and external evaluation of activities	Report	University of Mars	6,12, 18, 24, 30

- For the deliverable D1.2 multiple due dates are inserted, meaning that multiple reports will be done throughout the project.

- Explain combined outputs in the description:

D1.2 includes:

A) *Summary of feedback from target groups and stakeholders*

B) *Self-evaluation of project team and suggestions from the steering group*

C) *Summary of achieved indicators VS. target values. Identifies points of interest and suggests corrective actions*

Describing deliverables

- Notice how the deliverables build onto each other
- References to activities are made in the deliverable
- Try to summarize what the deliverable is, what is it for, and where will it be available.
- The Dissemination level of the Deliverable:
  A) Sensitive B) Public or C) Classified.

Example 11 – Deliverable descriptions

Elaborate what the output consists of, and – in short – what it is.

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Dissemination level	Lead	Due date
D3.1	New methodology and learning materials: pilot version	Report	Sensitive	University of Mars	M17
	Description: Using the summary report from workshops in A3.1 as a basis, new methodology and learning materials for teaching advanced terraforming is developed in A3.2 and A3.3. The methodology takes into consideration the needs of both industry and VET institutions. These materials are tested in two pilot courses, after which they are finalized. PDF document, English language, 20-50 pages, uploaded into funder's portal for approval.				

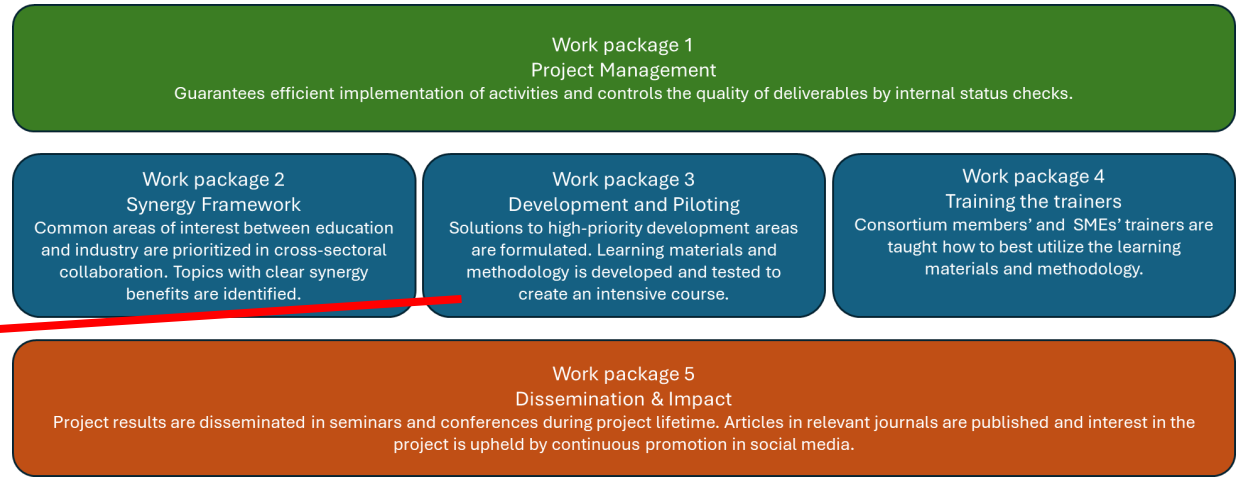
N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Dissemination level	Lead	Due date
D3.2	Pilot groups' evaluation report	Report	Sensitive	Jupiter Industries	M20
	Description: The developed methodology and learning materials have been evaluated in two pilot courses (A3.4.1 and A3.4.2). In this report, the course participants' feedback is analyzed, and further development suggestions are formulated by the consortium. The evaluation report is used to finalize the intensive course. PDF document, English language, 2-10 pages, uploaded into funder's portal for approval.				

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Dissemination level	Lead	Due date
D3.3	Finalized version of intensive course	Report	Public	Jupiter Industries	M22
	Description: The pilot groups' evaluation report is used to finalize the materials and build a coherent course structure. The finalized version of the intensive course enables teachers and trainers to implement the intensive course according to contemporary education regulations and work life needs. The methodology and learning materials can be used in EQF 6-7 VET education as well as for the lifelong learning needs of industry. The materials are available for download in the project's website and they are also uploaded to the universal learning material library. PDF document, English language, 2-10 pages.				

Overview of a work plan

Here is an overview of a work plan and the work packages it consists of. A “big picture” like this is good to be included in your application.

Each work package has its own set of Activities and Deliverables. Each Activity and Deliverable have their own descriptions.



Work package		WP Lead	Timing
3	Development and piloting	Tellus UAS	M6-M22
Objective addressed: To enhance the pedagogical and methodological approaches in advanced terraforming education across the Solar System by developing two new interplanetary intensive courses including open-access learning materials.			
Activities			
N.o.	**Activity**	**Activity Lead**	**Timing**
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops	Pluto training Ltd.	M6–M8
A3.2	Developing a new methodology	University of Mars	M9–M15
A3.3	Developing learning materials	Tellus UAS	M10–M16
A3.4	Evaluation and editing of materials according to feedback	Jupiter Industry	M17–22
A3.4.1	Pilot course for professionals in industry	Jupiter Industry	M17–19
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Deliverables			
N.o.	**Deliverable**	**Type**	**Deliverable Lead**	**Due month**
D3.1	New methodology and learning materials	Report	University of Mars	M17
D3.2	Pilot groups’ evaluation report	Report	Tellus UAS	M20
D3.3	Finalized version of intensive course	Course	Jupiter Industries	M22

N.o.	Deliverable name	Type	Dissemination level	Lead	Due date
D3.3	Finalized version of intensive course	Report	Public	Jupiter Industries	M22
	Description: The pilot groups’ evaluation report is used to finalize the materials and build a coherent course structure. The finalized version of the intensive course enables teachers and trainers to implement the intensive course according to contemporary education regulations and work life needs. The methodology and learning materials can be used in EQF 6-7 VET education as well as for the lifelong learning needs of industry. The materials are available for download in the project’s website and they are also uploaded to the universal learning material library.				

N.o.	Activity	Lead organization	Participants	Timing
A3.1	Organizing a series of workshops	Pluto training Ltd.	University of Mars	M6–M8
	Description: A discussion agenda is first planned and written (M6) for organizing four consecutive workshops (M7-M8) where the challenges regarding terraforming are discussed, solutions to existing needs are searched for, and synergies between education and industry are probed. Four workshops are then organized, each one of which include participants from 5 industry stakeholders as well as 5 education institutions. PlutoPeda TM methodology is used to facilitate the discussion. All workshops will be organized in-person at Pluto Training Co. headquarters. The duration of one workshop is 2 hours. The workshops are organized by Pluto training Ltd. in collaboration with the University of Mars. These organizations have the most practical (Pluto) and theoretical (Mars) knowledge of advanced terraforming in the consortium, and can learn a lot from each other. The participants can also benefit from the expertise of the consortium, and vice versa. As a result of the workshops, a summary of proposed solutions and synergies which may help to develop terraforming education is written (M8). The summary is used in the development of the methodology (A3.2) and learning materials (A3.3). Preliminary timetable and themes for workshops: 1st Workshop, M7: Understanding the needs of industry and education regarding terraforming 2nd Workshop, M7: Finding solutions for education needs 3rd Workshop, M8: Finding solutions for industry needs 4th Workshop, M8: Finding synergies and collaboration possibilities between industry and education The following workshops participants have already confirmed their participation in the project. Industry: 1) Meteor Mining co, 2) Starreaktor, 3) Nogia Oyj Education: 1) Saturniversity, 2) Venus VET, 3) Andromeda School of Stars The other 4 participants will be recruited using the existing collaboration networks of the consortium, including the Small Orbiting Rocks Industry Union and the Interplanetary Educators Committee.			

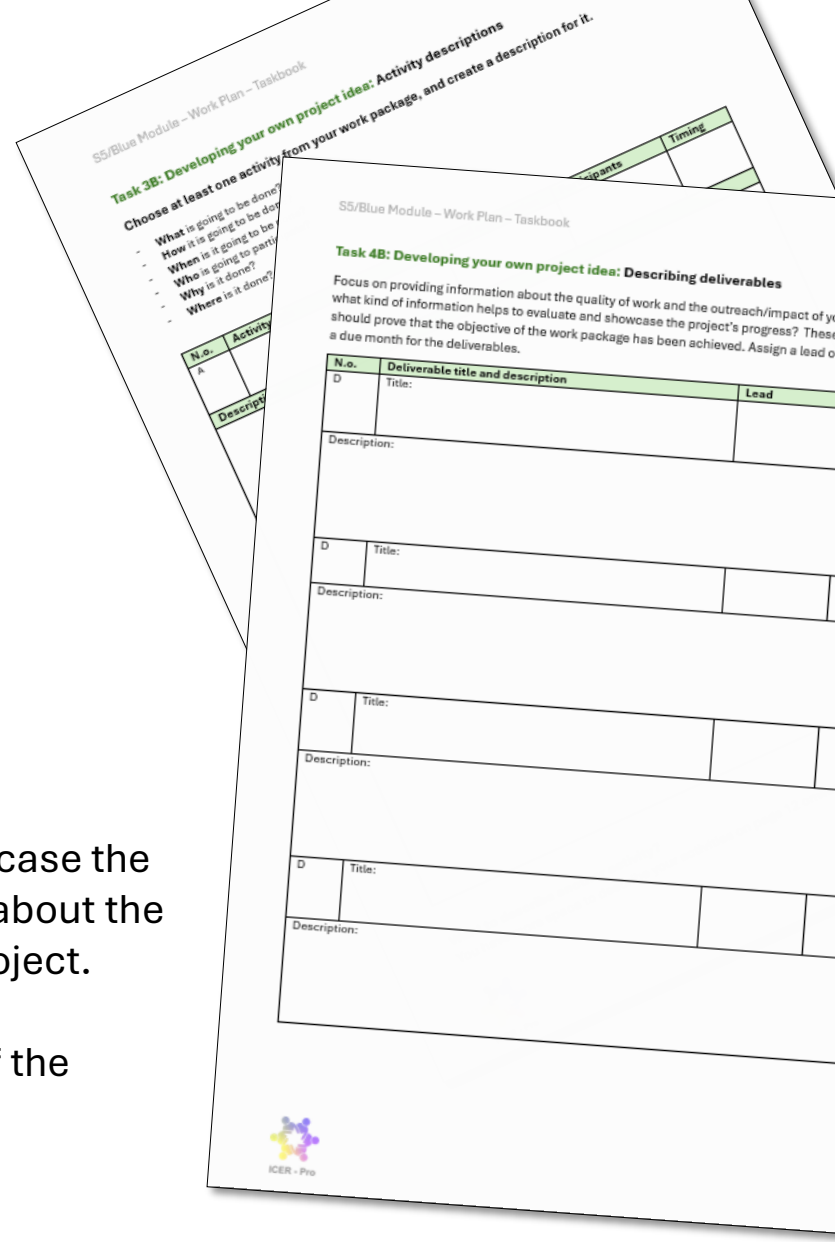
Taskbook tasks 3 & 4: Describing activities and deliverables

(pages 8-11)

Choose at least one activity and one deliverable from your chosen work package, and write a description for it.

A) Use the example project or/and

B) Use your own project idea's activities



For activities, think:

What is going to be done?
How is it going to be done?
When is it going to be done?
Who is going to participate?
Why is it done?
Where is it done?

For deliverables, think:

What kind of information helps to evaluate and showcase the **project's progress**? Focus on providing information about the **quality of work and the outreach/impact** of your project.

These deliverables should prove that the **objective** of the work package has been achieved.

Thank You!

ICER - Pro

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Please check the following tools for further information:

CARPE Website
(general project information & training material)

LinkedIn
(news & up-dates)

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