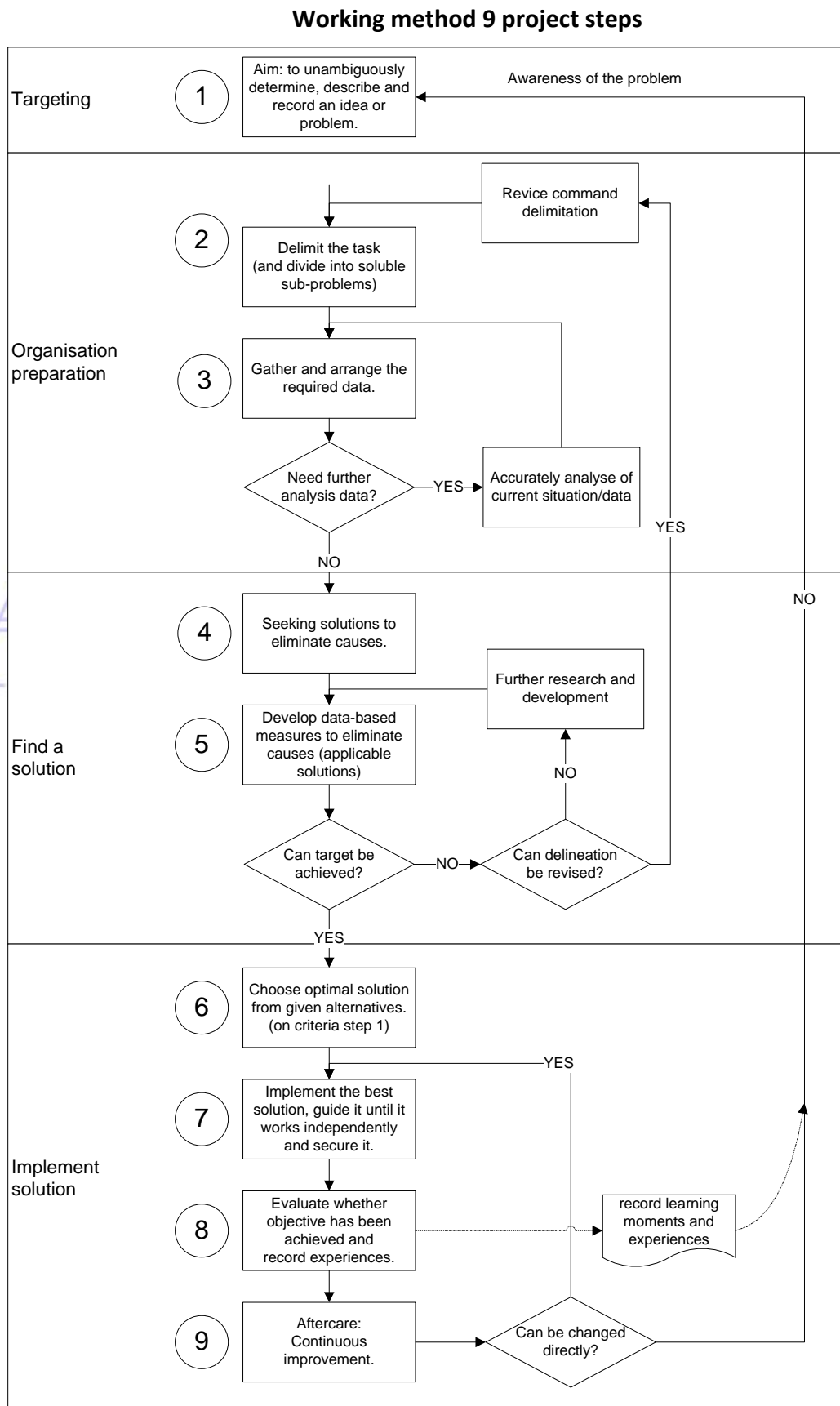# Work method-9 project steps

Projects can be used for various improvement purposes. The main advantage of projects is the independence from ongoing, daily activities. Additional capacity, special skills or knowledge can be hired. The most important steps are the first five. These require the greatest attention (time). These steps are essential for an optimal final choice in step 6. See following flow chart in which the steps to be taken, are visualised:

Working method 9 project steps

Targeting

1 — Aim: to unambiguously determine, describe and record an idea or problem.

Awareness of the problem

Organisation preparation

2 — Delimit the task (and divide into soluble sub-problems)

Revice command delimitation

3 — Gather and arrange the required data.

Need further analysis data? — YES → Accurately analyse of current situation/data

YES

NO

Find a solution

4 — Seeking solutions to eliminate causes.

5 — Develop data-based measures to eliminate causes (applicable solutions)

Further research and development

Can target be achieved? — NO → Can delineation be revised? — NO

YES

Implement solution

6 — Choose optimal solution from given alternatives. (on criteria step 1)

7 — Implement the best solution, guide it until it works independently and secure it.

YES

8 — Evaluate whether objective has been achieved and record experiences.

record learning moments and experiences

9 — Aftercare: Continuous improvement.

Can be changed directly?

Work method-9 project steps

A small explanation for each step:

1. The first step is to identify an anomaly and to consider a change. However, first ask yourself whether the problem is chronic or just an outlier. That's why the intake interview is important for a client's request. By demonstrating the necessity, the idea is worked out in a project proposal or project assignment. This describes the target and defines the requirements. Possible descriptions:
    - Problem definition or description of an existing situation,
    - Improvement target or investment definition,
    - A result definition for a development project.

2. The project definition provides a clear direction, including a good delineation, to prevent unnecessary side-paths from being entered. The project team is selected and a plan of approach is described:
    - Project result scope: which must be fulfilled (requirements, wishes, presentations)
    - Phasing and intermediate results reporting (monitoring)
    - Management aspects: time, money, quality, information and organisation
    In addition, a baseline measurement is used to record the current situation in figures or images (for comparison of results after completion). Where possible, divide the problem into (soluble) subproblems. Good to keep an overview and to be able to achieve results faster. Achieved milestones make it worthwhile to continue.

3. The diagnosis of the current situation is to look for the causes of problems, deviations or developments. Look at phenomena and frequencies, i.e. facts. The Ischikawa or fishbone diagram offers a good visualization and insight into the grouped issues. This will be the basis for a well-founded solution. The question: "do we have all the necessary data?", should be asked always.
    This 3rd step is of great importance for the follow-up process. Therefore, devote the necessary time (budget) and attention to recording the existing situation. Without "jumping to conclusions".

4. Finding the ideal solutions, after finding causes. Based on data from step 3, the possible solution directions can be generated. Brainstorming and the Pareto analysis can do a good service in this context, in order to make an assessment for the next step 5.

5. The elaboration and development of the measures that can be applied in practice in the direction of the target situation. The ins and outs of each choice must now be made clear in terms of numbers and visuals. This step therefore requires time and attention in order to be able to eliminate problem causes optimally. An important question that must always be asked for is: "can the goal be achieved?".

6. With the evaluation of the data from step 5, a solution can now be considered and determined. An important question here is: "who is involved or who gets involved?" The solution can be technological, organisational, social or systematic. The choice decision is also the release of the next step.

Work method-9 project steps

7. With the collected data from step 5, the chosen solution from step 6 can be implemented:
   - here are phases and milestones defined too (action plan)
   - implement measures to remove found causes (is implementing change)
   - guidance and result-oriented retaining, so the solution will be also implemented
   - to ensure the final result (securing against new negative causes)

8. The project has been completed and needs to be evaluated. The main question is: "Has the objective been achieved and has the implementation been carried out as expected?". Record experiences and learning moments now. With these experiences the throughput time for future projects can be shortened. The actual value of the result must be measurable or standards comparable. There are various methods to do this, such as a correlation diagram, sample survey, etc. In case of deviation, action is required obviously.

9. Aftercare: Continuous evaluation of use, management and maintenance. Continuous improvement will lead to new insights through progressive experiences and developments.
   Small improvements can be implemented quickly via step 7. However, if problems with a greater impact are encountered, it makes sense to start again at step 1.

Keep an overview during (almost) every step:

- Focus on the objective
  - Ensure availability of time, resources and an adequate budget,
  - Keep a good (time) registration (reporting),
  - Document the performance and achievement of the milestones,
  - Guarantee of objectivity (unbiased and correct organisational attitude).
- Which tools are needed or should be facilitated.
- Is all the knowledge in house? Are specialists needed?
- Is the capacity sufficient? Is support needed?
- What are the obstacles, such as legislation, labour market, state of the art, etc.?
- Take into consideration the end-user (department, customer).
- Involve those in the process, for whom changes can have consequences.
- …
- Provide intermediate and final reports always with date, place, time and signed for approval.

Finally:

- Put together a good project team with (correct) responsibilities and decision-making powers.

Success!

The process and working methods improver

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