A project diary is a written record of significant activities, events or processes that occur during the life of a project.

It is highly recommended that project staff keep some sort of diary to record their insights and experiences during a project's planning and implementation as these insights are important to collect and reflect upon in order to improve the way future projects are run. Project staff's diaries can provide a meaningful reflection of the time that may be needed to implement a project.

For example, diaries can provide a more accurate guide as to the time commitment (and budgeting) required in future project designs. Diaries are also invaluable for identifying the little things that make, hold back, or break a project. These small factors, such as not engaging particular stakeholders early enough, may have not been considered in the project plan but they are the things that end up being important. Project diaries therefore help collect the information that helps make a meaningful evaluation of a project's implementation, rather than having to depend on sketchy memories or anecdotal evidence.

An option is to combine diary-keeping with regular meetings, whereby project teams and other relevant stakeholders can reflect on what is working well and what needs improvement, and decide on what should be done to improve the project.

Keeping a diary could be done either through a traditional 'written' format, or through an electronic file that is updated as required.

You can also consider having a selection of participants keep diaries to record their observations of a project, and the changes they undertake. You may want to consider selecting the participants using specific criteria, such as demographics, previous knowledge or values, or the like, so that can see if different sub-groups have different experiences.

Pros	Cons
Provides an insight into what works and what does not	Requires project staff or participants to be diligent about keeping diary up to

Provides valuable information The value of the diary may change
The value of the diary may influence their recording of events
Not necessarily easy to analyse

Further Links & Resources

Writing and keeping journals from infed