

The issues ranking table

The second component in step 3 is also a table: the 'issues ranking table'. This table aims at helping consultants point to the most important and sensitive issues/features in terms of the project acceptance. As the conflicting issues table, this is mainly an instrumental component, which can be used in a team of consultants as it involves an important share of interpretive work. Again, and for this reason, it seems recommendable that the consultants who did the interviews in step 2, and the interpretative work in building the key issues table, would be involved in the construction of this table.

The table consists of two main parts, one describing issues/features more extensively, the second ranking them according to their strategic importance.

In the first part of the table, each important issue – in row- identified in the key issue table will be described in further detail in a few sentences.

In the second part of the table, each issue – in row – will be estimated in terms of their Urgency and Importance level –each corresponding to a particular column.

The final column is a synthesizing one, in which consultants will attribute a ranking to the issue/feature as regards its risk/importance for the project acceptance

Urgency: referring to the timeframe within which the issue should be solved in order for the project to continue (high/low)

Importance: referring to the dependence of the project on resolution of the issue (high/low).

Solvability: level of costs/ feasibility obstacles

On the basis of this the issues are ranked (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Then the project manager can add a comment on the extent to which they are solvable/feasible.

Issues/features	Description
Issue 1	
Issue 2	
Issue 3	

Issue 4				
Issues/features	Urgency	Importance	Weight=U*I	Solvability
Issue 1				
Issue 2				
Issue 3				
Issue 4				

From this table, the consultants will derive a graph that will illustrate and synthesize the analytical work in step 3. It will be the major output of Step 3 to step 4 and is going to be presented, with ranking issues table to the project manager for orienting step 4 activities.

Strategic issues graph

The third and last task in step 3 is the 'strategic issues graph'. Directly derived from the previous table it is a visual representation of the table main results. It will help consultants visualize the work they have done in step 3 and be a powerful output to show the project manager.

The graph is two dimensional:

- horizontal axis represents the urgency
- second axis represents the importance

In this way the different issues / features will be directly comparable. Moreover, the table shows, which activities are required for a given set of issues:

- Quadrant 1 (high urgency and high importance): the project manager should immediately act upon these issues,
- Quadrant 2 (low urgency and high importance): the project manager should develop an action strategy and planning to deal with these issues in the coming month/years,
- Quadrant 3 (low urgency and low importance): the project manager should not deal with these issues,

- Quadrant 4 (high urgency and low importance): these issues need a defensive strategy, as they are urgent, but not important for the project manager (they might be important to other stakeholders!),

